

Remote Learning Packet

NB: Please keep all work produced this week. Details regarding how to turn in this work will be forthcoming.

April 20-24, 2020

Course: U.S. History

Teacher(s): Mrs. Jimenez (margaret.cousino@greatheartsirving.org)

Weekly Plan:

Monday, April 20

- Read Chapter 17 Lesson 1 (pgs. 475-482)
- Answer questions on Lesson (worksheet)

Tuesday, April 21

- Read and annotate today's Lesson: Compromise, Compromise, Compromise
- Answer questions on Lesson (worksheet)

Wednesday, April 22

- Read Chapter 17 Lesson 2 (483-488)
- Answer questions on Lesson (worksheet)
- Complete and check U.S. Expansion Map

Thursday, April 23

- Read and annotate today's Lesson: Dred Scott v. Sandford
- Answer questions on Lesson (worksheet)

Friday, April 24

- Read and annotate today's Lesson: Abraham Lincoln
- Answer questions on Lesson (worksheet)

Statement of Academic Honesty

I affirm that the work completed from the packet is mine and that I completed it independently.

I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, my child completed this work independently

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Monday, April 20

Note from Mrs. Jimenez: Dear students, after talking with several of you over Zoom, outlining the history chapters seems to be very time-consuming. In order to lighten your load, I am not going to ask you to do the outlines anymore. However, I will be giving you additional reading questions for each reading instead. Happy learning!

1. Read the assigned reading (pgs. 475-482)
2. Answer the questions on these pages in this week's worksheet for Monday. Restate the question and respond in complete sentences. If you are not able to print the sheet, you may write your answers on a piece of lined paper. Be sure to include your heading and clearly mark the chapter/lesson/questions numbers.

Tuesday, April 21

1. Read and annotate today's lesson, Compromise, Compromise, Compromise.
2. Answer the questions on this reading in this week's worksheet for Tuesday. Restate the question and respond in complete sentences. If you are not able to print the sheet, you may write your answers on a piece of lined paper. Be sure to include your heading and clearly mark the lesson name/questions numbers.

Wednesday, April 22

1. Read the assigned reading (pgs. 483-488)
2. Answer the questions on these pages in this week's worksheet for Wednesday. Restate the question and respond in complete sentences. If you are not able to print the sheet, you may write your answers on a piece of lined paper. Be sure to include your heading and clearly mark the chapter/lesson/questions numbers.
3. Complete and check U.S. Expansion Map. Use map completed in class or on pg. 396

Thursday, April 23

1. Read and annotate today's lesson, Dred Scott v. Sandford
2. Answer the questions on this reading in this week's worksheet for Thursday. Restate the question and respond in complete sentences. If you are not able to print the sheet, you may write your answers on a piece of lined paper. Be sure to include your heading and clearly mark the lesson name/questions numbers.

Friday, April 24

1. Read and annotate today's lesson, Abraham Lincoln
2. Answer the questions on this reading in this week's worksheet for Friday. Restate the question and respond in complete sentences. If you are not able to print the sheet, you may write your answers on a piece of lined paper. Be sure to include your heading and clearly mark the lesson name/questions numbers.

Name/Section:
U.S. History
Mrs. Jimenez
April 20-24, 2020

Toward Civil War Reading Questions
Restate the question and respond in complete sentences.

Monday: Chapter 17 Lesson 1 (pg. 475-482)

1. What did the Wilmot Proviso propose?

2. What were the provisions of the Compromise of 1850 as proposed by Henry Clay?

3. How did Stephen Douglass persuade Congress to pass the Compromise of 1850?

4. Why did some Northerners defy the Fugitive Slave Act?

5. What were the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?

6. What was “Bleeding Kansas”? What caused it?

Tuesday: Compromise, Compromise, Compromise

1. How did the compromises on slavery in the Constitution refer to slaves and slavery? Why do you think the writers chose to express it in these roundabout ways?

Wednesday: Chapter 17 Lesson 2 (pg. 483-488)

1. What issue led to the formation of the Republican Party, and what stand did the party take on the issue? How did political parties begin to shift in the 1850s?

2. What was the court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*? What was the impact of the *Dred Scott* decision?

3. How did reactions to the *Dred Scott* decision increase sectional tensions?

4. Why do you think the raid on Harpers Ferry by just a few men was so threatening to Southerners?

Thursday: *Dred Scott v. Sandford*

1. What was Dred Scott's case about? What was his position?

2. What was Justice Taney's position about blacks in America? How did he justify his position?

3. How did the decision in *Dred Scott* affect black Americans, slave or free?

4. How did the *Dred Scott* decision overrule laws previously passed by Congress? How did it affect slavery in the territories?

Friday: Abraham Lincoln

1. How did Lincoln's life and person reflect America and the American character as a whole?

2. Why are the Lincoln-Douglas debates important? How did they affect Lincoln's political career?

3. What were Lincoln's positions on slavery and the Union?

4. Examine the 1860 Election Map. What do you observe about the way the states voted? How did each candidate do? Any other observations?

5. Why did Southern states start to secede in 1860-1861?

Tuesday's Lesson: Compromise, Compromise, Compromise

Slavery was an issue for the United States which divided American citizens from the beginning. Even before we gained our independence from Great Britain slavery was a concern. Then for nearly the first 100 years (1776-1861), our young nation tried to resolve the issue through compromises, compromises that grew increasingly unsatisfactory to both sides and less effective, compromises which ultimately could not last because of the evil of the institution of slavery. Let's review the compromises on slavery from the Constitution onwards.

