



Slavery and the Constitution

Explore the text and history of the Three-Fifths Clause, the Migration and Importation of Slaves or Slave Trade Clause, and the Fugitive Slave Clause.

The Three Fifths Clause

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.

The Three-Fifths Clause Debates in the Constitutional Convention

- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(June 11, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(June 15, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(June 30, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 9, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 11, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 12, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 13, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 14, 1787\)](#)

The Three-Fifths Clause Debates During the State Ratifying Process

- [A Federal Republican: A Review of the Constitution](#)
- [Cato VI](#)
- [The Federalist No. 54](#)
- [Brutus III](#)
- [Newspaper Report of Massachusetts Ratification Convention Debates \(January 17, 1788\)](#)
- [Journal Notes of the Virginia Ratification Convention \(June 12, 1788\)](#)
- [Francis Childs' Notes of the New York Ratification Debates \(June 20, 1788\)](#)
- [Collection of 60 Primary Source Documents Related to the Three-Fifths Clause](#)

The Slave Trade Clause

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Slave Trade Debates in The Constitutional Convention

- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(July 23, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 6, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 8, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 21, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 22, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 25, 1787\)](#)

The Slave Trade Debates During the State Ratifying Process

- [The Federalist No. 42](#)
- [A Federal Republican: A Review of the Constitution](#)
- [James Wilson in the Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention \(December 3, 1787\)](#)
- [Thomas Lloyd's Notes of the Pennsylvania Ratifying Convention \(December 10, 1787\)](#)
- [Luther Martin, Genuine Information VII](#)
- [Luther Martin, Genuine Information VIII](#)
- [Journal Notes of the Virginia Ratification Convention \(June 23, 1788\)](#)
- [Journal Notes of the Virginia Ratification Convention \(June 25, 1788\)](#)
- [Centinel III](#)
- [North Carolina Ratification Debates \(July 26, 1788\)](#)
- [Collection of 49 Primary Source Documents Related to Migration and Important of Slaves Clause](#)

The Fugitive Slave Clause

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

Fugitive Slave Clause Debates in The Constitutional Convention

- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 28, 1787\)](#)
- [James Madison's Notes of the Constitutional Convention \(August 29, 1787\)](#)

Fugitive Slave Clause Debates During the State Ratifying Process

- [Journal Notes of the Virginia Ratification Convention \(June 17, 1788\)](#)
- [North Carolina Ratification Convention Debates \(July 28, 1788\)](#)