

94%

Opening the Kansas and Nebraska territories to the influence of popularity sovereignty was a decision that was arguably abused by the American people, pro-slave and not, and brought about the conflict of Bleeding Kansas. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts delivered a controversial speech on the matter. Sources E, B, and C (listed in descending order of importance/reliability) point to the fact that Sumner revealed, if not caused, an unbridgeable division between North and South; he did so by way of increasing Northern morale and provoking and angering Southerners. Sources A and D, also listed in order of importance, would not show Sumner as the revealer or aggressor but rather that the South was a moral evil to defeat and that the interference of other states had brought the issue to light.

Source A does not support the assertion that Senator Sumner's 1856 speech revealed unbridgeable division between North and South. The document is the speech in question from Senator Sumner. Charles Sumner is from Massachusetts, so his position as a Northern Senator means he is speaking as a part of a majority of the United States population and likewise of the Senate. He is likely to have few inhibitions and speak his honest opinion then, as he would be expecting the support and backing from most of the Senate. Because he is appealing to the Congressional body, however, it is likely to be an impassioned speech full of hyperbolic statements to influence opinion, lowering his validity. The speech consists of many emotionally-driven statements and attacking statements, ranging from comparing the Kansas crisis to a rape to saying that the history of South Carolina is worth less than just the free state men of Kansas. Such remarks are made without consideration to how Northern states also interfered in the Kansas territory. Furthermore he slanders Senator Butler, likening slavery to his 'mistress'. This was effective in garnering support of opponents of slavery, who saw the institution of slavery comparable to such a sinful nature. Overall he was correct to point fingers at the South, especially if he believed he was fighting a moral cause, but his speech's argument lacked balance or justification of Northern action. Source A is most like Source D, because while less hostile, it shares the opinion that popular sovereignty was the proper course to take, but with the fatal flaw of other states not minding their own business. Source E reflects upon the statements made in Source A, wondering if its intent was to provoke others. Source B takes an outside view accounts for varied reactions of other senators following the conflict between Brooks and Sumner, which happened right after the remarks of Source A were made. Source C is a highly opinionated piece from a Southern newspiece, publicly reprimanding Sumner for the remarks made in the speech. Source A holds high importance because it is the originating piece inciting so much conflict.

Source E supports the idea that Sumner's statements not only revealed, but also formed an unbridgeable gap between North and South. The source is a modern historian's view of the incident. His scholarship in the field of history and the amount of time between the source and the relevant events allowed for great time of review of documents. Because he is American, however, he is unlikely to shed too negative of a light on his country's history. The source reviews the reactions of both Northerners and Southerners, including how Southerners regarded Congressman Brooks as a hero for physically beating Sumner, and the North confirmed their ideas of Southerners and stupid and violent. The source does not provide a balance by giving a Sumner point-of-view, and only suggests that he had antagonizing motives. The source does not disagree or agree with Source A, but comments on it as that is the relevant speech by Sumner. Source B only accounts the attack of Congressman Brooks and would

agree that there was Southern outrage on the matter; however source B would proclaim that the Northerners handled the situation more respectfully. Source C, outraged at Sumner, confirms the idea of Source E that the South was upset. Source D takes a more neutral and legal stand point, not discussing neither Sumner nor others' reactions, but the original intent of the Kansas-Nebraska bill which sparked the whole controversy. Source E is valuable because of its evaluative insight long after the Charles Sumner incident. ✓ CR

Source D would disagree that Charles Sumner formed an unbridgeable gap between the North and the South, as it does not discuss Charles Sumner and his statements explicitly, but rather presents ideas of popular sovereignty that Sumner would presumably agree with. The source comes from Stephen Douglas, a proponent of popular sovereignty meaning he will have an opinion favoring such actions, especially those of and relating to the Freeport Doctrine. Furthermore his statements are in an election speech from 1858, a midway point in James Buchanan's term and the 1860 elections are approaching, where Douglas will then run as the Democratic candidate for President. Therefore his statements made are going to be in attempt to win popularity. His strengths lay in the fact that he is a well respected politician. Furthermore the source is not emotionally driven, and although Douglas is a Democrat, he presents the concession of how slavery may be abolished (a thought contrary to most Democratic thought). He pushes that the intent of the Kansas-Nebraska bill was to allow the reign of popular sovereignty to take place and that it worked quite well in abolishing slavery in numerous states. However, he said it only worked "so long as free States minded our own business". Therefore he provides balance in acknowledging the flaw in the policy. He would disagree that Charles Sumner revealed an unbridgeable gap because this implies that the free States had interfered in Kansas (which they did) and that they were partially responsible. However he fails to provide alternatives to prevent interference while still singing the praises of popular sovereignty. Source A and D both disagree that Charles Sumner formed an unbridgeable gap, but Sumner believed the South was the only guilty one in trying to push slavery and override popular sovereignty; Douglas acknowledges the fault on both sides. Source B, merely an account of the attack on Sumner, does not even discuss the same thing as source D. ✓ Source C reflects Southern viewpoints and outrage after Sumner's speech, mirroring the idea that some fault was in the North. Source E does not provide the same balance as Source D in Northern fault but both would agree that Sumner had been rather aggressive in his wording. Stephen Douglas, a complex character, is more headstrong in his legal beliefs regarding popular sovereignty rather than personal beliefs on slavery, but he lacks some important balance making his speech somewhat valuable. ✓ SE CR

