Shared Stories of the Civil War
Reader's Theater Project

Rhetoric of the Civil War Press

Newspapers played a crucial role in shaping public perception of the events leading up to the Civil War. Nineteenth century journalism did not strive for unbiased accuracy, and newspapers were generally the organs of political parties.

For much of this era, the news in the national spotlight revolved around the events in the Kansas Territory. Between 1854 and 1858, the *New York Herald* published over 4,000 articles and 635 editorials on events in Kansas. The Kansas-Nebraska Act sparked a war of words between the daily presses and newspapers that would continue into the onset of the Civil War.

Please Note: Regional historians have reviewed the source materials used, the script, and the list of citations for accuracy.

Rhetoric of the Civil War Press is part of the Shared Stories of the Civil War Reader's Theater project, a partnership between the **Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area** and the **Kansas Humanities Council.**

FFNHA is a partnership of 41 counties in eastern Kansas and western Missouri dedicated to connecting the stories of settlement, the Border War and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom in this area. KHC is a non-profit organization promoting understanding of the history and ideas that shape our lives and strengthen our sense of community.

For More Information:

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area www.freedomsfrontier.org
Kansas Humanities Council www.kansashumanities.org

Introduction

Instructions: The facilitator can either read the entire introduction out loud or summarize key points.

This introduction is intended to provide context to the reader's theater script. It is not a comprehensive examination of events leading up to and including the Civil War. It has been developed to remind us to consider the violence and complexities of the time period as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War in 2011.

The following Reader's Theater examines the role of the national press in shaping the events in Kansas during the 1850s and 1860s. In order to understand the vital role that newspapers played during these decades, there are several important figures to note. Between 1825 and 1860, the number of active newspapers in the United States quadrupled; in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, there were nearly 2,500 newspapers in circulation, 373 of which were published daily. Overwhelmingly, the nation's newspapers were situated in the North. Only 80 newspapers were published in the South, which is roughly the same as the total number of newspapers published in Kansas between 1854 and 1860. New York alone supported 17 daily publications. By the time the war began in 1861, New York and Pennsylvania combined produced more newspapers than the entire Confederacy. The growth of the press coincided with a notable increase of literacy rates nationwide – by 1850, an unprecedented 89 percent of Northern whites could read. And for those who could not read, the era ushered in a considerable number of illustrated newspapers.

Newspapers in the 1850s and 1860s looked noticeably different from today's newspapers. Most were four pages in length, although a few of the New York papers, such as the *Times*, published eight page editions. Instead of the events from the previous day gracing the large headlines on the front page, many newspapers – especially the smaller publications from the western frontier – would reprint poetry and short stories. Major newspapers in urban hubs published both morning and evening editions, and railroads even had special "Sunday expresses" for expedited delivery.

Most importantly, newspapers played a crucial role in shaping public perception of the events leading up to the Civil War. Nineteenth century journalism did not strive for unbiased accuracy, and newspapers were generally the organs of political parties. But beginning with the introduction of the telegraph in 1845 and the inception of cooperative newsgathering and the Associated Press, news became instantaneous and well connected.

For much of this era, the news in the national spotlight revolved around the events in the Kansas Territory. Between 1854 and 1858, the *New York Herald* published over 4,000 articles and 635 editorials on events in Kansas.

The first portion of this script addresses the response of the press to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. The second episode of the script examines the rhetoric of the press over the Lecompton Constitution in 1857-1858.

The final episode concludes with the Civil War, and how both the Northern and Southern press were able to capitalize on new technologies and approaches to newspaper reporting. Although the census of 1860 classified 80 percent of U.S. newspapers as "political in character," the Civil War brought about a new charge for newspaper correspondents: veer away from gross editorializing, and stick to reporting the facts as important battles and political events unfolded. Of course, newspapers continued to use language that would appeal to their ideological base; but by the end of the Civil War, many readers began to recognize that the unchecked power of the press had a dangerous potential for obscuring vital information.

