

# **ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM**

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## **The Democratic Party in the Civil War**

By Al Ronzoni Jr.

### **Resources**

**If you can read only one book**

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Hettle, Wallace	<i>The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and Civil War.</i> Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.

### **Books and Articles**

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Baker, Jean H.	<i>Affairs of Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.</i> Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Reprint, New York: Fordham University Press, 1998.
Landis, Michael Todd	<i>Northern Men with Southern Loyalties: The Democratic Party and the Sectional Crisis.</i> Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.
Silby, Joel H.	<i>A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868.</i> New York: W.W. Norton, 1977.
Smith, Adam I. P.	<i>No Party Now: Politics in the Civil War North.</i> New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Weber, Jennifer L.	<i>Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North.</i> New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

### **Organizations**

## Web Resources

## Other Sources

## Scholars

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## Google Keywords

The Wilmot Proviso, first proposed by Democratic congressman David Wilmot in 1846, prohibited slavery in the new territories acquired from Mexico. Though it never became legislation, the Wilmot Proviso wrenched this traditional division of parties into a conflict between the North and South. The political landscape had been irrevocably altered creating a sectional division within the Democratic Party. With the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 the Democratic Party adopted the platform of popular sovereignty, the idea that each new state would decide whether to allow slavery, in effect repealing the Missouri Compromise. In the 1854 elections the northern democrats in the House of Representatives were reduced from 93 to 23 and the party became increasingly pro-southern. By the 1860 election the party was so split along regional lines that there was a four-way race for the presidency including a schism in the Democratic Party where Stephen A. Douglas was the candidate of the northern democrats and John C. Breckinridge that of the southern Democrats. During the Civil War the Democratic Party did survive in the North because of its strength in the cities, especially among the working class and immigrant groups like the Irish, who often felt they had no real stake in supporting the Republicans' war against the South. Again the party was split between those who supported the war and those sympathetic to the South, the Copperheads. In the election of 1864 the party ran George B. McClellan for president on a platform of seeking a peaceful end to the war. Sidelined during the war, the Democratic Party achieved congressional majorities within 14 years of the end of the war (albeit briefly) almost elected their first president since James Buchanan in the disputed election of 1876 and finally take back the White House in 1885 when Grover Cleveland was elected.

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