seldom meet with them, in traveling to Oregon, by the way of Fort Hall, as their country lies far to the north of that route. They are not to be dreaded, however, when met by a large party of whites; even forty or fifty armed men, are ample to deter them from any hostile movements. They should always be considered, and treated as enemies, whatever may be their pretensions of friendship... Petit larceny is the most common offence committed at these places, while grand larceny, and robbery are constantly being committed by them elsewhere; but as they are “friendly,” murder is an offence which they seldom commit.

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What can you infer about Hastings’s audience from the details he chose to share about migrating to the Oregon and California territories?

2. What conclusions can you draw from this source about the experience of traveling in the mid-nineteenth century?

3. Compare Hastings’s book with contemporary travel guides (or Web sites) you may have seen or used. How do you interpret the differences you see?

13-2 Two Views of the War with Mexico

JOHN D. SLOAT, To the Inhabitants of California (1846) and GENERAL FRANCISCO MEJIA, A Proclamation at Matamoros (1846)

In 1846, General Francisco Mejía was the commander of Mexico’s military forces at Matamoros, a city on the southern bank of the Rio Grande, opposite the U.S. troops that President James K. Polk had ordered forward to provoke a war with Mexico. The United States and Mexico disputed the southern border of Texas, recently annexed by the United States as its twenty-eighth state. Once hostilities broke out, Commodore John D. Sloat of the U.S. Navy stationed off California, then a province of Mexico, landed at Monterey and claimed California as a territory of the United States. These sources present conflicting perspectives on the cause of the U.S. war with Mexico.

To the Inhabitants of California

The central government of Mexico having commenced hostilities against the United States of America, by invading its territory and attacking the troops of the United States stationed on the north side of the Rio Grande, and with a force of seven thousand men, under the command of General Arista, which army was totally destroyed and all their artillery, baggage, &c., captured on the 8th and 9th

A Documentary History of the Mexican War, ed. Steven R. Butler (Richardson, TX: Descendants of Mexican War Veterans, 1995), 146 (Sloat), 25 (Mejía).
of May last, by a force of two thousand three hundred men, under the command
of General Taylor, and the city of Matamoras taken and occupied by the forces of
the United States; and the two nations being actually at war by this transaction, I
shall hoist the standard of the United States at Monterey immediately, and shall
carry it throughout California.

I declare to the inhabitants of California, that although I come in arms with a
powerful force, I do not come among them as an enemy to California; on the con-
trary, I come as their best friend as henceforward California will be a portion of
the United States, and its peaceable inhabitants will enjoy the same rights and
privileges they now enjoy; together with the privileges of choosing their own
magistrates and other officers for the administration of justice among them-
selves, and the same protection will be extended to them as to any other State in
the Union. They will also enjoy a permanent government under which life, prop-
erty and the constitutional right and lawful security to worship the Creator in the
way most congenial to each one's sense of duty will be secured, which unfortu-
nately the central government of Mexico cannot afford them, destroyed as her
resources are by internal factions and corrupt officers, who create constant revo-
lutions to promote their own interests and to oppress the people. Under the flag
of the United States California will be free from all such troubles and expense,
consequently the country will rapidly advance and improve both in agriculture
and commerce; as of course the revenue laws will be the same in California as in
all other parts of the United States, affording them all manufactures and produce
of the United States, free of any duty, and all foreign goods at one quarter of the
duty they now pay, a great increase in the value of real estate and the products of
California may also be anticipated.

With the great interest and kind feelings I know the government and people
of the United States possess towards the citizens of California, the country can-
not but improve more rapidly than any other on the continent of America. Such
of the inhabitants of California, whether natives or foreigners, as may not be dis-
posed to accept the high privileges of citizenship, and to live peaceably under
the government of the United States, will be allowed time to dispose of their prop-
erty and to remove out of the country, if they choose, without any restriction, or
remain in it, observing strict neutrality.

With full confidence in the honor and integrity of the inhabitants of the coun-
try, I invite the judges, alcaldes,¹ and other civil officers, to retain their offices and
to execute their functions as heretofore, that the public tranquility may not be
disturbed; at least, until the government of the territory can be more definitely
arranged.