Group Discussion Questions

Instructions: The facilitator should pose one or more of these questions in advance of the reading of the script. At the conclusion of the reading, participants will return to the questions for consideration.

1. In his book *The Impending Crisis,* historian David Potter wrote: "For purposes of understanding what took place in the nation, it is possibly less important to know what happened in Kansas than to know what the American public thought was happening in Kansas." Knowing the ways in which newspaper reporters and editors in the 1850s incorporated their own opinions into news articles, did the American public ever sufficiently understand all sides of the debate in Kansas? To what extent were irresponsible rhetoric and warring newspapers responsible for causing misunderstanding between the North and the South and, ultimately, the Civil War? If national newspapers had been less "biased" in their reports from Kansas, how might the outcome have changed, if at all?

2. Consider how Kansas is "portrayed" in popular dispatches from the territory, and compare this with dispatches about Kansas from out-of-state. Were correspondents attempting to "sell" Kansas to their constituencies, knowing that the fate of the state lay largely in the balance of the national debate over slavery? Consider the excerpt from the *Leavenworth Daily Conservative* celebrating Kansas' entrance into the Union. How did the geographical distance from the traditional hubs of economic and political power (New York, Washington, D.C.) affect how residents in Kansas viewed the turbulent events leading up to the Civil War?

3. In a recent interview, retired U.S. Lieutenant General Bernard Trainer stated that the "rush to glory for the sensational story is one of the greatest problems the press has today." Are there contemporary parallels between reporters in the 1860s rushing to cover Civil War battles and political developments, and the role of the extensive "new media" today? Consider how the newfound proliferation of the press and extensive coverage may have had positive impacts for citizens living on the western frontier, and how, conversely, it may have had negative effects.

Script

Instructions: Each part will be read out loud by an assigned reader. Readers should stand and speak into a microphone when it's their turn. The source of the quote should also be read out loud (this is the information bolded beneath each quote).

NARRATOR

Episode One – The Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Shaping of National Opinion.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in early 1854 was one of the most extensive, emotional, and well-publicized debates in American history. It contained two radical proposals:

The first was the repeal of the 1820 Missouri Compromise, which had prohibited slavery north of the 36th parallel – the southern border of Missouri. The second was the enactment of popular sovereignty and congressional nonintervention in the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Citizens of each new territory would vote to determine whether or not to allow slavery.

Most Northern and Southern Democrats, including Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois, claimed that the Constitution's guarantee of equal rights legitimized popular sovereignty in the territories and made it possible for westward expansion. Anti-slavery Northerners believed that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act betrayed the "solemn compact" between the states that had previously contained the spread of slavery.

READER ONE

All questions pertaining to Slavery in the territories and in the new States to be formed, are left to the decision of the people residing therein, through their appropriate representatives.

Stephen Douglas, January 10, 1854. [1]

READER TWO

[The Kansas-Nebraska bill] is a wanton and unprovoked outrage; it is a lion turned loose by the drunken keepers among the crowd of helpless men, women and children, who have just been feeding and fondling him.

***New York Tribune*, March 21, 1854.**

NARRATOR

Newspapers played a major role in how the general public reacted to Congress' efforts to pass the Act in early 1854. Newspapers published

articles that reflected the political ideology of editors, geographical locations, and the popular views of the reader base. The Kansas-Nebraska Act sparked a war of words between the daily presses and newspapers that would continue into the onset of the Civil War. At first, some Northern newspapers defended the idea of popular sovereignty as a possible solution to the expansion of slavery. Some believed that a compromise was more important than the complete abolition of slavery.

READER THREE The enforcement of this principle [*popular sovereignty*] is the only truly catholic and democratic mode of dealing with the territories. It is simply recognizing, to its proper limit, the great principle of the right of the people, everywhere, to self-government. Any other principle would be monarchical and arbitrary, and would, moreover, be trampling upon human rights.

***Detroit Free Press*, January 15, 1854.**

READER FOUR If sixty or a hundred thousand of the people of Nebraska, or of Kansas, who are alone concerned in the question, cannot determine whether slavery ought, or ought not to be introduced into these territories, we submit that a set of fanatical and desperate politicians . . . are wholly disqualified to legislate upon the subject.

