



Chapter 7 ~ Civics/Government

"The ballot is stronger than the bullet."

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"The ballot is stronger than the bullet." Develop lessons that will allow students to gain perspective and knowledge on the government and development of Illinois government, policy making, and Abraham Lincoln's Illinois links in his early legal career to the development of the state and its citizenry.

Know Nothing Party

The American party of the 1850s derived its informal name from its members replying, when asked about their role, "I know nothing." The party, that was anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant, grew out of the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner, a secret society apparently founded in New York City in 1849. They were often known as the 'dark lantern society' because of their secrecy according to Patricia Silver. Dr. Michael Holt reports that the group confined their membership to native-born Protestants

With the collapse of the Whigs and the Democratic split over the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and 1855, there are supporters who won several offices, including control of the Massachusetts legislature. In 1855, 43 members of the party were in Congress. Some of the northern know-nothings decided to join the anti-slavery forces but were not ready to join the Republicans and those converts helped Lincoln collect 500,000 more votes in 1860 than Fremont had won in 1856. By 1856 the party had abandoned secrecy and campaigned openly as the American Party. {Holt}

The party dissolved after the party endorsed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the southern members endorsed Millard Fillmore for president and the northern members endorsed Republican candidate, John C. Fremont.

Extension: Students may also want to research the topic Brass-Knuckle Crusade.

To learn more about the Know Nothings research the following websites; The Know Nothing Party – Michael Holt, Ph.D.

<http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/ps-knownothing.html>

Know Nothing Party – Houghton Mifflin Online Readers Companion

http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_050800_knownothingp.htm

Grolier Know Nothing Party Douglas T. Miller <http://ap.grolier.com/article?assetid+011940-o&templatename=/article/article.html>

Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia – Know-Nothing movement

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0827946.html>

Know Nothing Party – Social Studies for Kids – more resources linked from site <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/www/us/knownothingpartydef.htm>

Know Nothing Party Selected Research Resources from Questia Library

Know-Nothing Party - Selected Resources

- Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's by Tyler Anbinder. 330 pgs.
- Brass-Knuckle Crusade: The Great Know-Nothing Conspiracy, 1820-1860 by Carleton Beals. 312 pgs.
- The Know-Nothing Party in the South by W. Darrell Overdyke. 328 pgs.
- The Civil War Party System: The Case of Massachusetts, 1848-1876 (Chap. 2 "The Political Realignment of the 1850s: Know-Nothingism and the Emergence of a Republican Majority") by Dale Baum. 294 pgs.
- American Mobbing, 1828-1861: Toward Civil War by David Grimsted. 372 pgs.
- Third Parties in American Politics (Chap. 1 "The Anti-Masonic and Know-Nothing Parties") by Howard P. Nash, M. B. Schnapper, William B. Hesseltine. 326 pgs.
- The Amesbury-Salisbury Strike and the Social Origins of Political Nativism in Antebellum Massachusetts, in Journal of Social History by Mark Voss-Hubbard. 26 pgs.
- Respecting "The Wise Allotment of Our Sphere": White Women and Politics in Mississippi, 1840-1860, in Journal of Women's History by Christopher J. Olsen. 22 pgs.
- U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues: A Documentary History (Document 20: Article on Know-Nothing Party and Document 21: Letter of Abraham Lincoln to Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855) by Michael Lemay, Elliott Robert Barkan. 340 pgs.



For more resources from the Questia Library on the Know Nothing Party.

<http://www.questia.com/library/politics-and-government/political-science/political-parties/know-nothing-party.jsp>

Know Nothing Platform document

- The Know-Nothing Platform.
- (1) Repeal of all Naturalization Laws.
 - (2) None but native Americans for office.
 - (3) A pure American Common School system.
 - (4) War to the hilt, on political Romanism.
 - (5) Opposition to the formation of Military Companies, composed of Foreigners.
 - (6) The advocacy of a sound, healthy and safe Nationality.
 - (7) Hostility to all Papal influences, when brought to bear against the Republic.
 - (8) American Institutions & American Sentiments.
 - (9) More stringent & effective Emigration Laws.
 - (10) The amplest protection to Protestant Interests.
 - (11) The doctrines of the revered Washington.
 - (12) The sending back of all foreign paupers.
 - (13) Formation of societies to protect American interests.
 - (14) Eternal enmity to all who attempt to carry out the principles of a foreign Church or State.
 - (15) Our Country, our whole Country, and nothing but our Country.
 - (16) Finally, - American Laws, and Amer-

