

The Changing Face of the Nation: Admitting and Acquiring New States



In 1819 the Missouri Territory asked Congress for admission as a state. Most Missouri settlers had come from Kentucky and Tennessee, which allowed slavery. They believed slavery ought to be legal in Missouri.

Representative James Tallmadge proposed that Missouri gradually abolish slavery in order to be admitted to the union. The House passed this plan, but the Senate did not. At the time, the population in the North was slightly larger than in the South. As a result, the North had 105 members in the House of Representatives, compared to the South's 81 members. Representation in the Senate was balanced, with 11 slave states and 11 free states. The addition of

Missouri as a free state would put the South in the minority in both houses of Congress.

Debates in Congress heated to a boiling point, and some worried the Union might split over the issue. To ease tensions, Henry Clay proposed **The Missouri Compromise**. Clay proposed that Maine, in the northeast, be admitted as a free state and then Missouri could be admitted as a slave state. This would keep an even balance of power in the Senate- 12 free and 12 slave states.

The Missouri Compromise also addressed the question of slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Territory. The compromise drew a line west from the southern boundary of Missouri, at 36 °30' N latitude. The compromise blocked slavery north of the line but permitted it south of the line.

The Missouri Compromise promised a temporary solution to a sectional conflict. It did nothing to solve the basic problem, though. Americans who moved west took their different ways of life with them. White Southerners who moved west expected that slavery become a part of their new way of life there, while Northerners believed in labor by free people. It was a disagreement that seemed to have no peaceful solution.

1. Why did Missouri's desire to become a state spark a crisis for the United States?

2. Describe the terms of the Missouri Compromise.

3. Based on the map, how was Missouri an exception to the terms of the compromise?

4. Why did the Missouri Compromise fail to solve the issue of slavery?

Acquiring Florida

In 1817, the United States and Great Britain agreed to limit the number of armed naval vessels on the Great Lakes. Each country agreed to take apart or destroy armed ships on the Great Lakes as a sign of peace after the war. Later in 1818, the border between Canada and the Louisiana Territory was also established at the 49th Parallel.

While new boundaries west and north were being negotiated, the United States also had to manage an issue in the South with Spain, who owned the colonies of East Florida and West Florida. In 1810, American settlers in West Florida rebelled against Spanish rule. The U.S. government then argued that it was actually part of the Louisiana Purchase. Native Americans living in Spanish East Florida sometimes raided American settlements in Georgia. Florida was also a refuge for runaway slaves from Georgia and South Carolina. So in 1810 and 1812, the United States took control of sections of West Florida. Spain objected to losing part of West Florida, but took no action against the United States.

General **Andrew Jackson** was ordered to stop the Seminole Indians raids in Georgia. He believed that his orders included pursuing the Seminole Indians into the Florida colonies. In the spring of 1818, Jackson followed the Seminoles into Spanish West Florida, where he also seized Spanish forts at Pensacola and San Marcos. Secretary of State Adams had not authorized Jackson to do this, but he did nothing to stop it, either.

Spain, busy fighting rebels in Latin America, protested but did little else. Not wanting to find itself in a war with the United States, they were willing to discuss peace talks. In the end, Secretary of State **John Quincy Adams** worked out a treaty with Spain's foreign minister where Spain agreed to give Florida to the United State for \$5 million.

5. How did the United States acquire (gain) some of Florida in 1810 and 1812?

6. What role did Andrew Jackson play in gaining Florida from Spain?

7. Why was Spain so willing to negotiate a treaty with the United States over Florida? What did each side gain from the deal?
