

## Abraham Lincoln Speech at Springfield Illinois, June 26, 1857

[The Dred Scott decision] declares two propositions-first, that a negro cannot sue in the U.S. Courts; and secondly, that Congress cannot prohibit slavery in the Territories. It was made by a divided court-dividing differently on the different points.

We believe...in obedience to, and respect for the judicial department of government. We think its decisions on Constitutional questions...should control not only the particular cases decided, but the general policy of the country...But we think the Dred Scott decision is erroneous. We know the court that made it, has often over-ruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it to over-rule this. We offer no resistance to it.

If this important decision had been made by a unanimous vote, without any apparent partisan bias, and in agreement with public opinion...then it might be...[controversial], nay, even revolutionary, to not [agree with it] as a precedent.

Chief Justice Taney, in his opinion in the Dred Scott case, admits that the language of the [Declaration of Independence] is broad enough to include the whole human family, but he and Judge Douglas argue that the authors of [the Declaration] did not intend to include negroes, by the fact that they did not at once, actually place them equal with whites. And this is the staple argument of both the Chief Justice and Senator [Stephen Douglas], for doing this obvious violence to the plain unmistakable language of the Declaration. I think the authors of that [document] intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal-equal in "certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This they said, and this meant.

Author:

Audience:

Reason:

Main Idea:

Questions:

1. What point does Lincoln disagree with Taney & Senator Douglas on?
2. How does this disagreement affect each side's view of the Dred Scott decision?

AUTHOR

Who created the source?

What do you know about the author?

What is the author's point of view?

AUDIENCE

For whom was the source created?

How might this affect the reliability of the source?

REASON

Why was this source created at the time it was produced?

THE MAIN IDEA

What point is the source trying to convey?

---

William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, March 12, 1858

We are here to enter our indignant protest against the Dred Scott decision-against the infamous Fugitive Slave Law-against all unjust and oppressive enactments, with reference to distinctions between skin color-against the alarming aggressions of the Slave Power upon the rights of the people of the North-and especially against the existence of the slave system at the South, from which all these have naturally sprung, as streams of lava from a burning volcano.

We are here to reiterate the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, and to call for their practical enforcement throughout our land. We are here to declare that the men who, like CRISPUS ATTUCKS, were ready to lay down their lives to secure American Independence, and the blessings of liberty-who, in every period of our history, at all times, and in all parts of the country, on the land and on the sea, have ever been prompt in the hour of peril to fill "the deadly, imminent breach," pour out their blood like water, and repel the minions of foreign tyranny from our shores-are not the men to be denied the claims of human nature, or the rights of citizenship.

Alas! What have they reaped for all their patriotic toils and sufferings but [discrimination and exclusion]? O, shame on this cruelly unjust and most guilty nation! I trust in God that no colored men will ever again be found ready to fight under its banner, however great the danger that may menace it from abroad, until their rights are first secured, and every slave be set free. If they have no scruples in using the sword in defense of liberty, let them at least refuse to draw it in behalf of those who despise and oppress them.

Author:

Audience:

Reason:

Main Idea:

Questions

1. What is Garrison saying about the influence of the southern states?

2. How does Garrison say those who help defend America should be protected?

AUTHOR

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Fredrick Douglass, Speech before American Anti-Slavery Society,  
New York, May 14, 1857

Loud and exultingly have we been told that the slavery question is settled, and settled forever. You remember it was settled thirty-seven years ago, when Missouri was admitted into the Union with a slaveholding constitution, and slavery prohibited in all territory north of thirty-six degrees of north latitude. Just fifteen years afterwards, it was settled again by voting down the right of petition, and gagging down free discussion in Congress. Ten years after this it was settled again by the annexation of Texas, and with it the war with Mexico. In 1850 it was again settled.

This was called a final settlement. By it, slavery was virtually declared to be the equal of Liberty, and should come into the Union on the same terms. By it, the right and the power to hunt down men, women, and children, in every part of this country, was granted to our southern brethren, in order to keep them in the Union. Four years after this settlement, the whole question was once more settled, and settled by a settlement which unsettled all the former settlements.

Author:

Audience:

Reason:

Main Idea:

Questions:

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1. What is Douglass saying about how the issue of slavery has been dealt with?

2. What does Douglass say the effect of the Dred Scott decision was on previous agreements or compromises?

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## Newspaper editorial, Author unknown, 1857

Allow me to state some facts relative to Judge Taney's feelings toward the colored race. Some thirty years before his death he freed his slaves. This proves that he was no lover of slavery. On one occasion, speaking of the colored people, with much emphasis, he said: "Thank God that at least in one place all men are equal, in the church of God. I do not consider it any degradation to kneel side by side with a negro in the house of our Heavenly Father."

On another occasion, speaking of the Dred Scott decision, he remarked, that no matter what might be his feelings in regard to this question of slavery, his oath bound him to interpret the law under the Constitution. This was his higher law the oath he had taken when he accepted the position of Chief-Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

A purer, a more conscientious man never wore the [robe]; a more faithful servant the government of the United States never had. It was his [loyalty] to duty that cost him his life, as I personally know. I knew him intimately for several years. He spoke with sadness of our late troubles, wishing from his heart that some [politician] would rise up and prevent the [civil conflict].

Author:

Audience:

Reason:

Main Idea:

Questions:

1. What does the author state that Justice Taney based his decision on?

2. Why do you think the author mentions Taney's remarks regarding African Americans?

3. What opinion does this author take of Taney's ruling?

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