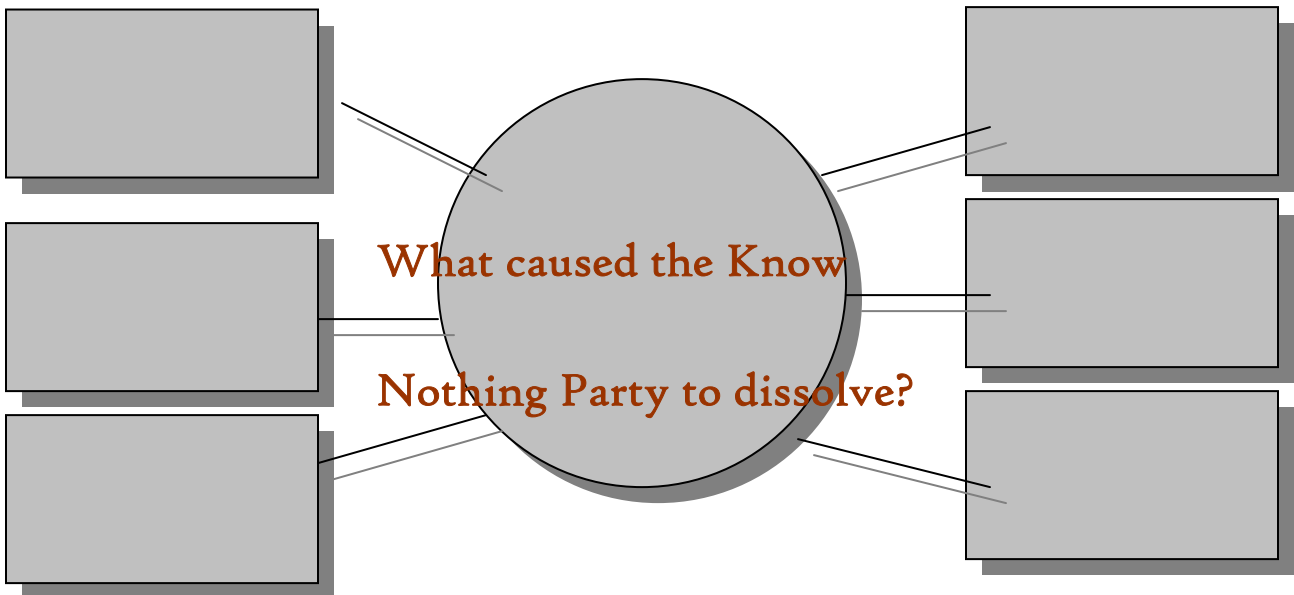
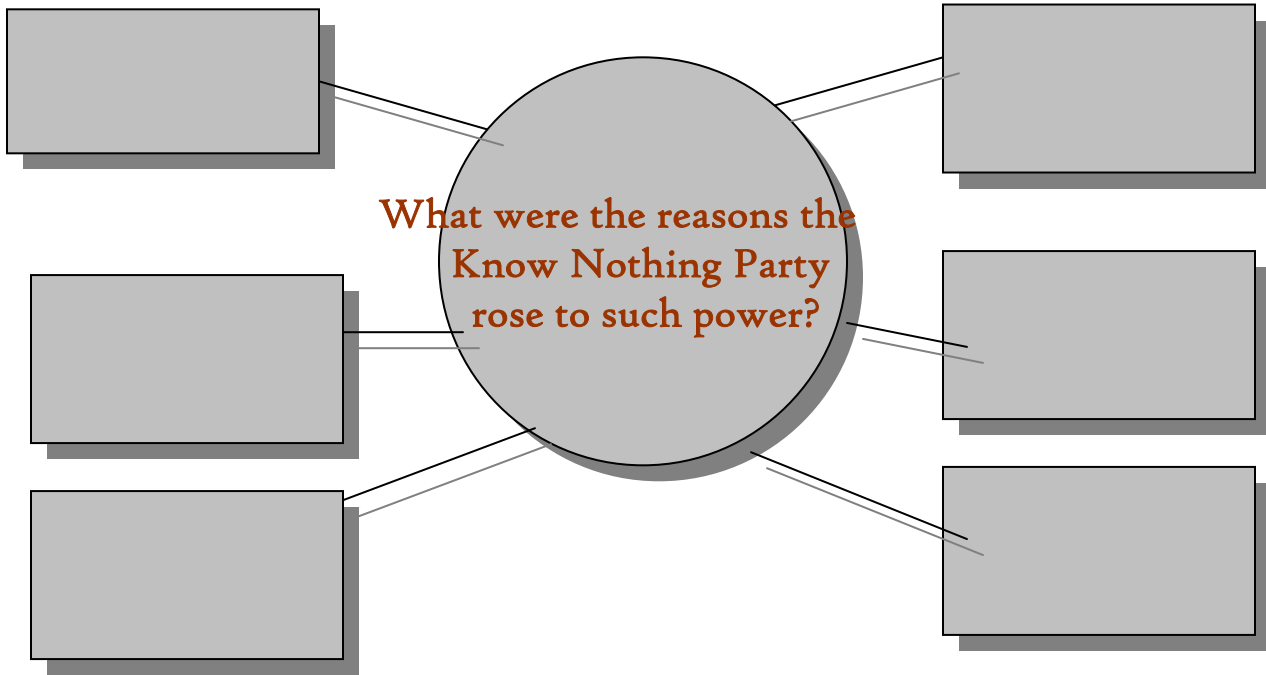
The Know-Nothing Platform

