

That Settles It: The Debate and Consequences of the Homestead Act of 1862

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IN 1894, eighteen-year-old Rachel Calof journeyed to North Dakota to homestead with her husband. She wrote that her husband “was convinced that our best chance to make something of ourselves was to avail ourselves of the offer of free land” and that homesteading “seemed a godsend to penniless people who otherwise could not hope to buy land.”¹ The Homestead Act of 1862 gave 160 acres of land to settlers who were willing to settle and cultivate the land for at least five years.² The passing of the Homestead Act settled over eighty years of debate regarding the disbursement of America’s public lands. The intentions of the Act were high-minded and it successfully transferred millions of acres into private ownership. However, in implementation the Act failed to live up to many of its designs.

From the establishment of the first settlements in the New World, people followed their desires to claim unsettled lands. After the American Revolution, settlement west of the Appalachians intensified.³ The Articles of Confederation, and later the Constitution, stated that lands outside the thirteen colonies were public lands owned by the government.⁴ Debate over the allocation of these lands, combined with debate over settler’s farming boundaries, resulted in legislation. The Land Ordinance of 1785 created an orderly system in which people could buy public land and organized public domain into rectangular townships. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 organized the governing of the territory. Beginning in 1797, settlers began appealing to Congress to grant portions of public land for cultivation.⁵ The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 more than doubled the size of the U.S., creating abundant public land. In 1806 the reports of the Lewis and Clark Expedition generated public excitement to move west. Pioneers moved west for California gold and Oregon farmland. Much of the territory between California and the Mississippi River, however, remained uncivilized.⁶ The question of the apportionment of the public lands remained.

As the debate rose in intensity, writer George Henry Evans publicized the slogan “Vote Yourself a Farm.”⁷ Evans believed improving the land qualified one for ownership. Evans’ National Reform Association garnered support for a liberal

approach to landowning.⁸ By 1840, increasing support for free lands in the West became a weighty issue in the election between the Whig and Democratic parties. The Democrats proposed the Log Cabin Bill, which passed in the Senate in 1840, allowing settlers who had claimed land by living on it (known as squatters) to buy 160 acres of land at \$1.25 an acre. Though the Log Cabin Bill was not voted on in the House in 1840, a bill containing these provisions, the Preemption Act, passed Congress in 1841.⁹ Next, between 1842 and 1850, a set of laws known as the “Donation Acts” gave deeds of land to settlers who were willing to live on the frontier in places such as Florida and Oregon Territories. These laws encouraged pioneers to move to unpopulated parts of the country.¹⁰ The idea of free land swept across the nation, finding both supporters and opponents. Settlers in the West were enthusiastic for pre-emption, but still wanted a liberalized land system.

This issue was initially opposed by some Northerners, particularly industrialists afraid of losing cheap labor if workers moved west. Southern states had originally supported pre-emption measures, but strongly opposed the idea of homestead bills. Southern states feared that such legislation would jeopardize the plantation system and lead to more states that opposed slavery, weakening Southern political influence.¹¹ Opponents argued it was unconstitutional, that it would reduce government revenue, decrease land prices for existing farms, and adversely affect emigration and immigration.¹²

The problems of low wages and terrible working conditions also began to receive attention in the 1840s. Supporters argued that a homestead policy would alleviate the problems of unemployment and overpopulation in large cities.¹³ In the North, homestead bills gained new support from factory owners, where large numbers of Irish immigrants proved a cheap labor source. Factory owners then saw western settlements in need of their goods and realized the revenue potential. “Workers, reformers, and industrialists agreed that the answer to the nation’s problems was a Homestead Law.”¹⁴ In 1848 the Free Soil Party was formed.¹⁵ The new party’s platform stated that “public lands ... should be granted in limited quantities, free of cost, to landless settlers.”¹⁶ The U.S. continued to gain public lands from the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.¹⁷

In 1848, Horace Greely suggested a bill that gave “landless settlers to preempt 160 acres and if he improved it he could have 40 acres without price.” This idea was met with disdain in Congress.¹⁸ Several other similar ideas were presented and in 1849 Andrew Johnson introduced the homestead bill, to “make the ‘soil free’ or provide an inalienable home of 160 acres of the public domain” to every citizen head of household “without money and without price.”¹⁹ Throughout the 1850s it was debated in Congress several times. In 1852 Representative Riddle stated: “The sooner we dispose of the unsettled and uncultivated territory, the better it will be for the people of the US.” When faced with arguments that Congress did not have constitutional power to grant the land, Mr. Johnson responded by arguing that Congress had already set a precedent of land granting.²⁰ “House Bill No. 7” was approved by the House of Representatives, but was never voted on by the Senate. Southern legislators believed homesteading would be of little use in the plantation system that required hundreds of acres.

After 1852, the Free Soil Party's popularity declined, but from its free-soil, anti-slavery supporters the Republican Party was born in 1856.²¹ Tensions over slavery escalated. In 1856, "Bleeding Kansas" gave thousands of supporters to the Republican party.²² Because of the role it played in the slavery debate, the issue of free land split the North and South further.