***St. Louis Daily Missouri Republican*, February 7, 1854.**

READER FIVE The advocacy of [*popular sovereignty*] commits no one in favor of slavery. It simply leaves [*the territory*] to decide the question for themselves. If we were there we would vote against slavery, and it will be found that if the territory is organized under this bill, nine-tenths of the people will vote against the introduction of the institution . . . It is a question of state and territorial rights, of domestic tranquility, national safety, and the integrity of the Union. In this view we believe every democrat of Illinois will "put himself on the record" in favor of the Douglas bill.

***Springfield* [IL] *Illinois State Register*, January 31, 1854.**

NARRATOR *When the U.S. Senate passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act with overwhelming support from Southern Democrats in 1854, Northern*

opponents of slavery feared that territorial legislatures would be vulnerable to corruption by proslavery supporters from neighboring states. In anticipation of this threat, Northern newspapers lashed out against the "Southern plot" to propagate slavery in the territory.

READER ONE The whole object of the bill is to *allow slaveholders to go into the territory now with their people*, and then to declare that Congress has so legalized the existence of slavery in the territory, that it cannot be shaken by any subsequent vote either of Congress or the Legislature.

***Hartford* [CT] *Daily Courant*, May 23, 1854.**

READER THREE They tell us that the North will not submit. We hope it will not. But we have seen this same North crouch lower and lower each year under the whip of the slave driver, until it is hard to tell what it will not submit to now . . . Who would have believed that it could enact that white men have a right to hold black in slavery wherever it is their sovereign will and pleasure? And yet, who now will deny that that prophecy is more than realized?

***Albany* [NY] *Evening Journal*, May 23, 1854.**

READER FIVE [If the bill is enacted] the whole strength of the North will be brought into the field against this infamous project. Sober-minded men, who have leaned to the side of the South . . . will turn and resist this movement as a gross outrage and aggression on the part of the South.

***New York Tribune*, January 17, 1854.**

NARRATOR *For the Southern press, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was met in a different, yet no less problematic, way. Whether slavery would be extended or not, the Act would at least ensure the survival of slavery in the South, and states' rights would triumph.*

Editorials from Southern newspapers argued that any new territories were common domain of the states, and therefore, it was improper to ban any citizen or his "property" from settlement. Southern papers noted how impressed they were at the efficiency of the Northern press in creating and propagating oppositional rhetoric. The Southern press was no less virulent.

READER TWO

The Duty of the South

[Northerners' hostility was] brought out with the utmost emphasis and power of expression. The opponents of the Nebraska bill have set in motion every engine of popular agitation. The public press, popular meetings, the pulpit and the State Legislatures have been employed as a means for kindling the passions of the mob and coercing the action of Congress.

While the Abolitionists are thus inflaming the zeal of their followers, and marshaling the ranks of their forces, does it become the South to await the onset with apathy and indifference? . . . It seems to us, that we should give them the support of a firm declaration of our rights, and an emphatic expression of our feelings. Can we expect zeal and courage of them if we manifest indifference and timidity in our own cause? If the Southern States stand as idle spectators of the struggle, may not the impression prevail that they feel no concern about the issue?

***Daily Richmond* [VA] *Enquirer*, February 16, 1854.**

NARRATOR

The South temporarily rejoiced with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. One South Carolinian predicted, "Kansas will be filled up soon by slaveholders from neighboring states."

READER FOUR

At last we have the cheering news from Washington that the Nebraska Bill has passed the House of Representatives by a majority of 13. We rejoice at this on many accounts . . . Great advantages for the South have been obtained by the passage of this bill, whether slavery ever goes into Nebraska or not; but this is not all, [for] by the passage of this bill the South has learned that she has many friends at the North upon whom she may rely for justice in the hour of need . . . In vain has an Abolition press warned them, that by voting for the bill they sealed their own political death warrant.