- (1.) Repeal of all Naturalization Laws.
- (2.) None but Native Americans for office.
- (3.) A pure American Common School System.
- (4.) War to the hilt, on political Romanism.
- (5.) Opposition to the formation of Military companies composed of Foreigners.
- (6.) The Advocacy of a sound, healthy and safe Nationality.
- (7.) Hostility to all Papal Influences, when brought to bear against the Republic.
- (8.) American Constitutions & American Sentiments.
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- (14.) Eternal enmity to all who attempt to carry out the principles of a foreign Church or State.
- (15.) Our Country, our whole Country, & nothing but our Country.
- (16.) Finally,- American Laws & America

Name _____

Activity 7.1 ~ Reading for Comprehension

This is a chart for the students to complete as they read the narrative and the primary document of the Know Nothing Platform document. The goal is to get multiple answers to the questions posed below:

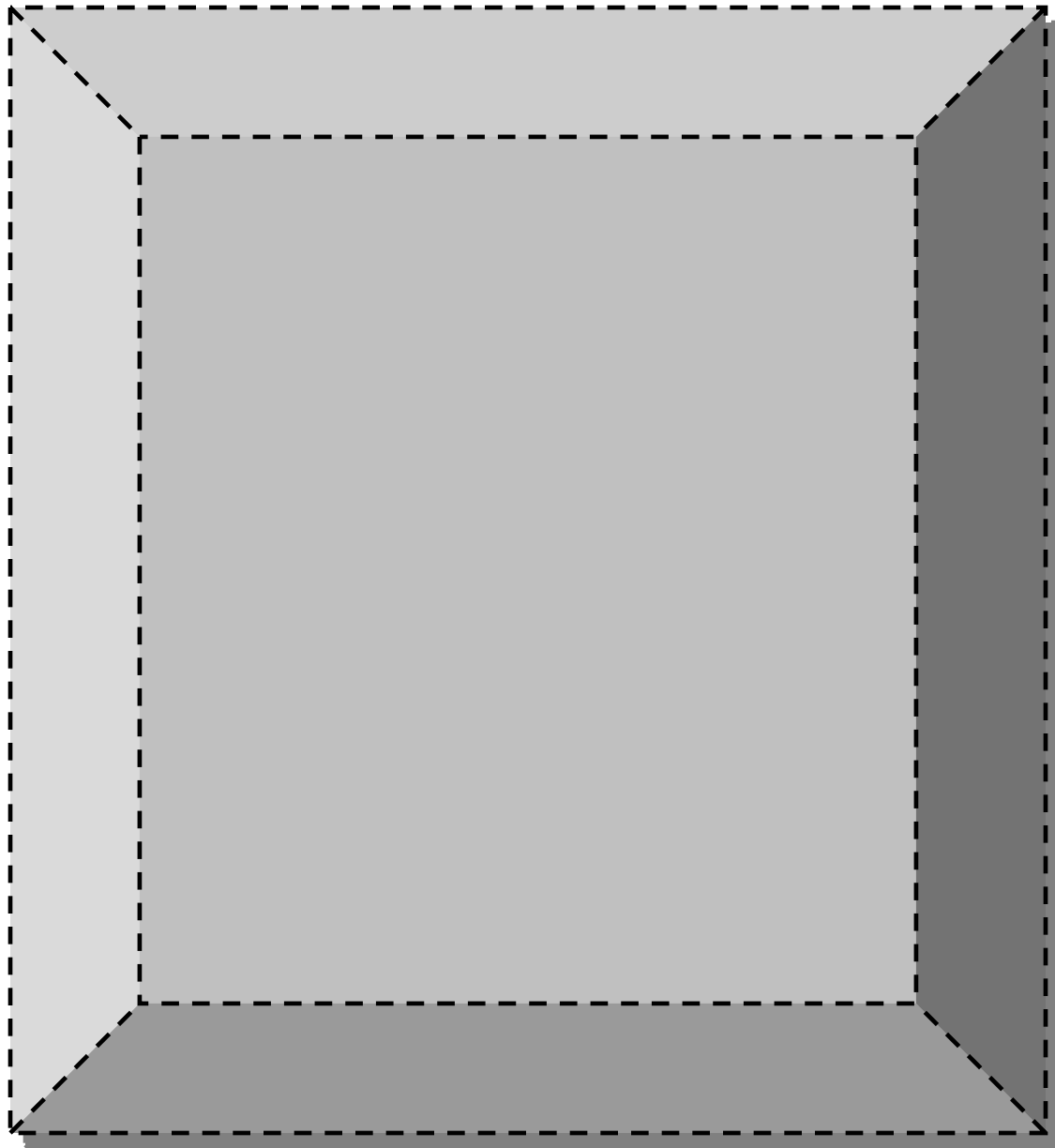


Activity 7.2 ~ Creating a New Symbol

The national motto of the Know Nothing Party was “I know nothing”. Explain what this motto means to you today.

Create a symbol or a sign depicting “I know nothing”. You could also decide to create a patch that depicts the group formerly known as the Order of the Star Spangled Banner. Include the motto and any words and/or images that help you illustrate the concept.