Constitutional Convention (1787)

In 1787, delegates from twelve of the thirteen states met in Philadelphia, PA to discuss the problems that had arisen under the United States' first constitution, the Articles of Confederation, which ended up leading to the writing of a whole new constitution. In the discussions that happened during this four-month long meeting, slavery was a hot topic. Southern delegates said they would walk out of the convention if laws were made against slavery, so laws about and the practice of slavery was left in the hands of each state rather than the federal government ruling on the issue. Instead of a clear national position, we end up with these three compromises written into our Constitution:

- **Three-Fifths Compromise**

Although supporters of slavery considered their slaves property, they wanted to count them as persons during the census to increase the population of Southern states which meant they would get more representatives in Congress and more electoral votes. However, when it came to the possibility of the federal government instituting a direct tax on the states determined by state population, the Southern delegates claimed their slaves were property, not people. The Northern delegates were not happy that the Southerners wanted it both ways so they devised the three-fifths compromise which states that every five slaves would count as three persons, so they partially counted for both the direct tax and the number of representatives. Here is the phrasing from the Constitution Article I, Section 2:

“Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, *three fifths of all other Persons.*”

Interestingly, the original Constitution never uses the word “slave” or “slavery”, dancing around the topic, compromising about it, but never directly addressing this horrible institution. However, everyone knew that “all other persons” referred to slaves.

- **Fugitive Slave Law**

Another issue of concern for the Southern delegates was runaway slaves. The Northern states were in the process of abolishing slavery and the South feared a divided country and free states which would tempt slaves to run away and seek their freedom there. So the delegates included a fugitive slave clause in Article IV, Section 2 which requires runaway slaves in free states to be returned to their masters: “No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.”

- **Slave Trade**

The last question of slavery in the Constitution was about the international slave trade, the importation of slaves from Africa and the Caribbean islands. Northerners wanted to end it outright so that even if slavery continued in the U.S., at least new slaves wouldn't continue to be imported. These were people who hoped for the gradual ending of slavery. Again, the Southern delegates were adamant that no

law should be made against the slave trade, so they compromised saying the international slave trade could continue for 20 more years (until 1808) and then Congress could legally consider whether or not to outlaw it. But while the slave trade continued, they gave the federal government the power to tax such persons being imported. Article I, Section 9 states: “The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.” In 1808 Congress did end the international slave trade, though the domestic slave trade continued and, in fact, increased.

Laws Regarding Expansion

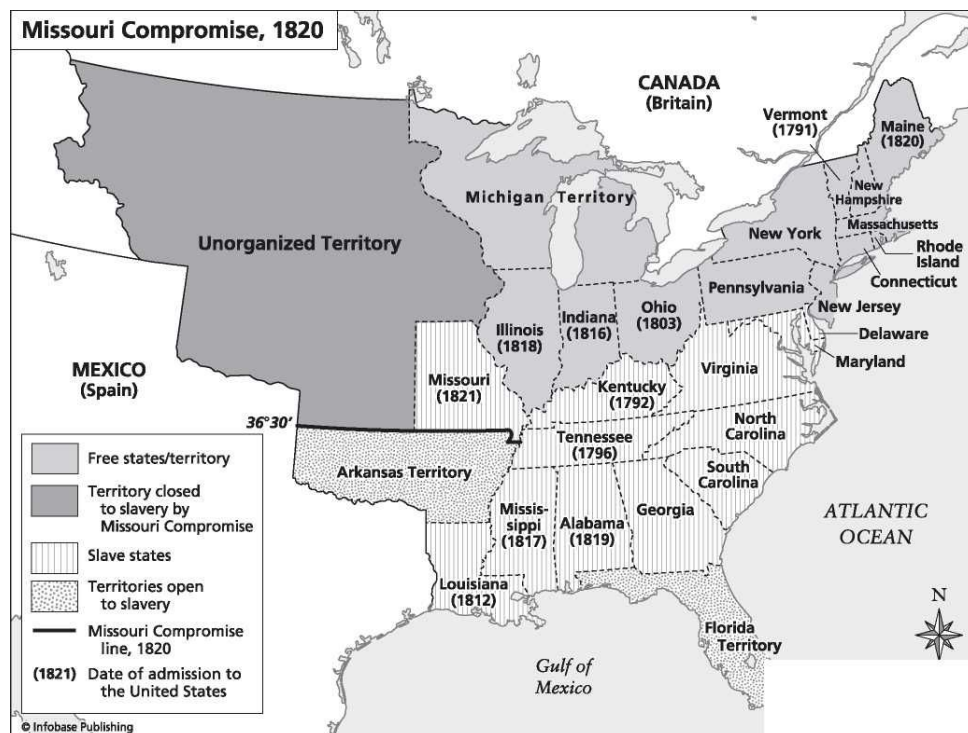
Ratifying the Constitution with the compromises explained above was not the end of the issue. In addition to granting the thirteen colonies their independence, Great Britain also ceded the land west of the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River to the new United States. These territories were not states and they were not as established as the colonies, which easily became states and wrote their own state constitutions. The territories raised some important questions: How would they be governed? Would they be states or colonies? Would slavery be allowed? These were resolved in the Northwest Ordinance (1787) which divided the land north of the Ohio River into five smaller territories and banned slavery there; it said the territories could apply for statehood and be equal to the original thirteen once they had 60,000 residents, meanwhile providing them with a territorial governor to keep law and order.

