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Constitution Commemoration Essay

The United States Constitution bestows citizens with liberties and rights that citizens of no other country are given. Many men have died to protect the ideals of the Constitution because they, like Abraham Lincoln, regard the fairness of its values. In Abraham Lincoln's 1856 speech at Kalamazoo, he stated "Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained for it is the only safeguard of our liberties." It may sound as if Lincoln is saying the Constitution is consummate the way it is, but this is not so. In actuality, Lincoln believed that the ideals of the Constitution were excellent, but the wording of said ideals was not specific enough to convey the exact meaning.

The Preamble of the Constitution states that in order to form a more perfect Union, we must promote general welfare. Slave owners took their own interpretation of this. Because they bought their slaves, they believed that slaves were their property and not humans. Therefore, slave owners believed they could treat slaves in whichever way they wish because nowhere in the Constitution does it state how one's possessions must be treated. When Abraham Lincoln said the Constitution must be maintained, he meant that the principles were to be kept the way they were because they were fair and well governing, but the wording of it needed to be changed so that technicalities could not be found. This is why Lincoln later supported the 13th amendment, which eliminated these escape clauses.

Lincoln believed in the fairness of our Constitution. He knew that it provided an abundance of guidance that governed the States; until it went against what people wanted. Southerners did not want to relinquish their slaves or even admit that they were human beings. Coming from a free state, Lincoln knew that he had to do something to end the exploitation of the Constitution. Lincoln was a moralistic man who agreed with the constitutional principles because they supported his values of human rights. He knew that people were mistreating slaves and handling them as possessions. Lincoln came from and represented the free state of Illinois. He was pro-abolition and knew the Constitution was meant to protect everyone's rights. When he said the Constitution was the only safeguard of our liberties, he meant both blacks and whites because he knew that blacks deserved rights just as much as whites.

“I do the very best I know how - the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end.” Abraham Lincoln was not the type of man to give up until he had exhausted every single option. In the very same Kalamazoo speech, Lincoln declared, “And now, my Democratic friends, come forward. Throw off these things, and come to the rescue of the great principle of equality.” Lincoln is urging the Democratic southerners to cast away slavery and recognize the equality of all races. He knew that the Constitution was a glorious document and that the men who wrote it had all people’s rights in mind, but it could only govern the people if the people agreed to follow it. Lincoln’s hard work paid off, but at the cost of many lives. After the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were passed. They abolished slavery, stated the rights of freed slaves, and accorded them the right to vote. The Constitution had finally been modified as Lincoln had aspired.

Unfortunately, Abraham Lincoln never got to see how much his hard work impacted the world. Lincoln was assassinated after Congress passed the 13th amendment but before it was adopted as part of the Constitution. He never knew all the grand things that would happen because of his ethics and integrity. At least he got to know that he provided the United States a great service. Abraham Lincoln was a patriotic man who achieved his goal of getting what was best for the United States of America and all of its people. He saw wrongs that many others couldn’t and was willing to fight to create a resolution for the Constitution. When Lincoln gave that speech in Kalamazoo, he spoke of the power of the Constitution. He expressed his beliefs that its values were grand and well governing and that they needed to be preserved. He believed in the power of the Constitution and equality.