All persons holding titles to real estate, or in quiet possession of lands under
a color of right, shall have those titles and rights guarantied to them.

All churches, and the property they contain, in possession of the clergy of
California, shall continue in the same rights and possessions they now enjoy.

¹alcalde: A local judicial and administrative officer.
All provisions and supplies of every kind, furnished by the inhabitants for the use of United States ships and soldiers, will be paid for at fair rates, and no private property will be taken for public use without just compensation at the moment.

JOHN D. SLOAT,
Commander-in-chief of the United States naval forces in the Pacific ocean.
United States Flag-ship Savannah, Harbor of Monterey, July 7, 1846.

A Proclamation by the General-in-Chief of the Forces Assembled Against the Enemy, to the Inhabitants of This Department and the Troops Under His Command

FELLOW-CITIZENS: The annexation of the department of Texas to the United States, projected and consummated by the tortuous policy of the cabinet of the Union, does not yet satisfy the ambitious desires of the degenerate sons of Washington. The civilized world has already recognized in that act all the marks of injustice, iniquity, and the most scandalous violation of the rights of nations. Indelible is the stain which will for ever darken the character for virtue falsely attributed to the people of the United States; and posterity will regard with horror their pernicious conduct, and the immorality of the means employed by them to carry into effect that most degrading depredation. The right of conquest has always been a crime against humanity; but nations jealous of their dignity and reputation have endeavoured at least to cover it by the splendour of arms and the prestige of victory. To the United States, it has been reserved to put in practice dissimulation, fraud, and the basest treachery, in order to obtain possession, in the midst of peace, of the territory of a friendly nation, which generously relied upon the faith of promises and the solemnity of treaties.

The cabinet of the United States does not, however, stop in its career of usurpation. Not only does it aspire to the possession of the department of Texas, but it covets also the regions on the left bank of the Rio Bravo. Its army, hitherto for some time stationed at Corpus Christi, is now advancing to take possession of a large part of Tamaulipas; and its vanguard has arrived at the Arroyo Colorado, distant eighteen leagues from this place. What expectations, therefore, can the Mexican government have of treating with an enemy, who, whilst endeavouring to lull us into security, by opening diplomatic negotiations, proceeds to occupy a territory which never could have been the object of the pending discussion? The limits of Texas are certain and recognized; never have they extended beyond the river Nueces; notwithstanding which, the American army has crossed the line separating Tamaulipas from that department. Even though Mexico could forget that the United States urged and aided the rebellion of the former colonists, and that the principle, giving to an independent people the right to annex itself to another nation, is not applicable to the case, in which the latter has been the protector of the independence of the former, with the object of admitting it into its own bosom; even though it could be accepted as an axiom of international law, that the violation of every rule of morality and justice might serve as a legitimate title for acquisition; nevertheless, the territory of Tamaulipas would still remain
beyond the law of annexation, sanctioned by the American Congress; because that law comprises independent Texas, the ground occupied by the rebellious colony, and in no wise includes other departments, in which the Mexican government has uninterruptedly exercised its legitimate authority.

Fellow-countrymen: With an enemy which respects not its own laws, which shamelessly derides the very principles invoked by it previously, in order to excuse its ambitious views, we have no other resource than arms. We are fortunately always prepared to take them up with glory, in defence of our country; little do we regard the blood in our veins, when we are called on to shed it in vindication of our honour, to assure our nationality and independence. If to the torrent of devastation which threatens us it be necessary to oppose a dike of steel, our swords will form it; and on their sharp points will the enemy receive the fruits of his anticipated conquest. If the banks of the Panuco have been immortalized by the defeat of an enemy, respectable and worthy of the valour of Mexico, those of the Bravo shall witness the ignominy of the proud sons of the north, and its deep waters shall serve as the sepulchre for those who dare to approach it. The flames of patriotism which burns in our hearts will receive new fuel from the odious presence of the conquerors; and the cry of Dolores and Iguala² shall be re-echoed with harmony to our ears, when we take up our march to oppose our naked breasts to the rifles of the hunters of the Mississippi.

