

Constitutional Convention of 1849

During Lincoln's visit, the Kentucky Constitutional Convention was underway at the capitol in Frankfort (about five miles from the Todd Buena Vista plantation) that would fully align Kentucky among the other slaveholding states. In addition to rejecting the Nonimportation Act of 1833 that prohibited slaves from being imported for commercial purposes, the convention changed the state's constitution to:

- Reject the ballot system "that it might prove injurious to slave interests."
- Provide that no person could voluntarily emancipate slaves, "except on condition that such emancipated slaves be immediately sent out of the state."
- Declare "The right of property is before and higher than any constitutional sanction; and the right of an owner to his slave, and its increase, is the same and is as inviolable as the right of the owner to any property whatever."

A year before Henry Clay forges his Compromise of 1850 that holds the Union intact for another decade; Kentucky has set its course. A course that ensures a "house divided."