In 1852, 1854, and 1859 homestead bills were approved by the House but were vanquished by the Senate, where the South dominated.²³ In 1858, New York Representative Kelly argued that the homestead bill would "expand the wings of commerce ... and elevate the true standard of American freemen, physically and morally."²⁴ Debates continued to rage. The Republican Party championed the homesteading cause. Their 1860 National Platform stated that land should be given freely and called for the passage of the Homestead Bill in the Senate.²⁵ On May 10, 1860, a homestead bill was approved by Congress.²⁶ President Buchanan vetoed the bill, stating it was unconstitutional, unfair to "old settlers" who had paid for the land, uneven to the soldiers who had received land for their service in the army, and unjust for artisans and laborers who receive nothing from the government. Buchanan also believed it would promote speculation, lessen government revenue and "demoralize the people."²⁷

Homestead bills were reintroduced with vigor after the election of Abraham Lincoln.²⁸ In Congress, politicians debated over details of the Act such as measures and amendments, who was entitled to file a claim, years of occupancy, and provisions for soldiers. In 1862, during the second session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, Mr. Grow argued passionately:

There has, perhaps, never been a measure before Congress so emphatically approved by a majority of the American people ... why should it not now pass? ... I submit, in behalf of the Treasury of the nation, in behalf of its credit, in behalf of its sons of toil, that the best disposition that can be made of the public domain is to set it apart and consecrate it forever in homes for freemen ... to develop the elements of a higher and better civilization.²⁹ (Appendix III)

During the Civil War, the Southern states seceded in the years between 1860-1861. In 1862 the Homestead Act passed in the House by a vote of 107 to 16 and in the Senate 33 to 7.³⁰ Secession had removed the main opposition. The Homestead Act was voted into law. On May 20, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act,³¹ which became law on January 1, 1863.³² After almost eighty years of debate, the Homestead Act settled the question of the disbursement of the public domain.³³ (Appendix I)

On May 29, 1862, Congressman Grow wrote, "No measure has passed Congress in ten, twenty years, that carries on its soldiers such sheaves of wealth as this does."³⁴ People were enthusiastic about the new opportunities. Within the first of the nine months of the new law, over 1,450,000 acres had been filed as homestead claims.³⁵ The Act's appeal remained. In 1866 the Secretary of Interior reported that the number of claims had increased by 60% over the previous year.³⁶

The Homestead Act of 1862 gave 160 acres of free land to any settler who was twenty-one years of age or older, or the head of a family, and a citizen of the

US or had declared his or her intention to become one.³⁷ The homesteader was required to pay a ten dollar filing fee and live on and cultivate the homestead for five years. Another option was to pay \$1.25 per acre and live on the homestead for six months. Those who had fought against the U.S. government were restricted from filing a claim.³⁸ Therefore, Confederate soldiers were excluded.³⁹

Homesteading spanned a period of 123 years. On January 1, 1863 the first homesteader, Daniel Freeman, filed his claim just after midnight.⁴⁰ Freeman's claim is now the Homestead National Monument. (Appendix IV) In 1974, Kenneth Deardorff filed an 80-acre claim in southern Alaska. In June 2001, he was recognized as the last homesteader under the Homestead Act.⁴¹ (Appendix V)

Called "Land for the Landless,"⁴² the Homestead Act gave homesteaders opportunities as never before. In no other nation could one get land without having a great fortune needed to purchase it. The consequences of the Homestead Act were varied, affecting both individuals and the nation. Two million claims were made under the Homestead Act. Two hundred seventy million acres, 10% of the United States, were settled under the Homestead Act. More than 93 million homesteader descendants are estimated to be alive today. Thirty out of the fifty states were homesteaded. (Appendix II) The Homestead Act spanned twenty-four presidential administrations.⁴³

On an individual level, many found life on a homestead challenge-filled. "Pioneer families stood shoulder to shoulder to settle the harsh land, with women fighting fires, fear, and locusts right beside men."⁴⁴ Farming was difficult, but necessary to "prove up" a homestead. Well-watered parts of the country such as Iowa were easier to homestead than in drier regions like Montana. In some regions settlers found that 160 acres was insufficient for their livelihood.⁴⁵ The problems faced by homesteaders varied by region and included windstorms, free-range livestock grazing, extremes in cold and heat, hailstorms and pests. Sometimes crops had to be replanted multiple times in a planting season.⁴⁶ Overproduction, shipping and machinery costs created financial dilemmas.⁴⁷ Despite hardships, however, some homesteads became successful. Forty percent of all homesteaders were able to "prove up their homestead."⁴⁸ Land that is still farmed today on the Great Plains produces vast amounts of our nation's food. The Homestead Act helped create multiple roads, railroads, and towns across the West. The Homestead Act has also been credited with escalating immigration, as the news of free land reached foreign countries.⁴⁹

The Act led to more laws and amendments. In 1866, concern over the scarcity of forests prompted the commissioner of the general land office to suggest that the Homestead Act be amended to "oblige the planting of trees by the settlers."⁵⁰ In 1873 the Timber Culture Act was passed. In 1872, an amendment to the Homestead Act was added for sailors and soldiers who had served the U.S., which allowed them to gain land by living on it for one year and their term in the army passed as their title. Other amendments extended claim time in areas that had experienced disasters and changed the provisions of the law.⁵¹

The Homestead Act affected U.S. culture. Pioneers had to be resourceful to produce their own necessities. Small local governments encouraged democracy.

