

Handout G: Laws About Slavery

The Missouri Compromise, 1820

[I]n all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude, not included within the limits of the state, contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, shall be, and is hereby, forever prohibited: Provided always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labour or service is lawfully claimed, in any state or territory of the United States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labour or service as aforesaid.

1. Can Congress limit slavery in the Louisiana Territory under the provisions in the U.S. Constitution?

Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

[W]hen a person held to service or labor in any State or Territory of the United States, has heretofore or shall hereafter escape into another State or Territory of the United States, the person or persons to whom such service or labor may be due ... may pursue and reclaim such fugitive person, either by procuring a warrant from some one of the courts, judges, or commissioners ... for the apprehension of such fugitive from service or labor, or by seizing and arresting such fugitive...

1. How does the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 expand the protections given to slave owners in the U.S. Constitution and the Missouri Compromise?