

January 7, 2007

Dear Mr. Scott,

In your case, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney stated, “African Americans could not be U.S. citizens.” However, because of your courageousness, you altered the way for many African Americans in a series of events to come.

The government had come up with many laws to uphold slavery, such as the 5th Amendment which stated that the “...government may not deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law” and the Fugitive Slave Act which stated that “a slaveholder or slave catcher had only to point out alleged runaways to have them taken into custody.” Although you had been taken into territory that had prohibited slavery, that did not change the law or alter your slave status. Nevertheless, because of your lawsuit, began the debate of slavery, which eventually led to the Civil War, which began because of the secession of the Confederacy over the issue of slavery. The Confederacy viewed this secession as similar to the American Revolution—a necessary course of action to uphold the people’s rights. By the end of the Civil War, the Union had defeated the Confederacy, and the purpose of your suit was finally upheld because African Americans were now free.

After the Civil War, a series of events and laws took place. The 13th Amendment banned slavery in the United States. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 granted citizenship to all persons born in the United States; it also guaranteed the rights of African Americans to own property, and it stated that they were to be treated equally in court. The 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States