Expansion fostered nationalism because as people moved from place to place, they began to identify less with specific regions and more as a national identity. Art, entertainment and literature evolved with Western influence.⁵²

Some consequences modified the land itself. The Act gave free land, but often failed to preserve that land. Cattle and sheep grazing in the northern plains harmed the natural vegetation. Grazing and droughts declined gramma and buffalo grasses, which held valuable topsoil together. Plowing the topsoil made it vulnerable to erosion and wind.⁵³ Eventually these factors contributed to the creation of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.⁵⁴ Expansion diminished forests, exhausted mines, and spent the soil's nutrients. Many native animals including buffalo, antelope, and deer were killed. Buffalo that once roamed in the thousands were reduced to mere hundreds.⁵⁵

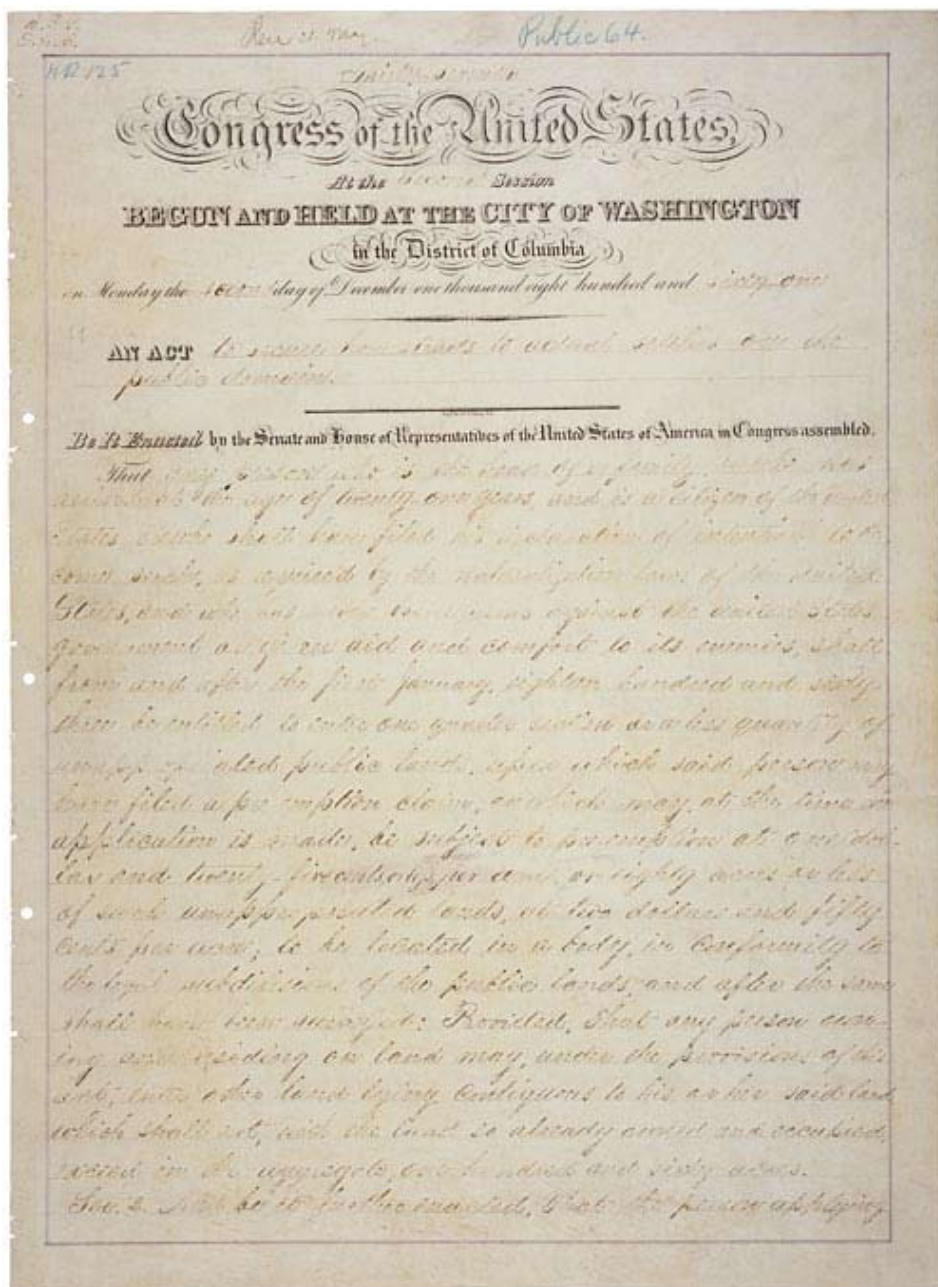
The Homestead Act contributed to the dispossession of Indian lands.⁵⁶ The Indian Removal Act of 1830 had ordered Indians to move off their lands onto reservations. Indians were moved further west so homesteaders could claim the land.⁵⁷

