



## NEWS

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A weekly series from the Kansas Territorial Sesquicentennial Commission  
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### Kansas Troubles: This Week in Territorial History March 1 - 6, 1854 (2004) (No Leap Year Day in 1854)

In Washington City, after weeks of debate, the Senate passed the Kansas Nebraska Bill at five in the morning on the 4th of March. Of the 51 Senators who voted, only 14 opposed the bill, among them William Seward of New York, who'd written in his diary the evening before: "Heaven be thanked that since this cup of humiliation cannot be passed, the struggle of draining it is nearly over! ....Southern men were imperious and Northern men abetted them...There is no longer dignity or honor in serving our country in the Senate of the United States."

The 4th was spend in argument over a last ditch effort by another of the radical anti-slavery Senators, Salmon Chase of Ohio, who had moved to attach an amendment to the bill. Chase knew that if he could tack on a provision allowing popular election of the new territory's executive and judicial branches, the Senate would defeat the bill. Popular sovereignty in the territories was unpopular idea in Washington. Unlike states, territories were not democracies. Territories were more literally bureaucracies, in which the executive branch and the judiciary --- the governor, his staff and the court system---were appointed by the federal government. Territorial settlers had the right to choose only the members of the third branch---the legislature.

Southern Senators, aided by compatriots nicknamed "doughfaces"---Northerners allied with Southern principles---defeated Chase's amendment. In the early hours on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, Washingtonians woke up to the sound of celebratory cannons fired by supporters of Senator Stephen Douglas and his Kansas Nebraska Bill. Anti-Nebraska partisans now clung to the hope that the House of Representatives would defeat the bill in the next step in the legislative process. (290 words)

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Frederick W. Seward, *Seward in Washington* (New York: Derby & Miller, 1891)  
Pg. 224.