

## The Missouri Compromise

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more people began moving west. As a result, more territories in America became eligible to become states. The original states were quite interested in these new states, because they wanted these new states be on their side of the arguments between the North and the South.

The North wanted the new states to agree with them, while the South wanted the new states to vote for what the South wanted. Mostly, the South wanted the new states to be slave states, where were states where it was legal to own slaves. The North disagreed. They wanted the new states to be free states. In a free state, slavery was forbidden. If either the North or the South gained a majority of representatives and senators in Congress, they would be able to pass laws against the wishes of the other side.

In 1819, the United States was evenly balanced between slave states and free states. There were eleven slave states and eleven free states. Missouri applied to be admitted to the Union. Missouri wanted to be a slave state. This caused many debates in Congress.

Finally, Congress reached an agreement called the Missouri Compromise in 1820. The Missouri Compromise allowed Missouri to be admitted as a slave state; to balance that, Maine was also admitted to the Union as a free state. In addition, Congress drew a line from east to west across the territories. It was agreed that all lands north of this line (except Missouri) would be free, and all lands south of the line would be allowed to own slaves. The line that was drawn is known as the Mason-Dixon line.

The Mason-Dixon line gets its name from Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon. Both of these men surveyed the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania after there was an argument over the boundary line between two colonies. Mason and Dixon surveyed the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania from 1793-1767. The Mason-Dixon line was named after them and was the unofficial boundary between the North and the South.

The Missouri Compromise was challenged when Dred Scott took a case before the Supreme Court. Dred Scott was a slave who wanted his freedom. His owner moved from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Wisconsin. While in Wisconsin, Scott was married and had children. When Scott's owner moved back to Missouri, he took Scott and Scott's family with him, as slaves. Dred Scott went to court and argued that he and his family were no longer slaves because they had lived in a free territory.

The Supreme Court heard Scott's case, but they did not give Scott and his family their freedom. The Court took an extreme pro-slavery stand. Most of the justices on the Court were from the South, and they declared that Scott and his family were slaves. They also ruled that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional by claiming that Congress did not have the right to exclude slavery from any territory. Dred Scott and his wife were later freed by a different master and got jobs in St. Louis.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## The Missouri Compromise Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. The Missouri Compromise was challenged when Dred Scott took a case before the:
  - a. Mason-Dixon Line
  - b. Supreme Court
  - c. Union
  - d. St. Louis Court
  
2. In 1819, in the United States, there were this many free states and slave states.
  - a. Six
  - b. Ten
  - c. Thirteen
  - d. Eleven
  
3. Mason and Dixon surveyed the boundary between Maryland and this state:
  - a. Delaware
  - b. New Jersey
  - c. Virginia
  - d. Pennsylvania

### True or False:

- \_\_\_ 4. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more people began moving west.
- \_\_\_ 5. The Mason-Dixon line gets its name from Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon.
- \_\_\_ 6. Dred Scott won his case and was given his freedom.
- \_\_\_ 7. Dred Scott lived in Michigan.
- \_\_\_ 8. The Missouri Compromise was ruled unconstitutional by claiming that Congress did not have the right to exclude slavery from any territory.
- \_\_\_ 9. The Missouri Compromise allowed Missouri to be admitted as a free state.

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## The Missouri Compromise Answers

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