This law set the precedent for the other states that would join the union as our country grew, except for the ban on slavery. As Southerners moved into new southern territories, they brought slavery with them and they entered the country as slave states. The Ohio River was considered the extension of the Mason-Dixon line between Maryland and Pennsylvania: North of it were free states, south of it were slave states. Everyone seemed to be okay with this state of affairs until we bought the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803: Would those new western lands allow slavery or not?

- **Missouri Compromise (1820)**

In 1812, Louisiana was the first state to join as a slave state after the Louisiana Purchase. Slavery had been practiced there under French and Spanish rule and continued once it became American. The next territory west of the Mississippi to seek statehood was Missouri. Missouri applied for statehood as a slave state in 1819, but this caused conflict in Congress because it was north of the Ohio River line and it would disrupt the balance in the Senate which was then divided evenly with 11 free states and 11 slave states. Adding Missouri as a slave state would tip that balance in favor of the South.

Representative James Tallmadge (New York) proposed to allow Missouri into the union on the condition that it would adopt a provision



for the gradual emancipation of slaves and outlawing of slavery. In general, Northern representatives believed that the U.S. should be working toward ending slavery by preventing its spread which would help it die out in the states it already existed. Missouri and Southern Congressman rejected this because it would tip the scales in favor of the free North and they did not want the federal government making laws about slavery, because they thought slavery ought to be a decision reserved to the states. The Senate was in a gridlock about admitting Missouri, tied 22 to 22.

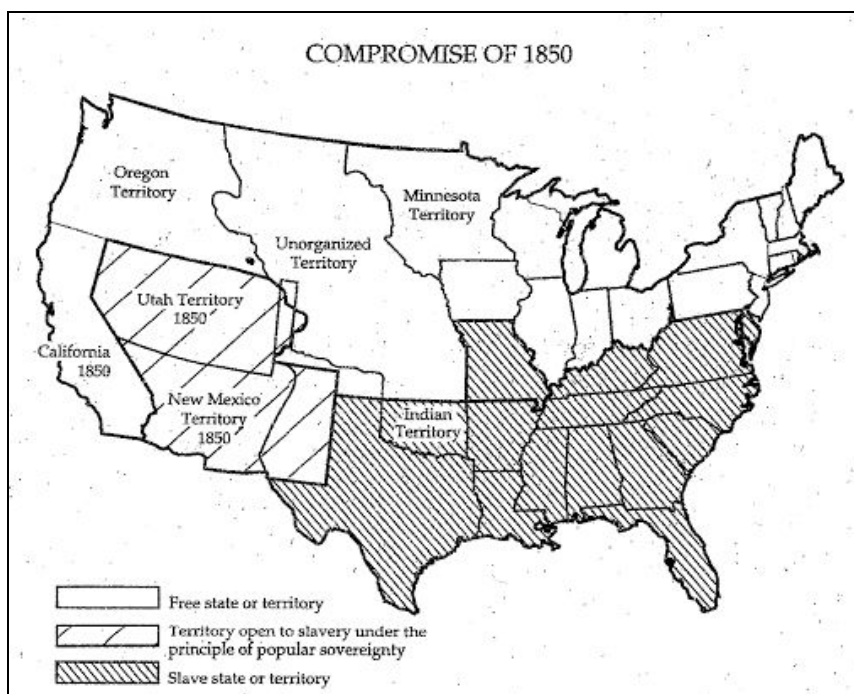
When Maine, previously a part of Massachusetts, applied to be its own state, Speaker of the House Henry Clay (KY) saw an opportunity for compromise. They would link the Missouri and Maine bills together so they would both join the country--Maine free and Missouri slave--to maintain the precarious balance in the Senate. In addition, Congress passed a law regarding the rest of the lands in the Louisiana Territory: the land north of the parallel 36°-30' N would be free, the land south of it would be slave, except for Missouri whose southern border was at 36°-30' N. This compromise continued the precedent set by the Mason-Dixon Line and the Ohio River of having a geographical boundary keeping the North free and the South slave. It also set the precedent that a new free state and a new slave state would be added at the same time to keep the balance, admitting these pairs over the next 30 years: Michigan and Arkansas, Florida and Iowa, Texas and Wisconsin. This, however, could not last forever and changed thirty years later with California's application for statehood in 1850.

- **Compromise of 1850**

In 1849, Manifest Destiny was complete with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Mexico ceded all its land from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean to the United States. This new acquisition of more western territory again raised the question of whether or not slavery would be permitted there. Representative David Wilmot (PA) proposed the "Wilmot Proviso" in Congress which

would ban slavery in the lands gained from Mexico. In response, John C. Calhoun (SC) said Congress has a positive duty under the Constitution to protect citizens' property (including slaves), therefore neither the federal nor territorial governments could make laws regarding slavery in the territories, only once a territory became a state could it decide to be free for slave. The Wilmot proviso passed in the House but not in the Senate.

Between these two extremes were other proposals, such as extending the 36°-30' N of the Missouri Compromise into the new territories or to allow for popular sovereignty--leaving the question of slavery up to the settlers in each territory.