Much of the poor population in the East lacked the resources to move west. The Act provided no means to help them start a homestead. Speculation and fraud were also a major failure of the Act. For example, speculators could buy 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre, live on it for six months, and then sell the land at a higher price. Speculation and fraud were prevalent:

... the act was framed so ambiguously that it seemed to invite fraud, and early modifications by Congress only compounded the problem. Most of the land went to speculators, cattlemen, miners, lumbermen, and railroads. Of some 500 million acres dispersed by the General Land Office between 1862 and 1904, only 80 million acres went to homesteaders. Indeed, small farmers acquired more land under the Homestead Act in the 20th century than in the 19th.⁵⁸

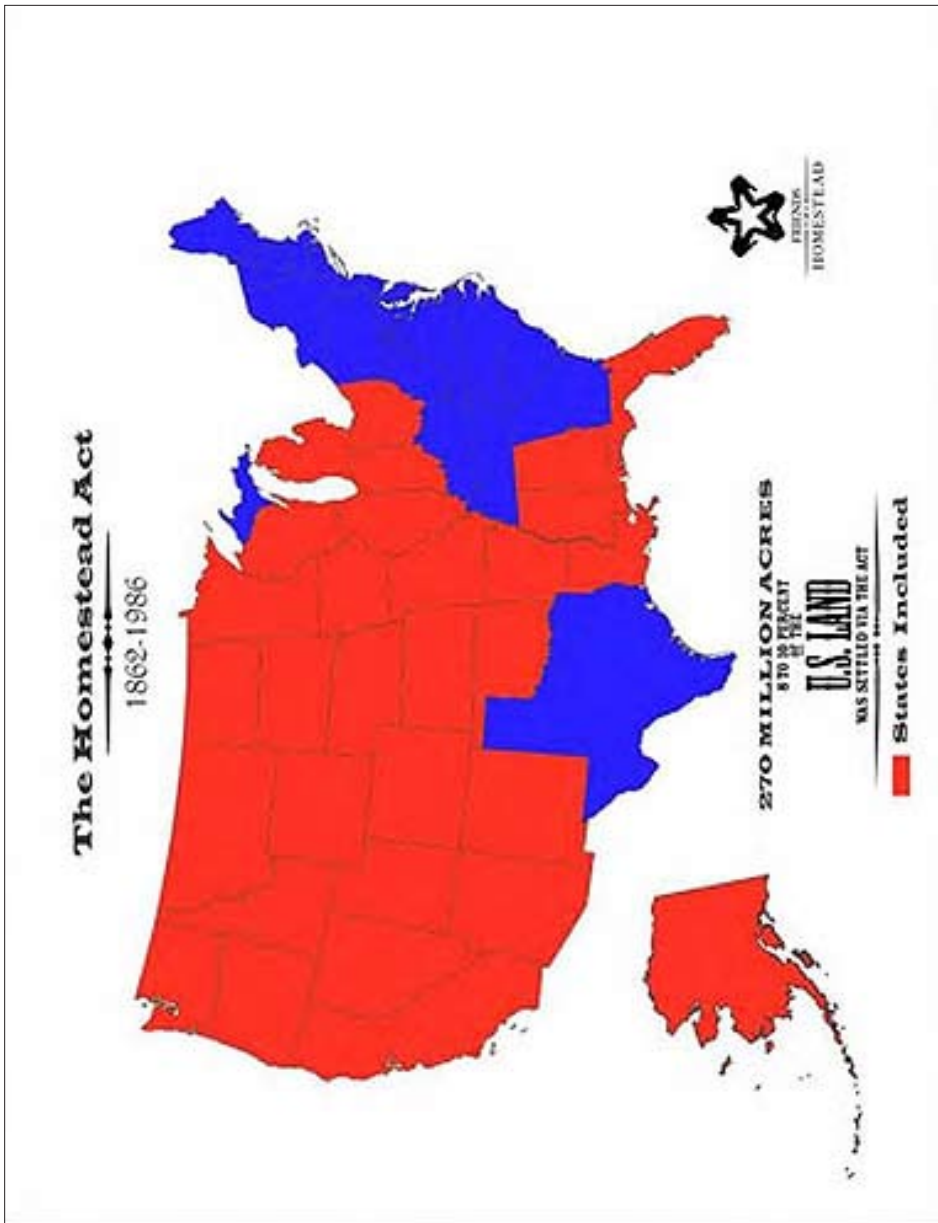
The product of long debate, the Homestead Act was idealistic. Its purpose was to give opportunities to settlers who would accept the challenges of the terrain and cultivate the land. The outcome was a mixture of successes and failures. The Act succeeded in transferring land to private owners, but speculation decreased the amount of land for the people for which the Act was designed. However, because of the way the Homestead Act affected the U.S., it remains consequential today.

