



# At the Edge of the Precipice: Henry Clay and the Compromise That Saved the Union

*Robert V. Remini*

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In 1850, America hovered on the brink of disunion. Tensions between slave-holders and abolitionists mounted, as the debate over slavery grew rancorous. An influx of new territory prompted Northern politicians to demand that new states remain free; in response, Southerners baldly threatened to secede from the Union. Only Henry Clay could keep the nation together.

*At the Edge of the Precipice* is historian Robert V. Remini's fascinating recounting of the Compromise of 1850, a titanic act of political will that only a skillful statesman like Clay could broker. Although the Compromise would collapse ten years later, plunging the nation into civil war, Clay's victory in 1850 ultimately saved the Union by giving the North an extra decade to industrialize and prepare.

A masterful narrative by an eminent historian, *At the Edge of the Precipice* also offers a timely reminder of the importance of bipartisanship in a bellicose age.

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