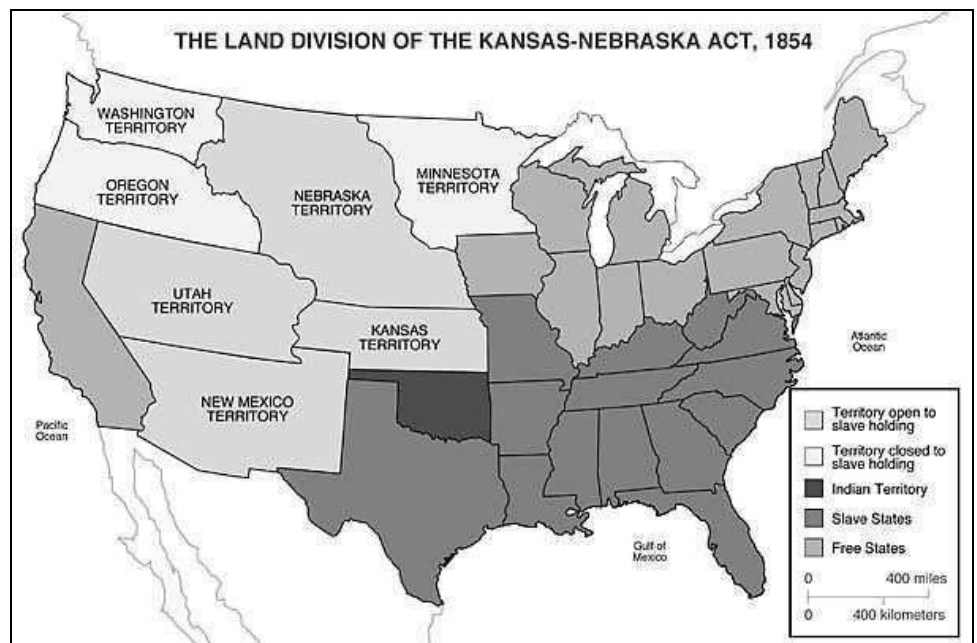
The issue was pushed to the deciding point when California applied for statehood as a free state in 1849. Gold had been discovered in California in 1848 leading to the Gold Rush and the massive, fast growth of California's population. California, therefore, applied for statehood the same year it had become part of the U.S. In 1849 there were 30 states: 15 free and 15 slave--California would disrupt the balance just as Missouri's request thirty years before threatened to disrupt it.

The Compromise of 1850 was devised by Whig Senator Henry Clay (KY) and shepherded through Congress by Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas (IL) to resolve several issues of conflict between the North and South. This was the last compromise the Great Compromiser would devise before his death in 1852. It consisted of five bills: 1) California would be a free state; 2) the other new territories from Mexico would have no limits on slavery; 3) the slave trade would be outlawed in Washington, D.C. but slavery would continue to be legal; 4) set Texas' western and northern borders; and, 5) put in place a stronger Fugitive Slave Act.

The bills passed in Congress, but many were afraid that Whig President Zachary Taylor would reject it. He was a slave-owner himself but surprised the country by opposing the expansion of slavery; he wanted California and New Mexico to both be free states. However, Taylor's untimely death in 1850 gave his Vice President, Millard Fillmore, the power to sign or veto the bills of the compromise. He did sign them in September of 1850 and this compromise, again, allowed for a temporary, tenuous peace between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions.

- **Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)**

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was the last major compromise about slavery before Southern states started seceding in 1860. Proposed by Democratic Senator Stephen Douglas (IL), it disregarded the Missouri Compromise and the 36°-30' N. line as the boundary between free and slave states. It divided the rest of the land from the Louisiana Purchase above the 36°-30' N. into the Kansas Territory and the Nebraska Territory and said that the slavery issue would be decided by popular sovereignty, meaning that the



people who moved to those territories would vote on whether they would be free or slave states. Northerners were furious as this would give these long-time free territories the option to allow slavery and thus spread the practice of slavery rather than stop it. The Southerners were delighted by the bill and it was passed in 1854 and signed by President Franklin Pierce.



Interestingly, Douglas--"The Little Giant"--proposed this bill not because he supported the expansion of slavery per se, but because he supported a transcontinental railway that would stretch from Chicago (his home city) out west. The northwestern territories had to be legally organized before construction for the railway could begin and he would need Southern support to pass the railway bill. He knew the only way he could win Southern support was by removing the Missouri Compromise and opening the territories to the possibility of slavery.

The policy of popular sovereignty led a mad rush of pro- and anti-slavery people into Kansas, trying to gain the majority and hold a vote to decide the issue of slavery. Brutal fighting broke out between the two sides, infamously known as Bleeding Kansas. "Popular sovereignty" would be decided by guns, not votes. There was even actual fighting in Congress. On May 22, 1856, a Southerner, Representative Preston S. Brooks (SC), savagely beat New Englander Charles Sumner (MA) with a cane in the Senate Chamber until he was unconscious for giving a speech which insulted the South about the travesty of Bleeding Kansas. Brooks was hailed as a Southern hero, Sumner as a Northern martyr.

For a while, there were two governments established in Kansas--one pro-slavery and the other anti-slavery. Finally, in 1861, Kansas joined as a free state. This 1854 Act was the final compromise before outright conflict and war between North and South.

Name/Section:
U.S. History
Mrs. Jimenez

U.S. Expansion Map

Label this map with the following territories the U.S. gained. Answer on your own, then check and correct your work with the map we completed in class or pg. 396 in your textbook.