FRANCISCO MEJIA.
Matamoros, March 18, 1846.

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compare how each of these sources describes the conflict between the United States and Mexico. What is the cause of the conflict each identifies?
2. To what extent does each author tailor his message to the specific audience he was addressing? What can you infer about the audience from the language of each source?

13.3 | A Southern Perspective on the Political Crisis

JOHN C. CALHOUN, Speech on the Slavery Question (1850)

A former nationalist, during the last phase of his public career, John C. Calhoun became the South's leading defender. In 1849, he wrote Discussion on Government, a work of political theory, advancing the idea of the "concurrent majority" to prevent the South's political eclipse by the numerically superior North. In his last major address before his death, delivered in the


²Cry of Dolores and Iguala: Two Mexican cities traditionally associated with the beginning and the end of the Mexican War for Independence.
remain honorably and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the sections, which existed anterior to the Missouri agitation. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the questions at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union.

But can this be done? Yes, easily; not by the weaker party, for it can of itself do nothing—not even protest 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.

**READIING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does Calhoun define the causes of the sectional conflict between the northern and southern states?
2. Calhoun died four weeks after delivering this speech. What did he hope to accomplish with his final act on the public stage?

### 13-4 Attacking the Slave Power Conspiracy

**CHARLES SUMNER, The Crime of Kansas (1856)**

Northern antislavery activists like Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner railed against fellow senator Stephen Douglas's "solution" to the slavery extension issue, which called for popular sovereignty, or allowing the people to decide. Though democratic, the plan opened the possibility of slavery extending into regions where it had never before gone. The rush of both abolitionists and proslavery men into the territories to claim a majority resulted in bloody conflict, a violent prelude to the 1861 Civil War. When the proslavery Kansas constitution was recognized as the legitimate government, Sumner described the outcome as a "crime against humanity."

[B]efore entering upon the argument, I must say something of a general character, particularly in response to what has fallen from senators who have raised themselves to eminence on this floor in championship of human wrongs; I mean the Senator from South Carolina [Mr. Butler], and the Senator from Illinois [Mr. Douglas], who, though unlike as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, yet, like this couple, sally forth together in the same adventure. I regret much to miss the elder Senator from his seat; but the cause, against which he has run a tilt, with such

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*Speech of Hon. Charles Sumner, in the Senate of the United States, 19th and 20th May, 1856 (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1856), 9–10, 12–14.*
activity of animosity, demands that the opportunity of exposing him should not be lost; and it is for the cause that I speak. The Senator from South Carolina has read many books of chivalry, and believes himself a chivalrous knight, with sentiments of honor and courage. Of course he has chosen a mistress to whom he has made his vows, and who, though ugly to others, is always lovely to him; though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight;—I mean the harlot, Slavery. For her her tongue is always profuse with words. Let her be impeached in character, or any proposition made to shut her out from the extension of her wantonness, and no extravagance of manner or hardihood of assertion is then too great for this Senator. The frenzy of Don Quixote in behalf of his wench Dulcinea del Toboso is all surpassed. The asserted rights of Slavery, which shock equality of all kinds, are cloak'd by a fantastic claim of equality. If the slave States cannot enjoy what, in mockery of the great fathers of the Republic, he misnames equality under the constitution,—in other words, the full power in the National Territories to compel fellow-men to unpaid toil, to separate husband and wife, and to sell little children at the auction block,—then, sir, the chivalric Senator will conduct the State of South Carolina out of the Union! Heroic knight! Exalted Senator! A second Moses come for a second exodus!

