

**Volume 17**

**Number 022**

**A House Divided: (34) The Birth of  
the Republican Party - II**

**Lead: One hundred and fifty years ago the Republic was facing its greatest crisis. This continuing series examines the American Civil War. It is *A House Divided*.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The Republican Party was born out of serious discontent with then contemporary party system in the United States and a growing revulsion in the North**

**about the spread indeed, the practice, of chattel slavery.**

**Not surprisingly for a party oriented to business, theirs was an economic argument for a new, non-agrarian, modern America. The new Party advanced a vision which included giving free land in the west to small farmers, not allowing large slave owners to buy it up for their slaves to cultivate. Republicans advocated Federal support for the construction of roads and railroads. They dreams of prairie factories and consumer oriented banking. The party asserted that free labor was much more efficient and moral than slavery and was the heart of a new**

**modern republic – “Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men.”**

**Many early Republicans were also pietistic Christian evangelicals determined to rid American society of all sorts of demonic sin: alcoholism, Mormon polygamy, and slavery. Strong centers of Republican strength were among Congregationalists and Presbyterians caught up in the Second Great Awakening in New England, New York and the middle states. Methodists in the upper South and Scandinavian Lutherans in the mid-west also numbered in the Republican coalition.**

**The first meeting of the new party was on a college campus in Ripon ('ri pan), Wisconsin in March, 1854. It held its first national Presidential nominating convention in 1856 and fielded its first candidate, John C. Frémont, that same year The Party elected its first President, a minority President, Abraham Lincoln, in the crisis year of 1860.**

**In Richmond, Virginia, this is Dan Roberts.**

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