

Missouri compromise

[Law](#), [Constitution](#)



Missouri Compromise In 1819, the territory of Missouri applied for statehood. It was the first new state to be taken from the land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. The issue of Missouri attempting to become a state sparked much debate and controversy. The debate in Congress was mainly about sectional power and not whether slavery was right or wrong. The people from the North disagreed with the added representation in Congress and in the Electoral College. Since Missouri would be a slave state, they would be able to count three-fifths of their slave population towards representation. The three-fifths rule had already added significant power to the South. In 1790, the South controlled 47 percent of Congress while only having 40 percent of the white population. The crisis brought the commitment of slavery and the resentment of Southern political power to a heated collision. The North vowed to give up no more land to slavery, while the South began talks of dissolving the union and civil war. One man, James Tallmadge Jr., a congressman from New York, proposed amendments to the bill attempting to allow Missouri to become a state. One proposed the ban of additional slaves to be brought into Missouri. This would not allow Missouri to gain more representation by simply increasing their number of slaves. Also, the amendments would emancipate Missouri slaves born after its admission as a state when they reached an age of 25. This again would limit Missouri's slave population. The voting on the Tallmadge amendments was again largely sectional. The North had held a large majority in the House of Representatives and the South had a small majority in the Senate. The House accepted the amendments but the southern senators with help from a few others defeated them in the Senate. After being deadlocked in Congress,

the Missouri Compromise was finally passed by a new Congress in 1820. As part of the compromise, Massachusetts had offered its northern most counties to become the new free state of Maine. The addition of two new states kept the balance between free and slave states. This settled the fears of the South gaining votes in the House or Senate. Along with this there was the Thomas Proviso which would admit Missouri as a state on the condition that the South would agree to outlaw slavery above a line from the Spanish Territory to the southern border of Missouri. This allowed slavery in the Arkansas Territory but banned slavery in the remainder of the Louisiana Territory. The bill that eventually passes and allows Missouri to become a state was partially crafted by Henry Clay. At the time Clay who was from Kentucky and was the speaker of the House and he strongly supported the balance of free and slave states. He did much campaigning to secure the passage of the compromise, so much so that he is generally regarded as the author despite Jesse B. Thomas who was far more responsible for the original bill. After this, Clay ran for President in 1824, but was defeated. He then gave his support to John Quincy Adams in exchange for being named secretary of state. Clay hoped this nomination would eventually lead to own presidency but it did not. He eventually made his way to the Senate, where at one point in his career he was dubbed "The Dictator" by some of his Senate colleagues. His more lasting fame and greatest contribution to his country was achieved in the role of "The Great Pacificator," the man who held together the Union. Clay was instrumental in forming not only the Missouri Compromise, but also the Compromise of 1833 which was a response to the Tariff Act of 1832 and the Compromise of 1850, which was a

continuation of the Missouri Compromise. Clay's gift for negotiating compromises between the North and South helped maintain a balance between slave states and free states and may very well have averted the start of the Civil War by several years. Clay's dedication to nationalism through many public policies may also have helped keep the Union intact. However, it should be considered that by working to please both the North and the South, Clay might have missed an opportunity to become a formidable leader of the North. Had he unified the North in opposition to slavery, weakened the South with restrictions, and prevented the admission of more slave states, it is possible that the perceived strength of the Union might have made war unthinkable to the South. Although Clay failed to become President he is remembered as one of the greatest influencers of our nation's history. There was a clearly defined need for the Missouri Compromise. The admission of new states to the union required a bill that dictated their stance on slavery and kept the balance of power in Congress. With the balance of free states and slave states, neither side was going to give up its share of control in the future development of the country. There had to be a way to divide the newly acquired territories from the Louisiana Purchase that was agreeable for both sides. Even though the compromise was eventually overturned by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, it was instrumental in dictating the values and ideas of the American people. It was a sincere attempt to keep a balance between two rivaling factions and demonstrated that compromises can be made in order to attain what is best for all people.

Works Cited Mintz, Steven. " The Missouri Compromise." Digital History. 25 Oct. 2005. University of Houston. 2 Nov. 2005 . Rush, Thomas. " The Missouri

Compromise." Eagleton Institute of Politics. 22 Oct. 2005. Rutgers University.
2 Nov. 2005 .