***Milledgeville* [GA] *Federal Union*, May 30, 1854.**

NARRATOR

The political fallout from the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was almost immediate. The Democratic Party split, losing nearly two-thirds of its congressional seats from the North in the November elections. Soon after, a coalition of Northern Democrats, who opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and called themselves Free-Soilers, joined the Whigs in

forming the Republican Party. Soon, the national spotlight shifted from the Kansas-Nebraska Act to the onslaught of emigrants, from both Missouri and New England, eager to tip the scales of the slavery debate in Kansas.

READER ONE Heaven spare us from the infection – not the bullets. For in no other civilized land can there be found so obscene, depraved, brutish a race of beings, as inhabit the border counties of Missouri.

***New York Daily Times*, February 25, 1856.**

READER THREE [The New England Aid Company's] lecturers, its newspapers, and its letter-writers have edified us with violent abuse of the friends of slavery in Kansas and its neighborhood – representing them as ignorant, degraded, vile, sensual and savage, in character and habits; as drunkards, liars, perjurers, blasphemers, cutthroats and devils.

***Providence Daily Post*, December 25, 1855.**

READER TWO [Missouri slaveholders] do not hold it necessary or expedient to wait until the torch is applied to our dwellings, or the knife to our throats, before we take measures for our security and the security of our firesides . . . [Property will become valueless with] hired fanatics, recruited, transported, armed and paid for the special and sole purpose of abolitionizing Kansas and Missouri.

Judge William B. Napton, Address to the Pro-Slavery Convention of Missouri, July 1855.[2]

READER FIVE <u>Disgraceful!</u>
The fire-eating portions of Missouri are still engaged in hunting up subjects on whom to wreak their vengeance. Like the dreaded Inquisition of a past age, it appears that all who do not subscribe to certain views are to be immolated. All must join in proclaiming the greatness of the demon of slavery, else he is stigmatized as an *Abolitionist* – a name more hateful in slaveholding communities than any other word in our language. It embodies in their estimation everything that is mean, low, and groveling. Missouri is bent upon plunging this Union into a fraternal war, which shall

only end with the destruction of an institution which is based in violence and wrong.

***The* [Kansas] *Herald of Freedom*, May 5, 1855.**

NARRATOR

<u>*Episode Two – The Lecompton Constitution and Statehood.*</u>
In 1857, Kansas' territorial legislature, dominated by the proslavery Law and Order party, authorized a constitutional convention in Lecompton. Delegates, elected by proslavery supporters in June, convened in the fall to draft a constitution to put forward to voters. The vote would decide whether or not the "Lecompton Constitution" would include slavery. Free state supporters refused to vote on the grounds that neither option would completely abolish slavery. They contended that a vote against slavery in the Lecompton Constitution would still permit Kansas slaveholders to keep existing slaves. On December 12, 1857, votes went in favor of a Lecompton Constitution that included slavery.

READER ONE

Whatever its [*the territorial legislature,*] devotees [*of the Law and Order Party]* may think of 'law,' they have a rather confused idea of 'order.' It is not an unusual thing for half a dozen to be talking at a time. A respectable number of delegates keep their hats on, while smoking, chewing and squirting tobacco juice on the floor.

***New York Daily Tribune*, January 28, 1857.**

READER TWO

The action of the Lecompton Convention is of just as much consequence to the people of the Territory as the decisions of the Supreme Court of Hahoo to the movement of the Asteroids.

***Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 16, 1857.**

READER THREE

There is no end to a Kansas election. It has as many lives as a cat, and as many forms as there are fashions for whiskers. In nine cases out of ten, the developments of a few months knock all our guesswork into the regions of absurdity, and we are left to quit the field in despair or guess again.

