

Compromises leading to the civil war essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



The Missouri Compromise was the first serious attempt at a solution to slavery. Little did the people who made the compromise and the citizens of the United States know that an era of 41 years of compromising was to follow. The tensions that were prevalent throughout the country had to be tended to, even though the multiple attempts were unsuccessful. The Government actions, Supreme Court cases, and individual movement failed to eliminate North-South tensions because the issue of slavery was so deeply rooted within the mindset of Northern and Southern people.

The Missouri Compromise's initial attempt to ease sectional tensions ultimately failed as the sectional differences between the North and South were increased. The main reasons the tensions were increased after the making of the Missouri Compromise were due to shortcomings in the compromise, and the failure of agreement between the North and the South. The purpose of a compromise is to make both sides happy, but prior the Civil War, neither side was ever happy at the end of a compromise. It was nearly impossible to satisfy both the slave-dependent southerners and the abolitionist northerners (Documents B and F). Because it was so difficult to make compromises with both sides, tensions continually rose even though people like Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were attempting to keep the Union intact.

Webster and Clay, the great compromiser, were known as Unionists, or people who wanted to keep the Union as one, and do anything to promote this somewhat unrealistic idea (Documents A and D). The never-ending compromises from Unionists and the stingy, stubborn thoughts from the

Northern and Southern citizens and Congressmen severely increased tensions. Although the Civil War may have been postponed by compromises, it of course was not prevented. The shortcomings of the Missouri Compromise were also seen in later years. The unforeseen strain on the Union was greatly swelled as the Missouri Compromise brought both sides further apart. Future land acquired after the Mexican American War did not help the situation either.

The positive feelings about gaining land in the Mexican American War ultimately turned into controversial fights about the dividing line for slavery because of the no longer relevant Missouri Compromise. The best example to demonstrate how desperate people were to get their way was seen in Kansas. The idea of popular sovereignty in United States territories, created by the Compromise of 1850, elevated hopes for both sides to change the view of slavery in the United States. The significance of popular sovereignty was not seen until severe problems began occurring in Kansas. Southern extremists and Northern abolitionists made the trek to Kansas to support their side, but were met by the violence of the others. Even in Congress, violence was seen between Northerners and Southerners (Document E).

Eventually, the problem seemed so far fetched to fix that Congress had thoughts of ignoring it completely (Document C). Individual action was taken in the territories by super extremists like John Brown. John Brown led anti-slavery Northerners into Kansas to help stop the illegal actions of "border ruffians". Eventually things got out of hand, and Brown ended up killing over

20 men at Osawatimie. The violence was so strong and intense in Kansas, that tensions were peaking higher than at any previous point in history.

The Supreme Court's decision about the Dred Scott case was meant to be a solution, but actually brought sectional tensions to their zenith. The Dred Scott case violated all that was said in the Compromise of 1850. Most importantly, it denied the right of popular sovereignty to the people, and stated that slaves are property, and are legal everywhere. This decision obviously infuriated Northerners, but protected Southerners and their alleged rights. The Dred Scott case happened to be the tip of the iceberg for the battle on slavery between the North and the South. South Carolina seceded just three years after the decision. The combination of the election of Abraham Lincoln as president (Document H), and the towering tensions between the Northern and Southern people, forced the end of the compromise era, and the beginning of the Civil War in America.

The multitudes of attempts made to salvage the Union without a civil war failed. The compromises, although occasionally beneficial, never worked out, and left the Union in 2 pieces. Had Abraham Lincoln not had his specific view on slavery, the United States might not be the United States today (Document G). The many compromises, Supreme Court cases, and civilian actions did not succeed in keeping a strong Union.