But, not content with this poor menace, which we have been twice told was "measured," the senator, in the unrestrained chivalry of his nature, has undertaken to apply opprobrious words to those who differ from him on this floor. He calls them "sectional and fanatical"; and opposition to the usurpation in Kansas he denounces as "an uncalculating fanaticism." To be sure these charges lack all grace of originality, and all sentiment of truth; but the adventurous Senator does not hesitate. He is the uncompromising, unblushing representative on this floor of a flagrant sectionalism, which now dominates over the Republic; and yet with a ludicrous ignorance of his own position,—unable to see himself as others see him,—or with an effrontery which even his white head ought not to protect from rebuke, he applies to those here who resist his sectionalism the very epithet which designates himself. The men who strive to bring back the government to its original policy, when Freedom and not Slavery was national, while Slavery and not freedom was sectional, he arraigns as sectional. This will not do. It involves too great a perversion of terms. I tell that Senator that it is to himself, and to the "organization" of which he is the "committed advocate," that this epithet belongs. I now fasten it upon them. For myself, I care little for names; but, since the question has been raised here, I affirm that the Republican party of the Union is in no just sense sectional, but, more than any other party, national; and that it now goes forth to dislodge from the high places of the government the tyrannical sectionalism of which the senator from South Carolina is one of the maddest zealots.

But I have not done with the senator. There is another matter, regarded by him of such consequence, that he interpolated it into the speech of the senator from New Hampshire [Mr. Hale] and also announced that he had prepared himself with it, to take in his pocket all the way to Boston, when he expected to address the people of that community. On this account, and for the sake of truth,
I stop for one moment, and tread it to the earth. The North, according to the senator, was engaged in the slave trade, and helped to introduce slaves into the Southern States; and this undeniable fact he proposed to establish by statistics, in stating which, his errors surpassed his sentences in number. But I let these pass for the present, that I may deal with his argument. Pray, sir, is the acknowledged turpitude of a departed generation to become an example for us? And yet the suggestion of the senator, if entitled to any consideration in this discussion, must have this extent. I join my friend from New Hampshire in thanking the senator from South Carolina for adducing this instance; for it gives me an opportunity to say, that the northern merchants, with homes in Boston, Bristol, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia, who catered for Slavery during the years of the slave trade, are the lineal progenitors of the northern men, with homes in these places, who lend themselves to Slavery in our day; and especially that all, whether north or south, who take part, directly or indirectly, in the conspiracy against Kansas, do but continue the work of the slave-traders, which you condemn. It is true—too true, alas!—that our fathers were engaged in this traffic; but that is no apology for it. And, in repelling the authority of this example, I repel also the trite argument founded on the earlier example of England. It is true that our mother country, at the peace of Utrecht, extorted from Spain the Assiento Contract, securing the monopoly of the slave-trade with the Spanish Colonies, as the whole price of all the blood of great victories; that she haggled at Aix-la Chapelle for another lease of this exclusive traffic; and again, at the treaty of Madrid, clung to the wretched piracy. It is true, that in this spirit the power of the mother country was prostituted to the same base ends in her American colonies, against the protests from our fathers. All these things now rise up in judgment against her. Let us not follow the senator from South Carolina to do this evil to-day, which in another generation we condemn.

As the senator from South Carolina is the Don Quixote, the senator from Illinois [Mr. Douglas] is the squire of slavery, its very Sancho Panza, ready to do all its humiliating offices. This senator, in his labored address, vindicating his labored report—piling one mass of elaborate error upon another mass—constrained himself, as you will remember, to unfamiliar, decimals of speech. Of that address I have nothing to say at this moment, though before I sit down I shall show something of its fallacies. But I go back now to an earlier occasion, when, true to his native impulses, he threw into this discussion, “for a charm of powerful trouble,” personalities most creditable to this body. I will not stop to repel the imputations which he cast upon myself; but I mention them to remind you of the “sweated venom sleeping got,” which, with other poisoned ingredients, he cast into the cauldron of this debate. Of other things I speak. Standing on this floor, the senator issued his rescript, requiring submission to the usurped power of Kansas; and this was accompanied by a manner—all his own—such as befits the tyrannical threat. Very well. Let the senator try. I tell him now that he cannot enforce any such submission. The senator, with the slave power at his back, is strong; but he is not strong enough for this purpose. He is bold. He shrinks from nothing. Like Danton, he may cry, “audace, audace, toujours
"audace!" but even his audacity cannot compass this work. The senator copies the British officer, who, with boastful swagger, said that with the hilt of his sword he would cram the "stamps" down the throats of the American people; and he will meet a similar failure. He may convulse this country with civil feud. Like the ancient madman, he may set fire to this temple of Constitutional Liberty, grander than Ephesian dome; but he cannot enforce obedience to that tyrannical usurpation.