Appendix I



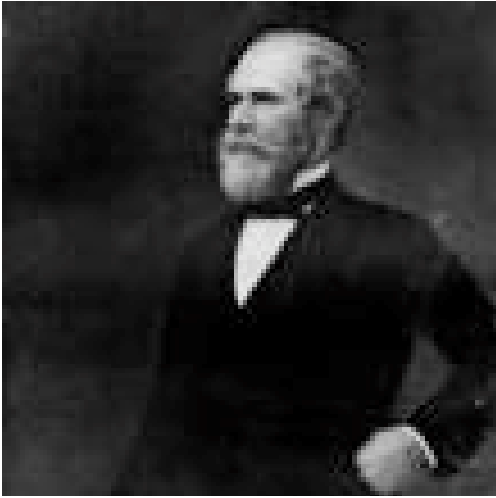
Above is the original document for the Homestead Act which was signed by President Lincoln.⁵⁹

Appendix II



This is a map of how many states were homesteaded. Three-fifths of all the states in the U.S. have been homesteaded in the 123 years that it was a law.⁶⁰

Appendix III



Above is a portrait of Congressman Galusha A. Grow, who was a main advocate for the Homestead Act. I quoted several of his quotes.⁶¹

Appendix IV



Above is Daniel Freeman, the first man to ever claim land under the Homestead Act when it went into effect January 3, 1863.

Application }
No 1. } Homestead
Land Office
Brownville N.T. January 6th 1863

I Daniel Freeman of Gage County Nebraska Territory
Do hereby apply to enter under the provisions of the
act of Congress approved May 20th 1862 entitled an act
to Secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain
The South half of N. 1/4 of Sec. 10 of N. 1/4 of S. 1/4 of N. 1/4 Sec. 26.
in Township ~~12~~¹³ N. in Range 31st East containing 160 acres
Having filed my Declaration of Intention thereto on
the Eighth day of September 1862

Daniel Freeman

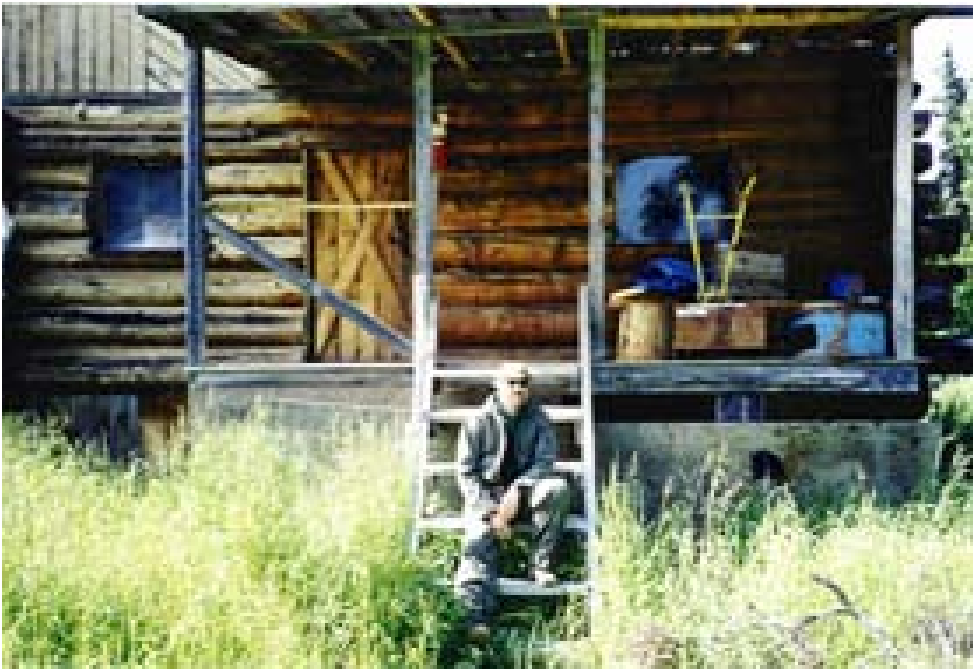
Land office at:
Brownville N.T. January 1st 1863

I Richard F. Barrett Register of the Land office do
hereby certify that the above application is for damaged
Lands of the Class which the applicant is legally entitled to enter
under the Homestead act. of May 20th 1862 and that there is no
Prior valid adverse Right to the same

Richard F. Barrett
Register

Above is a picture of Freeman's homestead application.⁶²

Appendix V



Above is Keanneth Deardorff, the last person to ever claim a homestead under the Homestead Act.⁶³

Notes

1. Sean McCollum, "Women on the Lone Prairie." *Scholastic Update* vol. 130, no. 4. (Oct. 1997): 18.
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This was the message when Buchanan vetoed the Homestead Bill. It gave a lengthy list of reasons why he opposed the bill. He thought it was unconstitutional, unfair, and that it would demoralize the people.

