

The Republican Party Platforms of 1856 and 1860

1856

Resolved: That the maintenance (upkeep) of the principles (ideas) . . . in the Declaration of Independence, and embodied [placed] in the Federal Constitution are essential to the preservation of our . . . institutions, and that the Federal Constitution . . . and the union of the States, must and shall be preserved.

1860

2. That the maintenance (upkeep) of the principles (ideas) . . . in the Declaration of Independence and embodied (placed) in the Federal Constitution, "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." is essential (necessary) to the preservation of our . . . institutions; and that the Federal Constitution . . . and the Union of the States, must and shall be preserved.

After examining these party platform statements with your partner, answer the following questions:

With which of the poster phrases can these platform statements be most closely associated?

Would Southern slave owners agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

1856

Resolved: That the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign powers (authority) over the Territories of the United States for their government; and that in the exercise of this power, it is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories . . . Slavery.

1860

7. That the new dogma that the Constitution, of its own force, carries Slavery into any or all of the Territories of the United States, is a dangerous political heresy. . . [and] is revolutionary in its tendency, and subversive of the peace and harmony of the country.

8. That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of freedom; That as our Republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that "no person should be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," it becomes our duty, by legislation, whenever such legislation is necessary, to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it;

and we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to Slavery in any Territory of the United States.

After examining these party platform statements with your partner, answer the following questions:

With which of the poster phrases can these platform statements be most closely associated?

Would Southern slave owners agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

1856

Resolved, That appropriations (money set aside) by Congress for the improvement of rivers and harbors, of a national character, required for the accommodation and security of our existing commerce [trade], are authorized by the Constitution, and justified by the obligation (duty) of the Government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

1860

12. That, while providing revenue (money) for the support of the General (Federal) Government by duties (taxes) upon imports, sound policy requires such an adjustment of these imposts (taxes) as to encourage the development of the industrial interests of the whole country; and we commend (support) that policy of national exchanges which secures to the working men liberal (plentiful) wages, to agriculture remunerating prices, to mechanics and manufacturers an adequate reward for their skill, labor and enterprise, and to the nation commercial prosperity and independence.

15. That appropriations by Congress for River and Harbor improvements of a National character, required for the accommodation and security of an existing commerce (trade), are authorized by the Constitution, and justified by the obligations (duties) of Government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

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