The senator dreams that he can subdue the North. He disclaims the open threat, but his conduct still implies it. How little that senator knows himself, or the strength of the cause which he persecutes! He is but a mortal man; against him is an immortal principle. With finite power he wrestles with the infinite, and he must fall. Against him are stronger battalions than any marshaled by mortal man—the inborn, ineradicable, invincible sentiments of the human heart; against him is nature in all her subtle forces; against him is God. Let him try to subdue these.

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you define the issues Sumner raised in his speech as short- or long-term causes of the Civil War? Explain your answer.

2. Compare Sumner's argument with the argument of Calhoun. How do they differ in the ways they understood the political conflict of the 1850s?

3. After delivering this speech, Sumner was savagely beaten on the floor of the U.S. Senate, sustaining injuries that incapacitated him for years. How did Sumner's speech and the response to it reflect the broader historical context of the 1850s?

13-5 | Supreme Court Rules Against Antislavery Cause

Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)

Few Supreme Court cases have been as divisive as Dred Scott v. Sanford, which ruled against Dred Scott, an enslaved African American who sued his master for his freedom after he had been taken into territories where slavery was banned. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney not only ruled that slaves were property, not people, but also invalidated the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which barred slavery in much of the Louisiana Purchase. This legal triumph for slaveholders enflamed abolitionists, who feared slavery's spread throughout the nation.


1French Revolutionary Georges-Jacques Danton reputedly uttered this line, misquoted by Sumner, meaning, "We need audacity, yet more audacity, and always audacity."

2Ephesian dome: An elaborate and grand sixth-century temple built in Ephesus (modern-day Turkey), burned to the ground two hundred years later by an arsonist, who hoped his act of destruction would secure his lasting fame.
Dred Scott, Plaintiff In Error, v. John F. A. Sanford.¹

The question is simply this: Can a negro whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights and privileges and immunities guaranteed to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States in the cases specified in the Constitution.

It will be observed, that the plea applies to that class of persons only whose ancestors were negroes of the African race, and imported into this country, and sold and held as slaves. The only matter in issue before the court, therefore, is, whether the descendants of such slaves, when they shall be emancipated, or who are born of parents who had become free before their birth, are citizens of a State, in the sense in which the word citizen is used in the Constitution of the United States. And this being the only matter in dispute on the pleadings, the court must be understood as speaking in this opinion of that class only, that is, of those persons who are the descendants of Africans who were imported into this country, and sold as slaves....

The words “people of the United States” and “citizens” are synonymous terms, and mean the same thing. They both describe the political body who, according to our republican institutions, form the sovereignty, and who hold the power and conduct the Government through their representatives. They are what we familiarly call the “sovereign people,” and every citizen is one of this people and a constituent member of this sovereignty. The question before us is, whether the class of persons described in the plea in abatement compose a portion of this people, and are constituent members of this sovereignty? We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word “citizens” in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States. On the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjected by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the government might choose to grant them....

The question then arises, whether the provisions of the Constitution, in relation to the personal rights and privileges to which the citizen of a State should be entitled, embraced the negro African race, at that time in this country, or who might afterwards be imported, who had then or should afterwards be made free in any State; and to put it in the power of a single State to make him a citizen of the United States, and endue him with the full rights of citizenship in every other State without their consent? Does the Constitution of the United States act upon him whenever he shall be made free under the laws of a State, and raised there to

¹The Supreme Court misspelled John F. A. Sanford’s name in its decision.
the rank of a citizen, and immediately clothe him with all the privileges of a citizen in every other State, and in its own courts?