"Faith In America Shown By Increasing of Foreign Immigration." *New York Evangelist*. Vol. 33 1863. 19. American Periodical Series Online. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=846197502&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VNAem=HNP> (accessed April 30, 2011).

This gave an important consequence of the passing Homestead Act. Homesteading was one of two reasons that emigration increased in the U.S. providing for labor in the U.S. Immigration increased in the U.S. after the passing of the Homestead Act.

Grow, Galusha A. "Letter." *Circular (1851-1870)* 29 May 1862: American Periodicals Series Online. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=776383012&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed April 25, 2011).

Congressman Grow wrote this letter in the newspaper announcing the Act's passage thanking everyone who had supported the Homestead Act and discussing the benefits of the act.

Julian, George W. "The Spoliation of the Public Lands," *The North American Review (1821-1940)*; (August 1885; Vol. CXLI, No. CCCXLV): pg. 175. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=204625431&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed April 23, 2011).

This newspaper article was written by George Julian who was a Congressman during the time of the Homestead Bill's debate and passing. He heard Mr. Grow speak. This gave a detailed history of the homestead bill, and its debate. This is where I learned about the Donation Acts.

National Archives, *Document for May 20th: Homestead Act*. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2010. <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=520> (accessed January 10, 2011).

This was the original document of the the Homestead Act signed on May 20, 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln. This gave me a better understanding on the conditions

of the Homestead Act. This will be useful in my paper to show people what the original document looked like. This document helped the Homestead Act be passed.

National Archives, *Land Records: Ingalls Homestead File*. <http://www.archives.gov/research/land/ingalls/index.html> U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 2010. (accessed October 21, 2010).

This 24 page document showed Charles Ingall's application for a homestead. This gave me a better understanding of how an application was filled out. It left me with the impression that homesteaders spent a lot of time on paperwork for their homestead.

National Archives. *Teaching with Documents: The Homestead Act of 1862*. National Archives and Records Administration, 2010. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/homestead-act/> (accessed November 11, 2010).

This article gave a brief political history of the Homestead Act. This also listed some primary sources, which include a picture of a pioneer family and their wagon. This told of the lasting effect on the U.S., and how the Homestead National Monument is Daniel Freeman's claim.

National Park Service. *The Homestead Act of 1862*. The Homestead National Monument of America. U.S. Department of Interior, 1995. <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/index.htm> (accessed October 27, 2010).

This is the website of the Homestead National Monument, which is Daniel Freeman's original claim. This website gave a biography of Daniel Freeman and the last homesteader, Kenneth Deardorff. It also gave a bit of information about the debate.

National Republican Convention. "Republican National Platform, 1860." Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum. http://cpr.org/Museum/Ephemera/Republican_Platform_1860.html (accessed May 5, 2011).

This website was the Republican Platform in 1860 and proved that the Republican Party supported the Homestead Act and opposed slavery.

"The Free Homestead Bill." *Ohio Cultivator*: 1 June 1862 18, 6; American Periodicals Series Online. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=793176712&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed May 5, 2011).

This article celebrated the passing of the Homestead Act and named some of its principle supporters.

The Homestead Lands. *Maine Farmer (1844-1900)*; 31 December 1863; 32; 3; American Periodicals Series Online pg. 1. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1632982682&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed April 30, 2011).

This newspaper shows that thousands of acres of land were taken up within the first nine months after the Act's passing.

“The Public Lands.” *Ohio Farmer (1856-1906)*: 15 December 1866; 14, 50; American Periodicals Series Online pg. 96. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=809331302&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed May 5, 2010).

This newspaper article reported how many acres were being homesteaded during the first few years and that there had been major increases.

“Timber in the West.” *Prairie Farmer (1843-1877)*; 9 June 1866; 17; 23; American Periodicals Series Online, pg. 405. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=804000342&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed April 23, 2011).

This discussed another consequence in the West, the Timber Act. They used the Homestead Act to modify so that people would plant trees therefore enriching soil and protecting animals.

United States. Congress. House. *Homestead Act of 1862*. Cong. REC. 20 May 1862; 392-393. Web. 5 May 2011.

This was the complete wording of the original document, only typed for easier reading. This told all the conditions of how to receive a homestead, age rights, and how they had to “cultivate the land” in order to receive a homestead. An interesting point that it made was that they could not have borne arms against the United States government, which included Confederate soldiers.

U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 30th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1849:25.

This record was useful because it showed that Andrew Johnson first introduced the Homestead Bill in Congress in 1848.