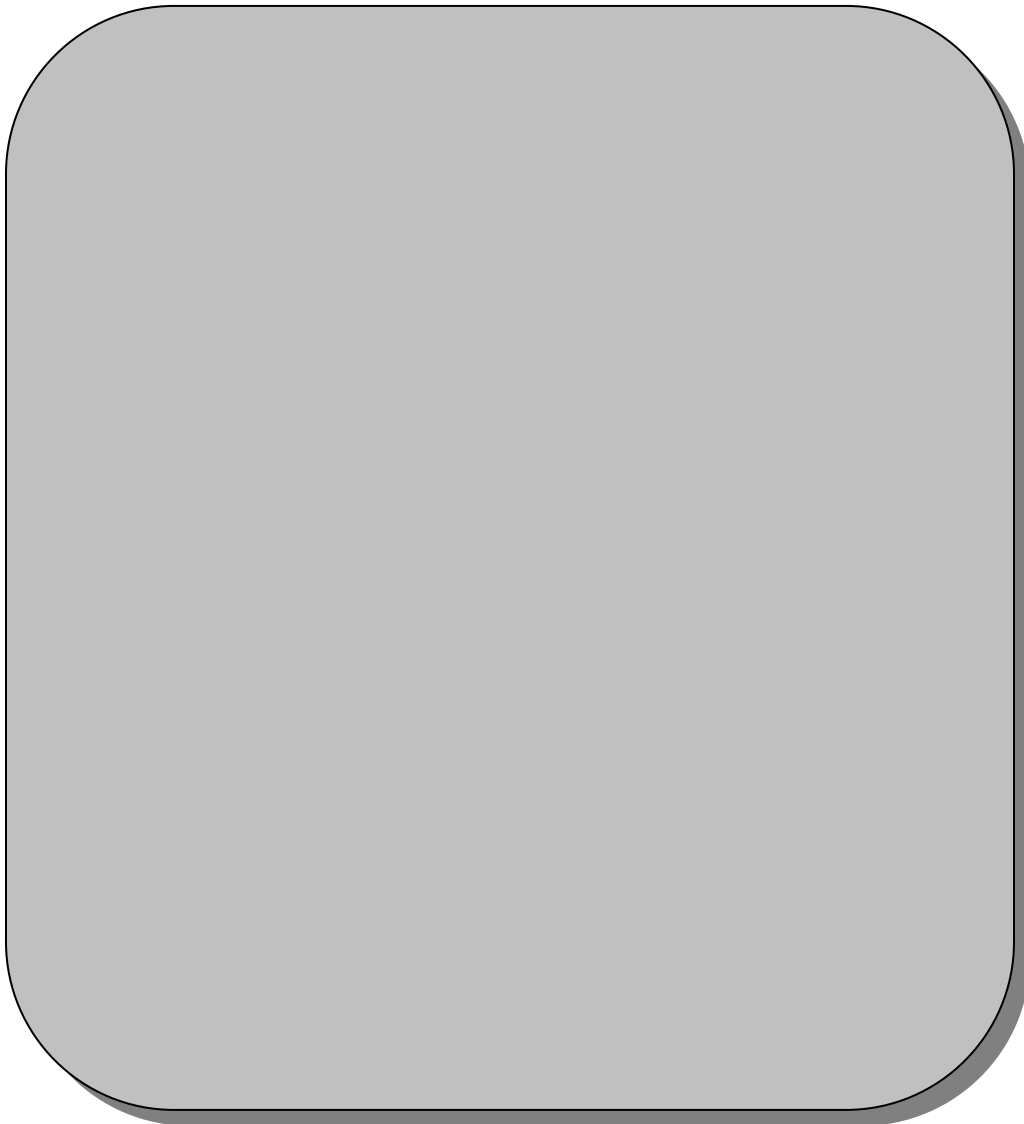
Name _____



Activity 7.3 ~ Create the Clothing you will need to Wear to a Know Nothing Party Public Meeting

Name _____

Research the fashion of the period of 1850 – 1855 and design an outfit for either a man or a woman that you could be made for you to wear to a Know Nothing Party public meeting. Include an explanation of the color, the type of fabric, and any trimmings you would include for the outfit. *Hint: Use keywords to search: fashion + 1850s + man's clothing or woman's clothing in an internet search. You can also search for fabric and trimmings by changing the word fashion for fabric or trimmings.*



The Wide Awakes

Getting the Message Out! National Campaign

Materials 1840 - 1860 <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/message/>

Getting the Message Out! National Political Campaign

Materials, 1840-1860 presents an examination of national



popular political culture in antebellum America. It includes histories of the presidential campaigns from 1840-1860, as well as primary source material, such as campaign biographies and campaign songbooks. Recordings of some of the songs are also available.