The court think the affirmative of these propositions cannot be maintained. And if it cannot, the plaintiff in error could not be a citizen of the State of Missouri, within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, and, consequently, was not entitled to sue in its courts. . . .

In the opinion of the court, the legislation and histories of the times, and the language used in the Declaration of Independence, show, that neither the class of persons who had been imported as slaves, nor their descendants, whether they had become free or not, were then acknowledged as a part of the people, nor intended to be included in the general words used in that memorable instrument. . . .

They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it. This opinion was at that time fixed and universal in the civilized portion of the white race. It was regarded as an axiom in morals as well as in politics, which no one thought of disputing, or supposed to be open to dispute; and men in every grade and position in society daily and habitually acted upon it in their private pursuits, as well as in matters of public concern; without doubting for a moment the correctness of this opinion. . . .

[Upon a full and careful consideration of the subject, the court is of opinion, that, upon the facts stated in the plea in abatement, Dred Scott was not a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, and not entitled as such to sue in its courts; and, consequently, that the Circuit Court had no jurisdiction of the case, and that the judgment on the plea in abatement is erroneous. . . .

Now, if the removal of which he speaks did not give them their freedom, then by his own admission he is still a slave; and whatever opinions may be entertained in favor of the citizenship of a free person of the African race, no one supposes that a slave is a citizen of the State or of the United States. If, therefore, the acts done by his owner did not make them free persons, he is still a slave, and certainly incapable of suing in the character of a citizen. . . .

We proceed, therefore, to inquire whether the facts relied on by the plaintiff entitled him to his freedom. . . .

The act of Congress, upon which the plaintiff relies [the Missouri Compromise], declares that slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever prohibited in all that part of the territory ceded by France, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees thirty minutes north latitude, and not included within the limits of Missouri. And the difficulty which meets us at the threshold of this part of the inquiry is,
whether Congress was authorised to pass this law under any of the powers granted to it by the Constitution; for if the authority is not given by that instrument, it is the duty of this court to declare it void and inoperative, and incapable of conferring freedom upon any one who is held as a slave under the laws of any one of the States. . . .

An act of Congress which deprives a citizen of the United States of his liberty or property, merely because he came himself or brought his property into a particular Territory of the United States, and who had committed no offence against the laws, could hardly be dignified with the name of due process of law. . . .

The powers over person and property of which we speak are not only not granted to Congress, but are in express terms denied, and they are forbidden to exercise them. And this prohibition is not confined to the States, but the words are general, and extend to the whole territory over which the Constitution gives it power to legislate, including those portions of it remaining under Territorial Government, as well as that covered by States. It is a total absence of power everywhere within the dominion of the United States, and places the citizens of a Territory, so far as these rights are concerned, on the same footing with citizens of the States, and, guards them as firmly and plainly against any inroads which the General Government might attempt, under the plea of implied or incidental powers. And if Congress itself cannot do this—if it is beyond the powers conferred on the Federal Government—it will be admitted, we presume, that it could not authorise a Territorial Government to exercise them. It could confer no power on any local Government, established by its authority, to violate the provisions of the Constitution. . . .

Upon these considerations, it is the opinion of the court that the act of Congress which prohibited a citizen from holding and owning property of this kind in the territory of the United States north of the line therein mentioned, is not warranted by the Constitution, and is therefore void; and that neither Dred Scott himself, nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into this territory; even if they had been carried there by the owner, with the intention of becoming a permanent resident . . .

Upon the whole, therefore, it is the judgment of this court, that it appears by the record before us that the plaintiff in error is not a citizen of Missouri, in the sense in which that word is used in the Constitution; and that the Circuit Court of the United States, for that reason, had no jurisdiction in the case, and could give no judgment in it. Its judgment for the defendant must, consequently, be reversed, and a mandate issued, directing the suit to be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

**READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does this court case connect to both the antislavery movement and the political crisis of the 1850s?

2. What do you think were the differing reactions to the *Dred Scott* decision? How might a northern abolitionist’s reaction compare to the perspective of a southern plantation owner?