

I chose this topic because of my passionate interest in this era of U.S. history (1790 to 1800). Ever since learning about this period in 8th grade, I became fascinated with the interactions between the founding fathers such as Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison. I loved learning about their political clashes and debates, as well as the how the first two-party system formed. When I learned that this year's NHD theme was Conflict and Compromise, I knew immediately that the Dinner-Table Bargain of 1790 would be the perfect topic to pursue.

I chose to conduct my research by first exploring several online resources to gain a basic understanding of the Compromise of 1790. One resource that I made extensive use of was the First Federal Congress Project's online exhibit, which included web guides on the issues residence, funding, and the Compromise of 1790. After I developed a preliminary understanding of my topic, I delved into scholarly articles, books, and primary sources. Along the way, I noticed three aspects of the Compromise of 1790 that stood out to me: its importance in preventing an early sectional crisis, its long-term economic impact, and the precedent that it set for future compromises. As I began to put my website together, I discovered more primary sources, particularly newspaper articles through the database America's Historical Newspapers, that helped boost my argument. After the district competition, I was able to interview Professor Kenneth R. Bowling of George Washington University via phone call. Professor Bowling authored numerous sources that I used in my research and is a true expert on this topic. During our interview, he helped me clarify several key aspects of the compromise. For example, he provided a detailed explanation about how the dinner-table bargain really did secure the passage of residence and assumption.

Before I even conducted my research, I had decided that I would work on a website. While I considered working on a paper, I realized that there were a great deal of relevant audio-visual resources that I could use to enhance my project. I knew that I wanted to incorporate music from Hamilton into the project and also discovered that there was an abundance of primary sources available through the Library of Congress and National Archives.

The Compromise of 1790 clearly relates to the theme of Conflict and Compromise because the topic revolves entirely around these two things. In my background pages, I detail the tremendous political conflict that existed in the U.S. from 1789-1790, which was largely due to the divisive issues of funding and residence. Recognizing the need to end this political turmoil and set the nation on the right track, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison forged a compromise that had a tremendous impact on the U.S. The compromise eased political tensions temporarily, which prevented the possibility of a national crisis. However, seeing this event as a model to follow, Congress continued to broker North-South compromises in the 1800s that eventually led to the Civil War.