***Providence* [RI] *Daily Post*, October 29, 1857.**

NARRATOR *Although Southern newspapers viewed the Lecompton Constitution as a solution to the Kansas difficulties, anti-slavery presses, such as the* Missouri Democrat, *viewed these developments as precisely the opposite. Other papers, such as the* Boston Post*, argued that Kansas should be admitted independent from the Lecompton Constitution.*

READER THREE It promises to blow the National Democracy into fragments, and hurl from place and power the present rulers of the country, at Washington, who are too gross and too dishonest to breathe the atmosphere which has been rendered pure by the presence of a Washington, a Jefferson, and a Jackson.

***Missouri Democrat*, December 14, 1857.**

READER FIVE Admit Kansas at once as a State, no matter with what Constitution, or even if without any Constitution . . . Make her a State, and instead of this vague, shadowy, undefined 'squatter sovereignty,' clothe her with the real sovereignty of the people to make or unmake Constitutions which is the sovereignty in government that belongs only to a State.

***Boston Post*, February 26, 1858.**

NARRATOR *Allegations of fraud made some members of the Southern press uneasy with the Lecompton Constitution. Others recognized that the Kansas statehood decision held dire implications for the future of the nation.*

READER TWO It were infinitely better for the South to lose a dozen such States as Kansas than to allow even a suspicion that she had countenanced any fraud or juggling for her benefit.

"A Kentucky Subscriber," *New York Times*, November 28, 1857.

READER FOUR [It is] a matter of the first importance that the rules for the admission of States into the Union should be uniform and inflexible – that a free State should not be rushed into the Union against all law and precedent, while a slave State is kept out by new-sprung preposterous conditions, that were never heard of before.

***Charleston* [SC] *Mercury*, July 6, 1857.**

READER THREE From its inception until now, this question, seemingly and really so easy of solution and of settlement upon its own inherent merits, has presented itself, or rather it has been presented, in such a variety of phrases and in so complicated a character, as to have rendered it one of the most difficult and dangerous problems that have ever been presented to the American Congress.

***Richmond* [VA] *Enquirer*, December 1, 1857.**

READER FIVE If it [the Lecompton constitution] is approved it will force the North to respect the Constitutional rights of the South or if not [approved] will divide the union . . . [Readers must be warned of] the spirit of envenomed hostility which animates the masses of the northern people towards the southern people. We are weary of this eternal slavery agitation which has entailed nothing but loss, persecution, and contumely upon the South.

***New Orleans Crescent*, December 21, 1857.**

NARRATOR *On October 5, 1857, while the proslavery party prepared to draft the Lecompton Constitution, free state voters elected a new free state legislature. On January 4, 1858 – less than one month after voters approved a Lecompton Constitution that allowed for slavery – the new free state legislature put the Lecompton Constitution to a popular vote. This time, voters overturned the Lecompton Constitution and authorized another constitutional convention.*

On February 2, 1858, President Buchanan went forward with his submission of the Lecompton Constitution to Congress, along with his recommendation that Kansas be admitted as a slave state. The Senate voted in favor of admission, but the House voted for resubmission of a new constitution. A compromise bill put forward by Congressman William H. English of Indiana, called for a popular vote on the Lecompton Constitution. The English bill passed, and on August 2, 1858, voters in the Kansas Territory rejected the Lecompton Constitution by an overwhelming majority.

The defeat of the Lecompton Constitution and the existence of a free state legislature cleared the way for Kansas' eventually admission to the Union as a free state, under the Wyandotte Constitution, on January 29, 1861. Newspapers predicted that Kansas statehood would be the final great leap toward Civil War.

READER ONE The House yesterday passed the Senate bill for the admission of Kansas, which thus becomes the thirty-fourth State of the Union, and the nineteenth Free State. The act not only opportunely adds to the Confederation a sound and loyal member, untainted by the blight of slavery, but does rightful though tardy justice to a State which has suffered for five years greater wrongs and outrages from Federal authority than all the Slave States together have endured since the beginning of the Government . . .

In the future, in impartial history, the attempt to force Slavery upon Kansas, and the violations of law, of order, and of personal and political rights, that were perpetrated in that attempt, will rank among the most outrageous and flagrant acts of tyranny in the annals of mankind.

