

Slavery: A Festering Wound

In what ways was slavery like a
festering wound?

Vocabulary

The North and South had to come to a **compromise** about slavery in order for both sides to be happy.

The **abolitionists** were happy with the Supreme Court's decision in the *Amistad* trial and celebrated when the Africans were allowed to return to Africa.

The South threatened to **secede** from the United States if slavery was made illegal.

Through **popular sovereignty** the people in each state decided if their state would allow slavery.

Free States and **Slave States** were often arguing over slavery.

The North was trying to **abolish** slavery in Washington DC.

Fugitive slaves would often try to escape to the North where slavery was illegal.

Vocabulary

Compromise - When two people or groups with different opinions come to an agreement where both get a little of what they want and have to give a little up.

Abolitionist - Someone who wants to end the practice of slavery

Secede - to leave or break away from

Popular Sovereignty - everyone votes and the majority rules

Free State – State where slavery is illegal (not allowed)

Slave State – State where slavery is legal (allowed)

Abolish – to make illegal, to get rid of

Fugitive Slave – a run-away slave

“A house divided against
itself cannot stand...”

The Problem - California

California wants to join the United States as a free state.

Southern viewpoint: If this happens, the North will have two more votes in the Senate than the South and be able to block the South in all votes. Also, slave owners want to open new slave plantations in California.

Northern viewpoint: If California is made to join the US as a slave state, the South will have two more votes in the Senate than the North and be able to block the South in all votes.

The Problem – The Mexican Cession

Slavery spreading west (southwest United States)

Northern Viewpoint: Slavery should not be allowed to spread into the western territories (land gained in the Mexican Cessions). It can continue where it already exists, but we must strongly argue that slavery is wrong.

Southern Viewpoint: Slave-owners should be allowed to take their property into the western territories. Slaves are needed to pick cotton and good for the economy. We need more cotton plantations to keep up with the demand. Without slaves, the US economy would suffer.

The Problem – Washington DC

Slavery in Washington DC

Northern Viewpoint: Slavery should be abolished in our nation's capital. It is a national disgrace for slavery to exist there.

Southern Viewpoint: Slavery has been allowed in Washington DC since it became our nation's capital. It is part of our tradition as a country and should not be changed.

The Problem – Run Away Slaves

Fugitive (run away) Slaves in the North

Northern Viewpoint: If a slave escapes to the North, he/she is in free territory since slavery is outlawed in the North. Therefore, the slave is now a free person.

Southern Viewpoint: Northern officials are refusing to help in the capture and return of southern property. Northern groups like the Underground Railroad are invading the South to help slaves escape. Run away slaves who escape to the North are fugitives and should be returned to their masters in the south just the same as a run away dog or other lost property.

The Solution: Maintain the Balance!

Compromise of 1850

- Victory to the North: California enters the United States as a free state and slavery is abolished in Washington DC.
- Victory to the South: All future US territories and states will decide by popular sovereignty if they will allow slavery among themselves or not.

Fugitive Slave Act 1850

- Black accused of being fugitive could be held without warrant/trial
- Northerners required by law to turn known fugitive slaves over to a federal official (police).
- Federal official paid \$5 if the black person is released, but \$10 if the black person was turned over to a slave holder.

Is the problem solved?

A House Divided

Abraham Lincoln:

“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 this house to fall – but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

- Lincoln, 1858