

The 13th amendment

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In 1865 a new amendment was passed, becoming the thirteenth amendment to The Constitution. This amendment pertained to slavery and making it illegal to own slaves. This amendment was passed by Abraham Lincoln while he was in office. The thirteenth amendment was one of three very important ones passed after the civil war. This amendment is regarded as one of the most important amendments to date. It is very easy to see how this could be a result of the Civil War, which was fought over slavery. The United States was a nation divided by slavery, creating two sides, The North which was against slavery and the South which wanted slavery. The thirteenth amendment that we now have is not the original version of the amendment. There was a thirteenth amendment that was passed prior to the one we know of now. This particular one was responsible for guaranteeing slavery as legal and acceptable. This version was never sent to each state to be ratified due to the civil war. Our final amendment was truly passed during the civil war while the southern states were excluded from congress. This was a very strategic move, allowing for there to be no opposition to the amendment, which ensured that it would be passed very quickly. One would think today that it must have easily passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Not true. As a matter of fact, although passed in April 1864 by the Senate, with a vote of 38 to 6, the required two-thirds majority was defeated in the House of Representatives by a vote of 93 to 65. Abolishing slavery was almost exclusively a Republican Party effort--only four Democrats voted for it. It was at this point that Lincoln took a major role in pushing the amendment through congress. He insisted that the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment be added to the Republican Party platform for the upcoming

presidential elections. He used all of his political skill and influences to convince additional democrats to support the amendments' passage. His efforts finally met with success, when the House passed the bill in January 1865 with a vote of 119-56. Another requirement for the Southern states to return to congress with full rights and powers was adoption of the thirteenth amendment. Lincoln is very often criticized for his Emancipation Proclamation, which is seen as the father of the thirteenth amendment. The Proclamation was passed by Lincoln to free all slaves, well before the thirteenth amendment. The only problem with it was that he had no right nor the powers to single handedly pass it. The Emancipation Proclamation is now seen as a " hollow" document. Lincoln correctly realized during the Civil War that he needed to pass a better document. That was his main reason for jumping on board with the amendment and supporting it as avidly as he did. It allowed him to abolish slavery like he wanted, and he could do it the correct way this time. This amendment is still important to us because it is still in use. It makes all slavery unlawful for any reason. The only type of slavery that is excluded is a prisoner for any crime. There is still many rules for making them work. The prisoner must be duly convicted in the United States and deemed as not a run away threat. The prisoners are closely guarded during their forced work periods.