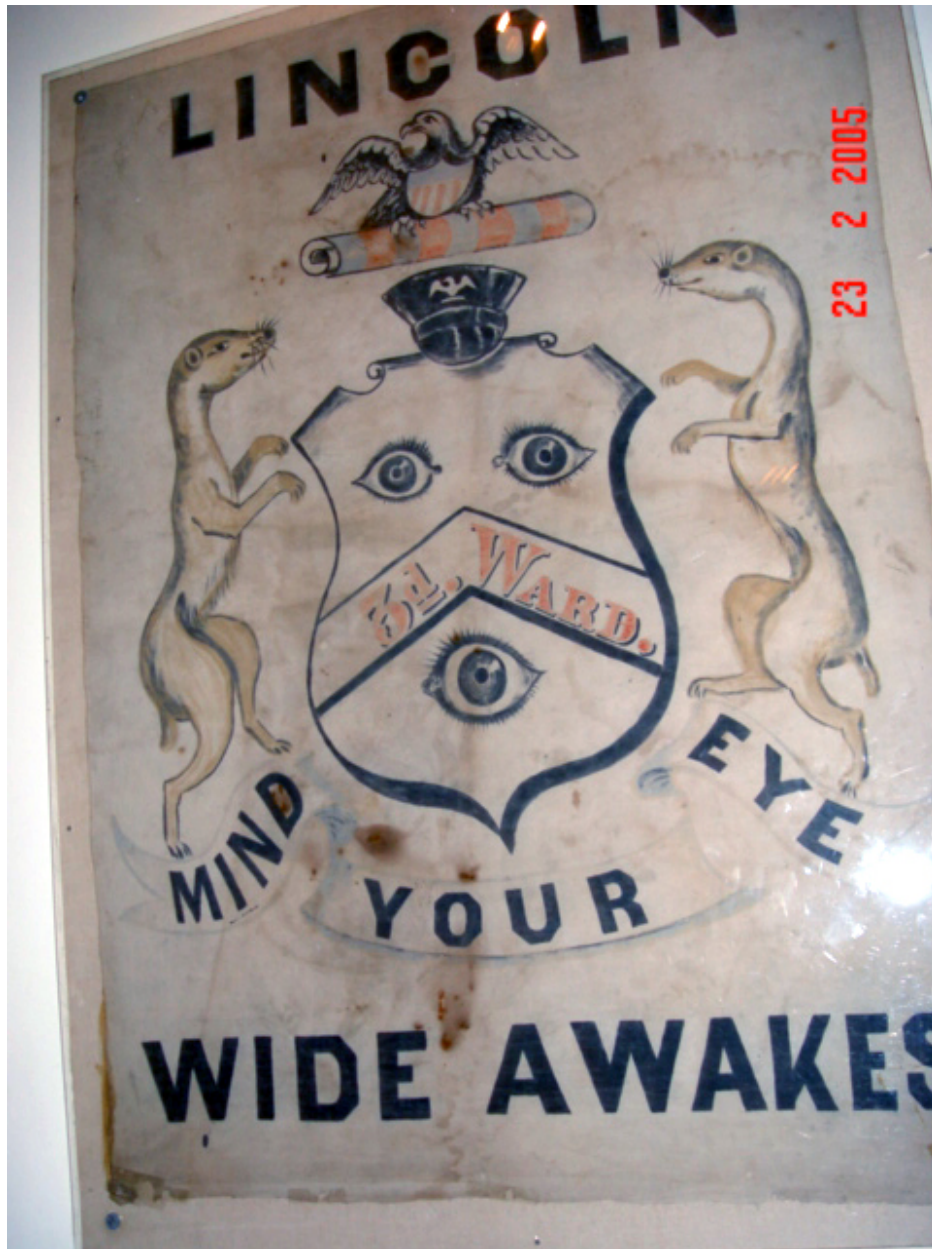


Banner carried by Wide-Awakes in torchlight parades, 1860. Chicago Historical Society

The electoral politics of antebellum America gave rise to many forms of mass participation. While elections saw voter turnout of 80% and higher, many individuals organized other aspects of their lives around politics as well. Most voters maintained close ties and strict loyalty to their party, links that were often passed down through families and cultivated in specific ethnic and religious communities. In this period political parties often served as social clubs and centers of recreational activity as well as electoral organizations. In this context there arose organizations like the Republican "Wide Awakes." These groups, usually made up of young, unmarried men, marched in support of their candidate in solemn, torch lit spectacles. Other times they gathered to sing political songs and rally the party faithful to the polls. Many groups were originally formed for the purpose of poll watching, to defend against hated Democrats' presumed attempts at voting irregularities. In this spirit Democrats also organized groups of young men to patrol the streets on election night, and the rival bands often met in alleys and barrooms.



The Wide Awakes are credited with helping Abraham Lincoln win the nomination for President of the United States at the Wigwam convention Hall in Chicago. They also helped bring the Republican Party to national attention with issues such as the stand against slavery.