Source B, although rather neutral, leans toward the idea that Sumner had indeed revealed an unbridgeable gap between North and South. The source is from the New York Herald; it is a northern newspaper meaning it will tend to show Northern/Republican views but it was also massive nationally so it had the responsibility to show a neutral viewpoint and not cause too much controversy. It provides an account of the events following Sumner's speech. It sheds more light negatively on Southern congressmen detailing the violent attack by Brooks on Senator Sumner. Brooks first accuses him of libel and slander, two acts which are unconstitutional and therefore this provides some justification on Brooks' behalf of his anger. Northern senators (Crittenden) are given a more peaceful description (trying to separate the fight) while it is mentioned that Senator Toombs of Georgia thought chastising Sumner ✓ SE

was appropriate. Although it is an outside account it seems to make an effort to illustrate Southerners as the aggressors. The source remarks "this affair is regretted by all" which is confusing as it is not clear who they are speaking for nor who they are in the position to speak for. It seems to speak for pity for Sumner at its conclusion, as Sumner was crying he was near his death. The reason the source would agree that Sumner brought out an unbridgeable gap is because it clearly details the anger and violence it provoked from Southerners, though it doesn't clearly say that Sumner was wrong for doing so. Sources A and B disagree because they follow each other chronologically; Sumner in source A would have been unaware of his repercussions and would not see himself as an aggressor, but Source B indicates that there was some type of spark set off following the speech of A. Source B and C would both agree that Sumner set something off, but Source C is comparatively emotional due to its publication in the South. Source D does not parallel B at all; B illustrates the anger immediately following Sumner's speech while D is a calm view on the matter nearly 2 years later. Source E makes mention of the same libel and violence that took place on May 19, 1856, and would agree that Sumner stirred up controversy, the difference between the two sources being the time to review before the publication of each. Source B is important because it is the only one of the sources from a news publication that is not overly biased and accurately and nearly neutrally recounts the events following Sumner's speech.

CE

CR

P

Source C would agree that Sumner revealed and also formed an unbridgeable gap between North and South as it illustrates and clearly angered Southern view. The source is the Richmond Enquirer; Richmond is a major Virginian town and the piece must have been held in some esteem to be published, therefore it accurately represented Southern views on Sumner. However it is likely to be skewed toward Southern, slave-owning views. It is emotionally driven, being only in the week following Sumner's speech and using many harsh words against him and abolitionists. Its strength is in its clear address of Sumner's poor language during his senate speech. This is negated by the emotional nature and tone of the source making it unimportant overall. The authors of Sources A and C would be likely to engage in conflict as the statements of A are being condemned in C. Sources B and C, although both from newspapers, vary in terms of location, mood, and viewpoint on the issue; however both agree that Sumner revealed an unbridgeable gap between North and South because of the undeniable Southern outrage. Sources D and C would probably both agree that popular sovereignty had been a good choice for the Kansas and Nebraska territories and would share Democrat ideology, however in source D Stephen Douglas approaches the idea much more calmly and source C appears to feel more threatened. Source E gives a long-term reflection on Southern outrage during the matter; Source C could have very well been an example of Southerners who regarded Brooks as "an instant hero" as mentioned in Source E. Furthermore both of these sources would agree that Sumner not only revealed the gap but took part in increasing hostility between the regions.

SE

CE

CR

In summary, Charles Sumner undeniably sparked outrage between North and South, as chronicled in Source B, illustrated in Source C, and reflected upon in Source E. Sumner himself however, would disagree that his intent was to cause controversy, judging by his statements made in Source A; other politicians were able to take a more balanced view on the matter of popular sovereignty in years following, set by example of Stephen Douglas in Source D.

①

Excellent essay but talk to me