1. Thirteen Original States (1787)
2. Oregon Country (1846)
3. Mexican Cession (1848)
4. Land from Webster- Ashburton Treaty (1842)*
5. Louisiana Purchase (1803)
6. Gadsden Purchase (1853)
7. Convention of 1818
8. Florida Cession (1821)
9. Texas Annexation (1845)
10. United States (Treaty of Paris 1783).

*Not marked on map; you have to draw it in.

Thursday's Lesson: *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 1857

On March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court handed down one of the most momentous and most controversial decisions in its history. It dealt with the case of the slave Dred Scott. Some years before he had been taken by his master to Illinois, where the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had forbidden slavery, and then then to the Wisconsin territory, where slavery had been prohibited by the Missouri Compromise. Afterwards he returned to Missouri. Now he sued for his freedom.

Life as a Slave

Dred Scott was born a slave in Southampton county, Virginia, around 1799. His original owner, Peter Blow, moved to Alabama in 1818 and then relocated to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1830, taking with him his property—including his slaves—as he moved west. Blow died in 1832, and Dr. John Emerson, an army surgeon, purchased Scott. From December 1, 1833, until May 4, 1836, Emerson served as the post physician at Fort Armstrong, Illinois, near the present city of Rock Island. Scott lived with Emerson on the army post. Because Illinois was a free state, Scott could have claimed his freedom during these years. For reasons unknown, however, he did not do so.

In 1836 Scott accompanied Emerson to the doctor's new posting at Fort Snelling in the Wisconsin Territory. Although slavery was illegal in the Wisconsin Territory, Scott remained a slave at Fort Snelling from his arrival through his departure in April 1838. During those two years he met and married Harriet Robinson, a slave owned by Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the Indian agent stationed there. Neither Scott nor his wife claimed freedom at this time, and at some point Harriet's ownership passed into Emerson's hands. In November 1837 the army transferred Emerson to Fort Jesup in Louisiana, where he met and married Eliza Irene Sandford. Emerson then sent for his slaves, and the Scotts traveled down the Mississippi River to Louisiana, meeting up with Emerson in April. The two passed through free jurisdictions on the voyage, but once again they did not claim their freedom.

When the army sent Emerson to Florida to serve during the Seminole War, he settled his wife and slaves in St. Louis, Missouri. After the fighting ended, Emerson went to the Iowa Territory, but the Scott family--which now included two daughters--remained in St. Louis, where they apparently hired out their services to various people. In December 1843 Emerson suddenly died, leaving his estate—including the Scotts—to his widow. For the next three years the Scotts worked as hired slaves, with the money they earned going to Irene Emerson. Scott offered to purchase his freedom, but Irene Emerson refused to sell him to himself.

In April 1846, Dred and Harriet filed separate lawsuits for freedom in the St. Louis Circuit Court against Irene Emerson based on two Missouri statutes. One statute allowed any person of any color to sue for wrongful enslavement. The other stated that any person taken to a free territory automatically became free and could not be re-enslaved upon returning to a slave state. Neither Dred nor Harriet Scott could read or write and they needed both logistical and financial support to plead their case. They received it from their church, abolitionists and an unlikely source, the Blow family who had once owned them.

The Case

After fighting in the lower courts, Scott's case finally came up to the United States Supreme Court, which had to review the decision of the federal circuit court for Missouri. That court had declared that Scott remained a slave despite his travels and that, as he was not a citizen of Missouri, he did not even have the right to bring suit. To review this decision, the justices had to decide whether Scott was a citizen. That, of course, meant deciding whether he was free--which was what the case was all about. So the court decided to answer these two questions--was Scott a citizen and was he free?

The decision against Scott was 7 to 2. Its clarity was confused by the fact that each judge wrote his own opinion to support his vote. But the opinion of Roger B. Taney (pronounced "Tawney") as the Chief Justice was the most important. Blacks, according to Taney, could not be citizens. The Constitution had been made by and for white men only. So Scott could not bring suit in court. Taney wrote:

The question is simply this: Can a negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States in the cases specified in the Constitution....

The words "people of the United States" and "citizens" are synonymous terms, and mean the same thing. ...The question before us is, whether the class of persons described in the plea in abatement [people of African ancestry] compose a portion of this people, and are constituent members of this sovereignty? We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States. On the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them....

No one of that race had ever migrated to the United States voluntarily; all of them had been brought here as articles of merchandise. The number that had been emancipated at that time were but few in comparison with those held in slavery; and they were identified in the public mind with the race to which they belonged, and regarded as a part of the slave population rather than the free. It is obvious that they were not even in the minds of the framers of the Constitution when they were conferring special rights and privileges upon the citizens of a State in every other part of the Union.

