

The Politics of Slavery

Slavery was a contentious issue in the politics of the United States from the 1770s through the 1860s. From the very beginning, it was a topic of debate in the drafting of the Constitution, with the slave trade protected for 20 years and slaves being counted toward Congressional apportionment. Slavery was also a subject of Federal legislation, as seen in the banning on the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808...

The protections of slavery in the Constitution strengthened the political power of Southern representatives and the southern economy had links nationwide. As the historian James Oliver Horton noted, slaveholders and the commodity crops of the South had a strong influence on United States politics and economy; New York City's economy was closely tied to the South through shipping and manufacturing, for instance. In addition, he noted that during the years between Presidents Lincoln and Washington, "50 of those years [had] a slaveholder as president of the United States. "

Northern Abolition

Between 1777 and 1804, anti-slavery laws or constitutions were passed in every state north of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line. By 1810, 75 percent of all blacks in the North were free. By 1840, virtually all blacks in the North were free. Free blacks were subject to racial segregation in the North and it took decades for some states to extend the franchise to them. As a result of the very gradual approach taken by many states, New York did not free its last slaves until 1829, Rhode Island had 5 slaves still listed in the 1840 census, Pennsylvania's last slaves were freed in 1847, Connecticut did not completely abolish slavery until 1848, and slavery was not completely lifted in New Hampshire and New Jersey until the nationwide emancipation in 1865.

The principal organized bodies to advocate these reforms in the north were the *Pennsylvania Abolition Society* and the *New York Manumission Society*. The emancipation of slaves in the North led to growth in the population of Northern free blacks, from several hundreds in the 1770s to nearly 50,000 by 1810.

Through the *Northwest Ordinance of 1787*, slavery was prohibited in the territories northwest of the Ohio River. That was a compromise, as Thomas Jefferson's original proposal in 1784 to end slavery in all the territories lost in Congress by one vote. As a result, the territories south of the Ohio River (and Missouri) continued to have full slavery. Yankees and Northerners predominated in the westward movement into the Midwestern territory after the American Revolution, and as the states were organized, they voted to prohibit slavery in their constitutions when they achieved statehood (Ohio in 1803, Indiana in 1816, and Illinois in 1818). What developed was a Northern geographic area that generally shared an anti-slavery culture. The exceptions were areas along the Ohio River settled by

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Southerners, including the southern portions of states such as Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. This led to those areas generally sharing Southern culture and positions.

The Dred Scott Decision

In 1846, Dred Scott, depicted in and his wife Harriet each sued for freedom in St. Louis, Missouri after the death of their master on the grounds that they had lived in a territory where slavery was forbidden. The case went through two state trials, the first denying and the second granting freedom to the couple and their two daughters. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, where it denied Scott his freedom in a sweeping decision that set the United States on a course for civil war. The court ruled that, under the Constitution, Dred Scott (and any other slave) was not a citizen who had a right to sue in the Federal courts. Many Republicans, including Abraham Lincoln, considered the decision unjust and proof that slavery's proponents had seized control of the Supreme Court.



Dred Scott was an African-American slave in the United States who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom and that of his wife and their two daughters in the Dred Scott v. Sandford case of 1857, popularly known as "the Dred Scott Decision. "

1860 Presidential Election (Lincoln is elected president)

The divisions between North and South became fully exposed with the 1860 presidential election. The electorate split four ways: Southern Democrats endorsed slavery, while the Republicans denounced it; Northern Democrats said democracy required the people to decide on slavery locally, while the Constitutional Union Party said the survival of the Union was at stake and everything else should be compromised. Lincoln's election (the Republican) split the nation along sectional lines. Many slave owners in the South feared that the real intent of the Republicans was the abolition of slavery in states where it already existed. They feared that the sudden emancipation of four million slaves would be problematic for the slave owners and for the economy that drew its greatest profits from the labor of people who were not paid.

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Four Corners Discussion/Debate.

By the 1860s, how much did the Constitution achieve early American ideals?

1: Stand by Superman

I choose **NO**, the Constitution **DID NOT** achieve early American ideals.

The author of the article states... which supports my argument because...

This quote “ _____ ” supports my argument, because...

If early Americans believed that... then...

This part in the text “ _____ ” reminds me of the ideal _____, because...

2: Stand by the Door

I choose **SOMEWHAT**, because the Constitution partly achieved early American ideals.

The author of the article states... then states this... which supports my argument because...

These quotes support my argument, because...

If early Americans believed that... then...

This part in the text “ _____ ” reminds me of the ideal _____, because...

Compromise was important, because...

3: Stand by the 3 Branches of Government

I choose **YES** the Constitution achieved early American ideals.

The author of the article states... which supports my argument because...

This quote “ _____ ” supports my argument, because...

If early Americans believed that... then...

This part in the text “ _____ ” reminds me of the ideal _____, because...

4: Stand by the Library

I am **UNSURE**, BUT I have questions ready to ask and discuss with the class.

I'm confused, by this quote “ _____ ” Does this support a YES / NO / SOMEWHAT position? How and why?

What does the author mean when they say...?

This quote “ _____ ” reminds me of... and this quote “ _____ ” reminds me of... Can anyone explain...?

I'm having trouble connecting / understanding / finding / ...

Which early American ideals...?