***New York Daily Tribune*, January 29, 1861.**

READER TWO The election of Lincoln, glorious as was the triumph, was, in our estimation, far less important and decisive than the admission of Kansas. Our people have an abiding love for, and a loving faith and confidence in, the Union. This love and faith has been bred in the bone – it has stood the test of desertion, and even oppression; but it is as strong and confident as ever. . . Then, to our Republican brethren of Kansas we send one joyous greeting – to Republicans everywhere we extend the same joyous greeting. The grand culminating triumph of Republicanism has been achieved. Kansas has been admitted.

***Leavenworth* [KS] *Daily Conservative*, January 30, 1861.**

NARRATOR <u>*Episode Three: The Civil War in Popular Press.*</u>
The telegraph proved instrumental to newspapers' coverage of the Civil War. First used in the late 1840s during the Mexican War, the telegraph allowed for relatively instantaneous communication between reporters on the frontlines and newspaper offices miles away. The telegraph also made it possible for newspapers to share reports and led to the organization of the Associated Press, a cooperative newsgathering service. By the start of the Civil War in 1861, the AP had a crew of reporters assigned to cover the war directly from the battlefield.

READER ONE The brilliant mission of the newspaper is . . . to be, the high priest of history, the vitalizer of society, the world's great informer, the earth's high

censor, the medium of public thought and opinion, and the circulating life blood of the whole human mind. It is the great enemy of tyrants and the right arm of liberty, and is destined, more than any other agency, to melt and mold the jarring and contending nations of the world into . . . one great brotherhood.

Samuel Bowles, Editor-Publisher, *Springfield* [MA] *Republican*, 1851.[3]

READER FOUR What a busy place the editorial office of *The Times* was! Politicians, office-holders, Colonels, and Government spokesmen came there. We were constantly receiving packages from correspondents at all points of the compass, special dispatches from the front, or from many a front, official documents or advices; covert news from army officers, visits from wire-pullers or pipe layers, information from the departments at Washington, and gratuitous suggestions from men of all sorts and conditions.

John Swinton, Managing Editor, *New York Times*, 1870.[4]

NARRATOR *Periodicals, such as the* New York Herald *and* Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, *employed dozens of correspondents, and supplied their own tents and wagons to accompany each army corps. News came in quick flashes through the power of the telegraph and from reporters in the field. The reports that came straight from the battlefield demonstrated the new instantaneous nature of the press. One example was the reporting from the battle of Island Mound in Missouri. On October 27, 1862, while en route to Bates County, Missouri, the First Kansas Colored Regiment came under attack from the Confederate Missouri State Guard and guerrillas. Although outnumbered, the regiment battled for two days, eventually forcing the defeat of the Confederate troops. This incident was widely reported in newspapers and journals across the country.*

READER ONE <u>A Negro Regiment in Action – The Battle of Island Mounds – Desperate Bravery of the Negroes – Defeat of the Guerillas – An Attempted Fraud.</u>
LEAVENWORTH, Saturday, Nov. 6

The first regiment of the Kansas Colored Volunteers, or a portion of it, have been in a fight, shed their own and rebel blood, and come off victorious, when the odds were as five to one against them . . . On the 25th the command marched twenty miles, and on the 27th reached

Dickies Ford on the Osage at about 2 P.M. Our destination was the house of a notorious rebel . . . As we came in sight of it, we discovered at the same time a number of horsemen on the Osage bottoms, a mile to the Southeast. The scouts and mounted officers galloped forward to reconnoiter, and soon discovered them to be rebel guerillas…

READER TWO Our intention was to skirmish with them until reinforcements arrived, and when Major Henning's force arrived to make an attack on the Island from each side. All day we skirmished with the rebel pickets, at the same time sending out foraging and other parties. On the 29th the rebel pickets . . . seemed to have been considerably reinforced. A detachment of about sixty men was sent out, under the command of Captain Armstrong and Adjutant Hinton, with directions to skirmish with the enemy, holding them in play while a foraging party proceeded in search of salt and corn meal. The rebels were evidently well handled. They designed to draw on some detachment far enough from camp to overwhelm it before assistance could arrive. The skirmishing grew brisk, and shots were rapidly exchanged, though always at long range and individual objects. The guerillas would shout from the hill on which they were posted, in the most derisive manner, cursing the white officers… After all exertions, the Negro regiment still remains unrecognized or mustered…