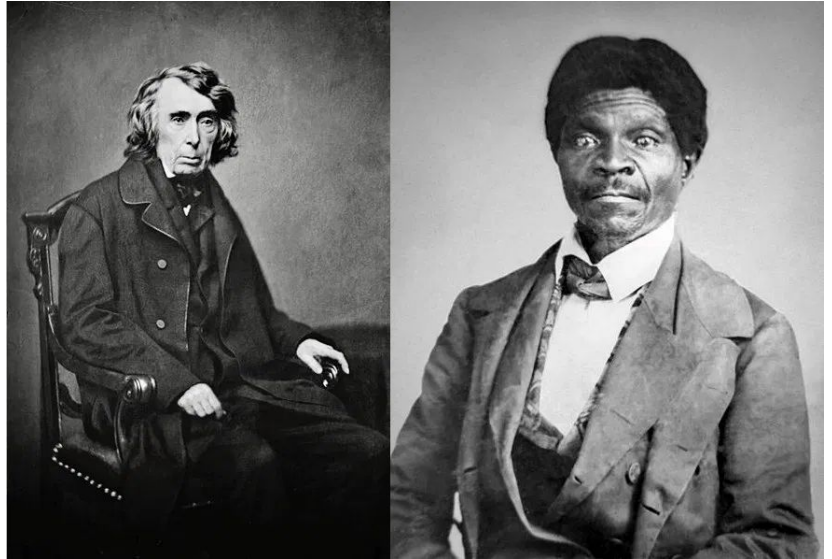
Most of Justice Taney's decision goes on like the above, describing the inferior status of blacks and showing all the ways in which they were not and never were intended to be citizens of the United States, even if freed from the bonds of slavery. He then dismisses Scott's lawsuit as a "nonentity" because not being a citizen, he did not have the right to the law courts and justice system of the United States. Finally, Taney turns to Scott's appeal for his freedom--his chance to live as free and independent human being--and briefly dismisses it:

Our notice of this part of the case will be very brief; for the principle on which it depends was decided in this court, upon much consideration, in the case of *Strader et al. v. Graham* [1850]. In that case, the slave had been taken from Kentucky to Ohio, with the consent of the owner, and afterwards brought back to Kentucky. And this court held that their status or condition, as free or slave, depended upon the laws of Kentucky, when they were brought back into that State, and not of Ohio; and that this court had no jurisdiction to revise the judgement of a State court upon its own laws. This was the point directly before the court, and the decision that this court had no jurisdiction turned upon it, as will be seen by the report of the case.

So in this case. As Scott was a slave when taken into the State of Illinois by his owner, and was there held as such, and brought back in that character, his status, as free or slave, depended on the laws of Missouri, and not of Illinois....

Upon the whole, therefore, it is the judgment of this court, that it appears by the record before us that the plaintiff in error is not a citizen of Missouri, in the sense in which that word is used in the Constitution; and that the Circuit Court of the United States, for that reason, had no jurisdiction in the case, and could give no judgment in it. Its judgment for the defendant must, consequently, be reversed, and a mandate issued, directing the suit to be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

Taney ruled that Scott was not free and, moreover, that the Missouri Compromise (and by inference the Northwest Ordinance and Kansas-Nebraska Act) was unconstitutional. Why? 1) A slave was the property of his owner. 2) The Constitution nowhere gave Congress the right to deprive a citizen of the United States of his slaves in the territories, lands which were the common property of all the states. What the Dred Scott decision meant was that Congress could do nothing about slavery in the territories. The people there had no power to restrict or abolish slavery until they applied for admission as a state. It was the most devastating ruling for abolitionists and for those who hoped to stop the spread of slavery. It dashed the hopes of black Americans by declaring that all blacks, slave or free, *could never be citizens of the United States*.



Roger B. Taney

Dred Scott

The South rejoiced that at last the highest court in the land had endorsed the proslavery doctrine of John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis. It now seemed that slavery would be able to spread into all the territories. The North was outraged. Some Northerners vowed to overturn the decision. Stephen A. Douglas and others who had hoped to bury the slavery issue through popular sovereignty were embarrassed. The Supreme Court, which was supposed to settle constitutional issues, had now deepened the nation's divisions and moved the nation's politics to the brink of war.

Finally Free

Dred Scott did, in fact, get his freedom, but not through the courts. By the time the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its Dred Scott decision, Irene had married her second husband, Calvin Chaffee, a U.S. congressman and abolitionist. Upset upon learning his wife still owned the most infamous slave of the time, he sold Scott and his family to Taylor Blow, the son of Peter Blow, Scott's original owner. Taylor freed Scott and his family on May 26, 1857. Scott found work as a porter in a St. Louis hotel, but didn't live long as a free man. At about 59 years of age, Scott died from tuberculosis on September 17, 1858. Harriet Scott lived until June 1876, long enough to see the Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment finally abolish slavery in the United States.

Sources:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2933t.html>;

A History of the United States by Boorstin and Kelley.

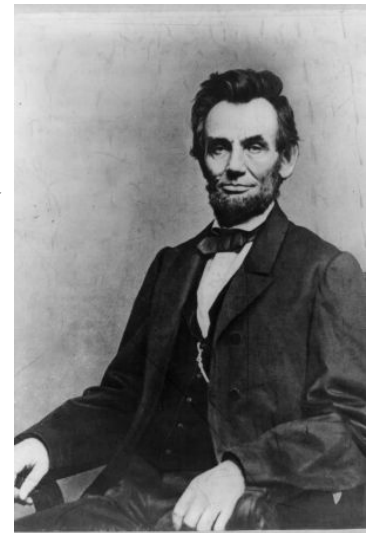
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dred-Scott>

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/dred-scott-case>

Friday's Lesson: Abraham Lincoln

Early Years

Abraham Lincoln's life was a capsule history of the United States. His restless family had come from England to New England and then to Pennsylvania. Lincoln's great-grandfather had lived in Virginia, where he had five sons. Four of them moved west. In 1786 Lincoln's grandfather who had gone to Kentucky, was killed by Indians while clearing his farmland in the forest. There in Kentucky Abraham's father was raised and there the future president was born on February 12, 1809.



