

Compromise of 1850



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From a standpoint of historical observation, actions taken by others in the hopes of paving the way for real change, have tended to do just that. In the case of the founders, their action for desiring a separation from England, would result in the creation of the Declaration of Independence and a new nation known as America. Almost 75 years later, change would come once more, in the form of handling the issue of slavery that would have been rampant throughout the countryside. An inherent desire amongst those who were bound by slavery, to in fact experience the same form of general freedom, that Thomas Jefferson would have talked about, when he made known that he considered all men should be created equal. While that statement had many different interpretations placed upon it, the Compromise of 1850, in part, would seek to address the issue of slavery. As for its definition, " The Compromise of 1850 was a series of five bills that were intended to stave off sectional strife. Its goal was to deal with the spread of slavery to territories in order to keep northern and southern interests in balance," (Kelly, p. 1). For the young nation, the hope would be to equalize the relations between both the northern region, as well as the south and enable both sides to come to the same respective unity. The discussion over slavery, would remain one of the more potentially contentious portions of the proposed plan itself. In this case, " Of all the bills that made up the Compromise of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was the most controversial. It required citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves. It denied a fugitive's right to a jury trial. (Cases would instead be handled by special commissioners -- commissioners who would be paid \$5 if an alleged fugitive were released and \$10 if he or she were sent away with the claimant.) The act called for changes in filing for a claim, making the process

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easier for slave owners. Also, according to the act, there would be more federal officials responsible for enforcing the law," (" The Compromise", p. 1).

In assessing the nature of the Fugitive Slave Act, the process by which trials would have been handled, would have been alarming at best. It would not provide for an honest and fair trial for someone who was fleeing the life of being a slave but rather, would give preferential treatment towards the slave owners and in this case, make it easier for them than it would have been for the slaves who were running for their lives. Monetary compensation would be provided to the individuals charged with overseeing the proceedings, with higher monetary means being provided, if the slaves were in fact returned to their slave owners. A slight increase in funds in comparison to how much they would have been paid, had the slave been let go but just the same, an increase of any measure. Credence would be given to the allocation of more officers to enforce the law and an insistence that average citizens would take part in finding missing slaves.

In reading historical accounts of the slavery movement, those who sought to free slaves through the usage of the underground railroad system, became more and more, as a result of the desire to free those who had been enslaved. " Passage of the Fugitive Slave Act made abolitionists all the more resolved to put an end to slavery. The Underground Railroad became more active, reaching its peak between 1850 and 1860. The act also brought the subject of slavery before the nation. Many who had previously been ambivalent about slavery now took a definitive stance against the institution," (" The Compromise", p. 1). As a consequence of the desire to free those wrongly held, brave individuals would seek to take action and see <https://assignbuster.com/compromise-of-1850-essay-samples/>

that these slaves were given the chance to gain freedom. The nature of the process would remain very secretive, as many would have feared death, or other harmful retribution for their actions.

The history of the United States was been built upon many things, since it was first created at the end of the 1700's. As part of the national framework and woven in with the inner fibers of the national conscious, slavery was something that existed for many years and something that would prove to be extremely contentious. The desire of those who felt captured within a system that would have surely been against them, if only based upon the color of their skin. Just as it would be for many other declarations from the elected government, the Compromise of 1850 would have been a benefit towards the cause of slavery but only briefly. With the passage of time, came the increased division between the citizenry over the issue of slavery to where, at the end of the day, the citizens would find themselves, maybe not as divided as before but divided just the same.

References

Kelly, Martin. " Compromise of 1850". Retrieved from <http://americanhistory.about.com/od/beforethewar/g/compromise1850.htm>

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