Wide Awake Banner from the Old State Capitol – Springfield Illinois Source: Peggy Dunn

The American Whig Party

Background Information on the Whig Party 1834 - 1856
<http://www.earlyrepublic.net/whigs.htm>

Lincoln Left the Whig Party
<http://www.americanpresident.org/history/abrahamlincoln/>

Why Abraham Lincoln Was a Whig Journal of Abraham Lincoln Association
Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter, 1995 <http://jala.press.uiuc.edu/16.1/howe.html>

Springfield, the Law, and the Whig Party, 1837-1843 By R.D. Monroe, Ph.D.
<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/biography3text.html>

Abraham Lincoln Timeline - Political Career
<http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/education/polbrief.htm>



Lincoln-Douglas Debates



In a series of seven debates in 1858, Abraham Lincoln challenged United States Senator Stephen Douglas's support of a law allowing slavery in free territory. Lincoln lost his bid for Douglas's Senate seat, but the debates helped pave the road to the presidency.

Lincoln Douglas Debate Map and Resources on the debates to follow as an extension activity in this curriculum.

Illinois in the Civil War - Lincoln Douglas Debates

<http://www.illinoiscivilwar.org/debates.html>

Lincoln Douglas Debates of 1858

<http://www.nps.gov/liho/debates.htm>



Lincoln Douglas Debates of 1858 This is a very complete site on the debates, including the text, newspaper accounts, lesson plans, maps, video and images.

<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/lincolndouglas/>