Abraham was born to Nancy and Thomas Lincoln in a one-room log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. Unlike other "log-cabin" candidates before him, Lincoln really was born in a log cabin. When he was seven, his family moved to southern Indiana in 1816. Although Lincoln's formal schooling was limited to three brief periods in local schools because he had to work constantly to support his family, he was an avid reader and self-educated himself in his spare time. He especially enjoyed reading the Bible, William Shakespeare, and stories about the Founding Fathers.

As a young man, Lincoln settled in the town of New Salem, Illinois, where he built a flatboat and navigated down the Mississippi to New Orleans. For a while he worked as a surveyor, a shopkeeper, and a postmaster. He was elected captain of the militia that chased Chief Black Hawk and his Indians back to the Wisconsin wilderness. He soon became involved in local politics as a supporter of the Whig Party, winning election to the Illinois state legislature in 1834; he won a seat four more times. Like his Whig heroes Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery to the territories, and had a grand vision of the expanding United States, with a focus on commerce and cities rather than agriculture.

Lincoln taught himself law, passing the bar examination in 1836. The following year, he moved to the newly named state capital of Springfield. For the next few years, he worked there as a lawyer and served clients ranging from individual residents of small towns to national railroad lines. He was especially successful before juries. In Springfield, he met Mary Todd, a well-to-do Kentucky belle with many suitors (including Lincoln's future political rival, Stephen Douglas), and they married in 1842. The Lincolns went on to have four sons together, though only one, Robert Todd Lincoln, would live to adulthood.

Lincoln entered national politics when he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1846 and began serving his term the following year. As a congressman, Lincoln was unpopular with many Illinois voters for his strong stance against the Mexican-American War. Promising not to seek reelection, he returned to Springfield in 1849 to live a private life.

Lincoln-Douglas Debates (1858)

Events conspired to push Lincoln back into national politics, however: Stephen A. Douglas, a leading Democrat in Congress from Illinois, had pushed through the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), which declared that the voters of each territory, rather than the federal government, had the right to decide whether the territory should be slave or free. Lincoln was absolutely opposed to it and joined the new Republican Party which formed in 1854 in opposition to slavery's expansion. It was mostly composed of Northern Whigs, Free-Soilers, and abolitionists. In 1858, when Douglas had to re-run for his seat in the Senate, Lincoln competed against him as the Republican candidate.

In June 1858, when Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination, he delivered his now-famous “house divided” speech, in which he quoted from the Gospels to illustrate his belief that: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved--I do not expect the house to fall--but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other.”

Lincoln believed slavery was a moral wrong and that a nation divided over the issue could not continue.



Stephen A. Douglas

Douglas, on the other hand, believed that slave and free states could continue to live together in peace and that popular sovereignty was the solution to the North/South disagreements over slavery. He did not care whether or not slavery was practiced--for him it was a political issue, not a moral one.

On Lincoln’s challenge, Douglas agreed to a series of seven debates. The difference between the candidates was striking. Douglas was scarcely five feet in height, thickset, quick, volcanic in speech and gesture. Lincoln, six foot four, lank and awkward, was a superb stump speaker. Slow, hesitant, and thoughtful at first, he captured his audience and carried it with him to share his beliefs. He had magic in his speech. With his slow backwoods drawl, using the simple words of the Bible, he uttered the wisdom of a philosopher. He told jokes and stories. He spoke the way the average man could imagine himself speaking.

The high point of the debates was reached at Freeport, IL, on August 27 when Lincoln asked Douglas whether the people of a territory could lawfully exclude slavery before they became a state. Douglas was caught in a dilemma: If he answered “yes,” he would seem to defy the *Dred Scott* decision which said Congress could not deprive a U.S. citizen of his slaves in the territories because slaves were property and the territories belonged to the whole nation. Not being states, they could not make laws regarding slavery. If Douglas answered “no,” he would oppose his own doctrine of popular sovereignty. He tried to get out of answering by saying the institution could not exist in a place if it was not supported by the local people, so slavery could be excluded by people failing to pass laws to protect it. He persisted in evading the moral issue of slavery, but the unstable position of “popular sovereignty” was revealed.

Lincoln lost the election and Douglas served for another term as Illinois senator. However, these debates were published in newspapers around the country, putting Lincoln in the national spotlight and prepared him to be the leading Republican and their presidential candidate in the 1860 election. He articulated clearly and thoughtfully the Republican position regarding slavery.

Presidential Election (1860)

The Republican Party, born in 1854, had put forth its first presidential candidate in 1856, John Fremont. He did not win, but the Republicans did better nationally than they had anticipated, Fremont gaining 11 free states and 114 electoral votes (compared to the winner’s, James Buchanan’s, 174). They also won many seats in Congress. Republicans had real hope of winning the White House in 1860. Lincoln was an ideal candidate for the Republicans because he was a moderate and had a clean slate, lacking a long political career. He was not an abolitionist--a “fire-eater,” as they were called--and although he argued against the expansion slavery, he thought it legally should be protected in the states where it was already an established institution. Also, although he thought slavery was a moral evil and that slaves were human who were entitled to liberty and dignity, he did not think they should be citizens

equal to white Americans. Finally, he believed in the union of the nation above all else and was adamant in his conviction against secession.