U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 32nd Cong., 1st Sess. 1852:1210.

This record helped me to understand some basic arguments behind the Homestead Act. Examples of some of the arguments include how some said it was unconstitutional, how it was constitutional, etc.

U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 35th Cong., 1st Sess. 1858:430-431.

This record said that through several wars and purchases, that the U.S. acquired this land that needs to be settled through a homestead bill, and included further debate on the subject.

U.S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*. 37th Cong., 2nd Sess. 1862: 909, 910, 2364.

This record gave a stirring quote by Congressman Grow on the frontiersmen and how they were soldiers of the land. He said they deserved an equal chance at owning the land. Grow also noted that this debate needed to come to an end. This Congressional Globe reported that the bill had become a law.

W. Warvelle, *Magazine of Western History (1844-1891)*; (February 1885; 1, 4): 300. <http://proquest.umi.compqdwebddid=429782731&Fmt=10&clientId=1652&RQT=309&VName=HNP> (accessed April 23, 2011).

This article gave me some background information of why the debate for the Homestead Act truly began. This also gave an excellent overview of the Homestead Act's political history: Donation Laws, votes for the Homestead Act in the House and Senate, etc.

Secondary Sources

Aley, Ginette. "Homestead Act." *Milestone Documents*. Schlager Group, Inc., 2011. <http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/view/homestead-act/> (accessed December 27, 2010).

This was a key resource in telling about the Homestead Act's debate. It was the passage of over eighty years of debate. This article focused on Jeffersonian Republicanism—giving out public lands into private hands. This article told how it led to the dispossession of the Indian lands. This told of several bill authors that wanted free land in the West.

Billington, Ray Allen. *America's Frontier Culture*. (College Station and London: Texas A&M University Press, 1977): 20.

This book put the Homestead Act in a whole new perspective for me. "There was a king's ransom in furs could be had for the taking, where fortunes in gold and silver lay scarcely hidden." This showed it wasn't just a wasteland for some people, it held hopes of new beginnings and a new life.

Billington, Ray Allen. *Expansion the American Frontier*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974): 325, 518-524.

This gave a great deal of information on slavery and how the South opposed the act. Southern states feared that this act would lead to more states that too opposed slavery. It helped my paper by showing the differences between political parties and who opposed and was for the Homestead Act.

Cannon, Brian Q. *Reopening the Frontier: Homesteading in the West*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009): 63, 73-74.

This book told of financial problems which resulted because of the Homestead Act. It also told about how they struggled to raise successful crops, with little water. Settlers had to learn to irrigate the water. This book also told of hardships including: heat, cold, hailstorms, heavy rains, wind, fire, grasshoppers, and other hardships.

Dale, Edward Everett. *Frontier ways; Sketches of Life in the Old West* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971): 79.

This source contained interesting stories of homesteading families. It illustrated details of life on a homestead, and the difficulties they faced.

Donaldson, Thomas. *The Public Domain, Its History With Statistics*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880): 349. <http://www.archive.org/stream/publicdomainits00goog#page/n368/mode/2up> (accessed May 2, 2011).

This source detailed amendments to the Homestead Act. Some examples are special amendments to sailors and soldiers, Indians, etc.

Hibbard, Benjamin Horace. *A History of the Public Land Policies*. (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965): 21-22.

This book gave several arguments for and against the Homestead Act: that it would decrease government revenue, decrease land prices for existing farms, and adversely affect emigration and immigration. This also told how the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 gave more land to the U.S.

“Homestead Act.” *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. Student Research Center, 2011. <http://web.ebscohost.com/src/detail?vid=5&hid=18&sid=4d45d6b9-5a8e-4c44-95al-a499384fe152%40sessionmgr15&bdata=JnNpdGU9c3JjLWxpdmU%3d#db=mih&AN=39012068>. Web (accessed February 2, 2011).

This talked a bit about the debate and President Buchanan’s veto of a Homestead bill in 1860.

Independence Hall Association. “Republican Philadelphia: The Origins of the Republican Party,” Independence Hall Association in Philadelphia. <http://www.ushistory.org/gop/origins.htm> (accessed April 30, 2011).

This website told about the evolution of the Republican Party when they became a national party in 1856. This website also said that part of the reason the Republican Party evolved because of the issue of slavery.

Jones, Mary Ellen. *Daily Life on the Nineteenth Century Frontier*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998): 162-163.

This book gave two consequences which happened as a result of the Homestead Act; natural vegetation was ruined and valuable topsoil became loose, leading to erosion, which led to the Dust Bowl. It also discussed other land laws that went along with the Homestead Act.

McCollum, Sean. "Women on the Lone Prairie." *Scholastic Update* vol. 130, no. 4. (Oct. 1997): 18-19.

This article had an interesting perspective on women's point of view regarding the adventure and challenges of living on the prairie. This article presented the thrill of conquering a new country. This article made an interesting point when it said that women worked alongside men.

