

The Anti-Slavery Timeline

Dates above timeline are Vermont events. Dates below timeline are national events.

1777:

Vermont's Constitution established—the first to prohibit slavery

1786:

The Vermont Legislature passed “An Act to Prevent the Sale and Transportation of Negroes and Malattoes Out of This State”

1820:

The Missouri Compromise (Reactions in Vermont)

Every Vermont Congressman (except one whose vote was not recorded) voted against the proslavery amendments in the Bill.

The Vermont Legislature passed the following resolution: “Slavery is incompatible with the vital principles of all free governments and tends to their ruin. It paralyzes industry, the greatest source of national wealth, stifles the love of freedom, and endangers the safety of the nation. It is prohibited by the laws of nature which are equally binding on governments and individuals. The right to introduce and establish slavery in a free government does not exist.”

1834:

Vermont Anti-Slavery Society formed

1835:

Abolitionist Samuel J. May mobbed while lecturing in Montpelier

1837:

By 1837 there were 89 local anti-slavery societies with over 5,000 members

Vermont forwarded a resolution to Congress protesting against slavery in the District of Columbia and the admission of Texas. Senator Calhoun's response to the resolutions was recorded in *The Congressional Globe*:

“Calhoun deemed the present moment one of deepest importance. A great step has been take in the progress of events....He had long foreseen the present state of things and now the time had actually come when it was to be determined whether we are to remain as one united and happy people or whether this union is to be dissolved by the hand of violence. Vermont has struck a deep and dangerous blow into the vitals of our confederacy.”

1840:

The Liberty Party formed in Vermont

1843:

Frederick Douglass toured Vermont

The Vermont Legislature passed a law forbidding sheriffs, bailiffs, jailers, constables, and citizens from detaining fugitives

1850:

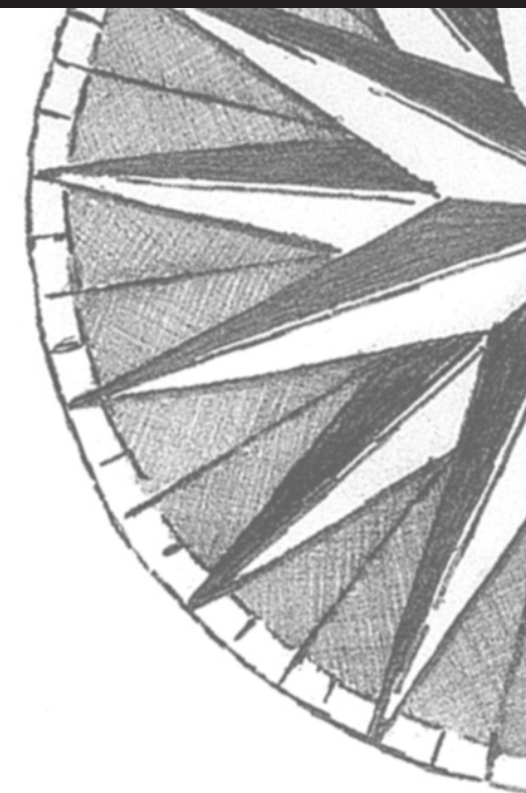
No Vermont Congressman voted for the Compromise of 1850

The Vermont Legislature passed an act to impede the carrying out of the Fugitive Slave Act

The Vermont Legislature send protests to other state legislatures. Virginia responded: “The legislature of Virginia declines to consider the resolutions of the state of Vermont, relative to the peace of the world until that body shall show itself careful of the peace of the Union by conforming to the enactments of the Constitution of the United States and laws passed in pursuance thereof.”

1859:

Burlington's Reverend Young preached John Brown's funeral service



1777

1877

1820:

The Missouri Compromise

1822:

Colony established on the West Coast of Africa that eventually would become the nation of Liberia

1831:

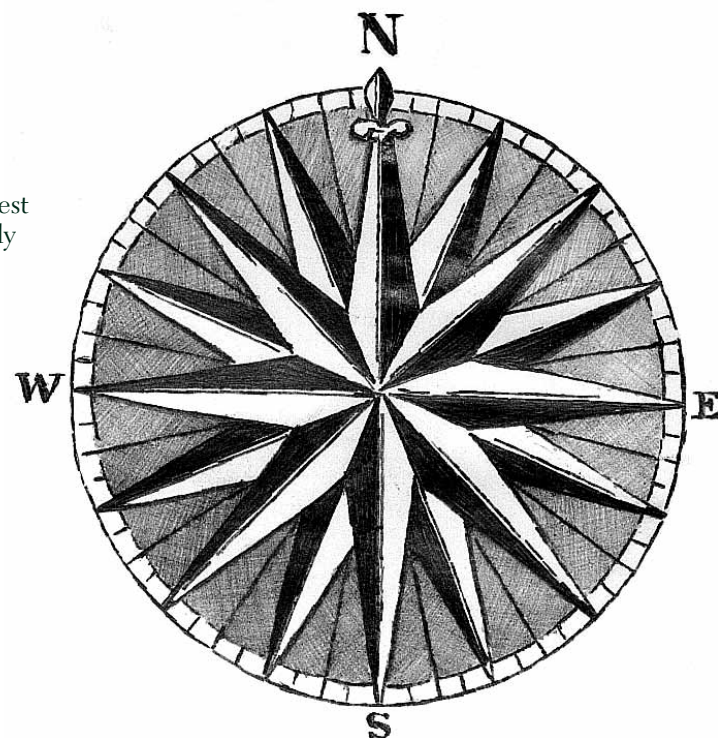
The Liberator begins publication

1833:

The American Anti-Slavery Society formed

1834:

Slavery abolished in Canada



1849:

California applies for admission to the Union as a free state

1850:

Compromise of 1850 & the Fugitive Slave Act

1852:

Publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe

1854:

Kansas-Nebraska Act

1857:

The Dred Scott Decision

Resolution passed in the Georgia Senate: “Resolved, that his Excellency President Pierce, be requested to employ a sufficient number of able-bodied Irishmen to proceed to the State of Vermont and dig a ditch around the limits of the same, and float ‘the thing’ into the Atlantic.”

1859:

John Brown raided Harpers Ferry

1860:

Democratic Party split in half

Abraham Lincoln elected President, sweeping Vermont with 75.8 percent of the vote

South Carolina seceded from the Union

1861:

Confederacy established

Attack on Fort Sumter

The Civil War began

Vermont was the first state to offer troops to Abraham Lincoln



Unknown Vermont Civil War Drummer. Collection of the Vermont Historical Society.