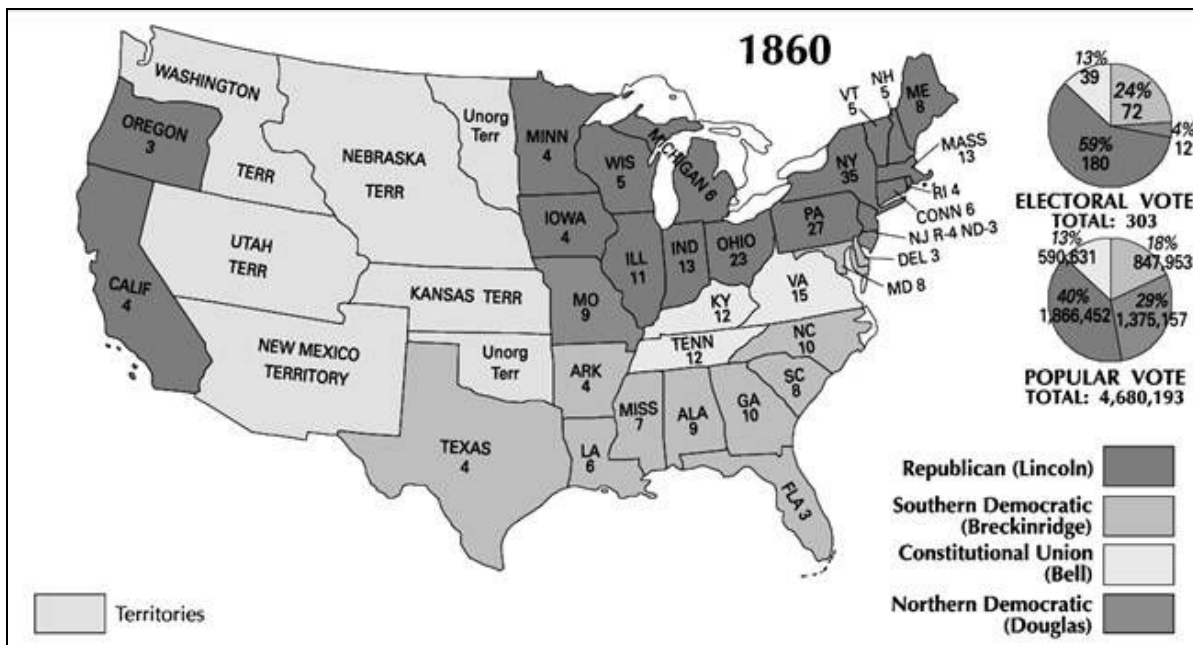
The Democratic Party, still a national party at this point, was beginning to splinter according to Northern and Southern sectional interests. When the Democrats met for their national convention in Charleston, SC, during the summer of 1860 to decide their platform and choose their presidential candidate, the party split. Southern Democrats demanded that the party declare its support for slavery in the territories while Northern Democrats rejected that; the two sides could not resolve their differences. The convention ended when the Southern delegates walked out. The Northern Democrats ended up nominating Stephen Douglas as their candidate while Southern Democrats chose their own pro-slavery and pro-secession candidate: John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky. The once national party was now officially divided along sectional lines. Many Southerners who were in favor of secession hoped the split in the Democratic Party and therefore the Democratic votes split along sectional lines would lead to a Republican victory. With a Northern, anti-slavery president, the South would have an excuse to secede.

A third party also formed for the election of 1860: the Constitutional-Unionists. It was made up of conservative Whigs and Know-Nothings. The party did not take a stand on slavery at all but only stood for the union of the nation, adamantly opposed to secession. John Bell of Tennessee was their candidate.

After receiving the Republican nomination, Lincoln stayed quiet. He did not go around campaigning, giving speeches, or writing articles. He knew his views on slavery and the Union were already dispersed in the papers from his debates with Douglas and he thought reiterating them was pointless and there was the danger that his words could be misconstrued.

Election day was November 6, 1860. It had the highest voter turn-out in U.S. history yet. Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, becoming our 16th president. He carried all 18 free states and received not a single southern electoral vote; his name did not even appear on the ballots of ten Southern states. Lincoln only received 40% of the popular vote, the votes split sectionally among the four candidates.

Although elected in November 1860, Lincoln would not take office until March 4, 1861. Before he took the oath of office, seven Southern states would secede from the Union and he would become president of a broken nation on the brink of war.



Secession Winter (1860-1861)

When word of Lincoln's victory reached South Carolina, the state which had long threatened secession, declared Lincoln as president a "hostile act." Delegates held a meeting in December 1860 and officially seceded from the United States on December 20. The announcement was met with celebrations and fireworks in South Carolina.

Other Southern states soon followed South Carolina's lead, holding their own conventions to vote on secession: Mississippi seceded January 9, 1861; Florida, January 10; Alabama, January 11; Georgia, January 19; Louisiana, January 26; and Texas, February 1. Delegates from these seven states met in Montgomery, Alabama in February 1861 to write a provisional constitution for what they claimed to be their new nation: the Confederate States of America (CSA). They elected a temporary president, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, until they had officially established themselves.

Meantime confusion reigned in Washington. The "lame duck" president, James Buchanan, anxiously awaited March 4 when he could hand off the nation's problems to president-elect, Abraham Lincoln. He said secession was illegal but he also claimed he had no power to compel states to stay in the Union if they didn't want to. Southern Congressmen from the seceded states resigned their positions and returned home. This was the situation Lincoln inherited when he became president on March 4, 1861.

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