McElroy, Wendy. "The Free-Soil Movement, Part 1," Freedom Daily, The Future of Freedom Foundation. <http://www.fff.org/freedom/0501e.asp> (accessed March 25, 2010).

This article told about Evans and his desire for a homestead bill. This also helped me to understand about the political parties, who rose to power, and gave me some reasons the South opposed homestead bills.

Merk, Lois Bannister. *History of the Western Movement*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1978): 401.

This book discussed slavery and its role in debate over the Homestead Act. This gave me a better understanding of what the Homestead Act promised for the settlers. It quoted "Land for the Landless."

Milestone Documents. "Homestead Act (1862)." Schlager Groups, 2010. <http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/view/homestead-act/> (accessed October 21, 2010).

This website gave a brief history of the Homestead Act and how it was a debate. It told how each man received 160 acres of land. As long as he lived on it for five years he got to keep the land. It also gave examples of who lived and homesteaded when the act was in progress.

Noy, Gary. *Distant Horizon*. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999): 92.

This gave me a reading of the original document of the Homestead Act and how women heads of families, and any male over 21 or could participate in the Homestead Act. It gave interesting information about how Confederate soldiers were excluded. It gave information about how topsoil eroded away that led to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

Parker, Matthew D. "Homestead Act." *Thomas' Legion: The 69th North Carolina Regiment*. Thomas Legion, 27 August 2007. http://thomaslegion.net/homestead_act_homesteading_homesteaders.html (accessed December 29, 2010).

This gave me a map and emphasized the impact the Homestead Act had on the United States. It listed the number of states and the involved number of claims. This website provided numbers. For example: 270 million acres were given away, etc.

Porterfield, Jason. *The Homestead Act of 1862: A Primary Source History of the Settlement of the American Heartland in the Late 19th Century*. (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2005): 8-16.

This was a helpful book because it gave me an idea of where to find primary sources. This told about the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and how it made pioneers excited to go West. This gave the history of America's early lands.

Rohatyn, Felix. *Bold Endeavors*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009. Print.

This gave me more information on Andrew Johnson and his political career, George Evans, and Horace Greeley. This gave a brief history of the debate surrounding it and made it more clear what each political party believed in. It discussed some of the successes and failures of the Act.

Slatta, Richard W. "Western Frontier Life in America." *World Book Student*. World Book, 2010. <http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar599110=%93western+frontier+life+in+america.%94> (accessed November 30, 2010).

This gave a great background of the dispossession of the Indian lands. It also told of hardships on the homestead. It also told how the West impacted the American culture through literature, art, and entertainment.

Shannon, Fred A. "The Homestead Act and the Labor Surplus," *American Historical Review*, XLI, No. 4 (July, 1936): 637-651.

This paper was helpful because it focused on another aspect of the debate: labor surplus. This article states that supporters were sure that a Homestead Act would alleviate problems of the overpopulation and unemployment in eastern cities.

Steffen, Jerome O. "Westward Movement in America." *World Book Student*. World Book, 2011. <http://www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar599870&st=%22westward+movement+in+america.%22> (accessed January 6, 2011).

This article told about cultural consequences that the Homestead Act had on America including nationalism and how it promoted democracy. This will help me identify consequences in my paper.

West, Elliot. *The Way to the West*. (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1995): 97.

This book was about the lifestyle of homestead families. It detailed how children had to spend time searching for plants and how families sometimes settled close to relatives to make life easier. It discussed how farmer's role shaped the land.

Personal Communications:

Cannon, Brian Q. April 28, 2011. Email message to author.

This email was helpful because Mr. Cannon made several important points, such as areas of higher precipitation were more successfully homesteaded, and that the act appealed to American idealism but was harder to put into practice due to fraudulent activity.



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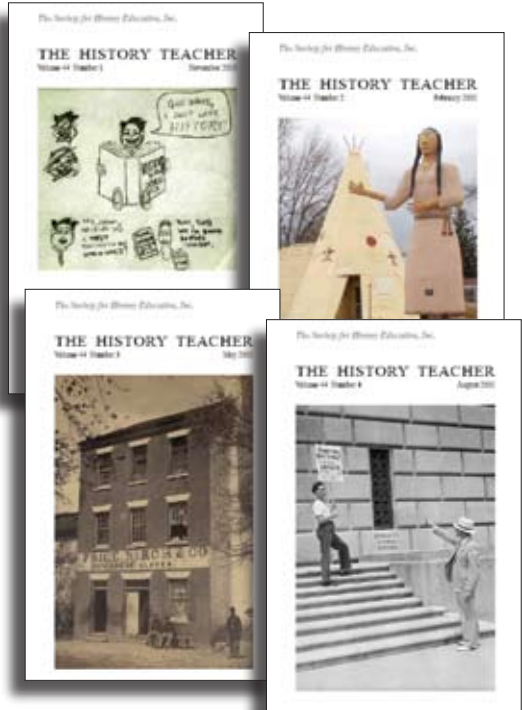
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