***New York Times*, November 19, 1862.**

NARRATOR *The Civil War press was changing. Its uneasy mix of reporting, editorials, and entertainment begged new questions about the role of the news correspondent. The press' role in promoting ideological causes, as well as editors' assertions of the right to free speech, led many to wonder if journalistic credibility had been sacrificed for the benefit of profits and readership.*

READER ONE No territory or state ever suffered so much from misrepresentation and slanders of letter writers and political adventurers as has Kansas.

***Boston Post*, July 19, 1858.**

READER TWO Even a licentious press is far less evil than a press that is enslaved because both sides may be heard in the former case, but not the

latter . . . . An enslaved press must be evil; an enslaved press suppresses truth.

***Camden* [SC] *Daily Journal*, November 26, 1864.**

READER FIVE These newspaper debates on the Kansas-Nebraska issue were examples of framing. They set up simplified, maybe even false, emotion-filled dichotomies, speaking to the common culture as well as to special sectional and party sensibilities. They created the feeling that there was in each case a stark choice between good and evil and that the alternate choice was unthinkable.

Craig Miner, *Seeding Civil War: Kansas in the National News, 1854-1858.*[5]

Instructions: The facilitator will now return to the questions found on page 3 for consideration by the group.

At the conclusion of the event:

- ***The local coordinator will indicate whether the scripts need to be returned.***
- ***The page titled* Citations *is intended to be a take-home handout for participants.***

Footnotes

[1] Stephen Douglas (1813-1861), Democratic U.S. Senator, was born in Vermont, but came to Illinois in 1833 as a traveling teacher. After receiving a degree in law, Douglas served as state attorney beginning in 1834, and was elected to Congress in 1842, where he campaigned on behalf of expansion and support for the Mexican War. While serving as chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, Douglas was instrumental in repealing the Missouri Compromise and proposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act. For the remainder of the 1850s, Douglas became well known for his debates with fellow Illinois congressman Abraham Lincoln, and denounced the secession of Southern states as criminal. He died of typhoid fever in Chicago on June 3, 1861.

[2] Judge William B. Napton (1808-1883) was a member of the "Bogus Legislature" in Lecompton, Kansas. Napton was born in New Jersey, studied law at the University of Virginia, and moved to Missouri in 1832, where he became editor of the *Boonslick Democrat*. He was one of the central figures of the Lexington Slave Owners Convention in 1855, and asserted that control of the institution of slavery lay with the states, but stopped short of secession from the Union.

[3] Samuel Bowles (1826-1878) was the publisher and editor of the Springfield [Massachusetts] *Republican* for 34 years, from 1844 to his death in 1878. He inherited the newspaper from his father, and convinced him to publish the paper daily. By 1850, the *Republican* had the largest circulation of any daily paper in New England, and Bowles did not hesitate to promote the paper's strong editorial stance in favor of abolitionism and the Republican party agenda. Upon his death, he was succeeded as the publisher of the *Republican* by his son, Samuel Bowles IV.

[4] John Swinton (1830-1901) was the chief editorial writer for the *New York Times* from 1860 to 1870, as well as the editorial writer for the *New York Sun* from 1875 to 1897. A native of Scotland, Swinton practiced medicine and worked as a freelance journalist before being appointed head of the editorial staff at the *Times* in 1860. Swinton's support of Abraham Lincoln and abolitionism was well-known, and after the war, he took a keen interest in the trade union movement, championing the cause of the poor and oppressed.

[5] Craig Miner (1944-2010) was a leading Kansas historian and Professor of History at Wichita State University. A native of Wichita, he received his doctorate from the University of Colorado in 1970, and published books on wide-ranging topics, from the development of railroads to wheat farming.