

Discuss the Causes of the Civil War

Considering the differences and arguments between the North and South, the issues with slavery, and an era of political upheaval, the American Civil War was deemed unavoidable. Aside from these long-term causes, the Civil War was also immediately provoked by certain sparks such as the election of Abraham Lincoln as president, an abolitionist John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, and an

To begin, the Northern and Southern parts of the United States of America were very much like two separate nations. While one side saw a capitalist and industrializing North, the other side had an agrarian, planter-dominated South. The North consisted of numerous urbanized towns, narrow and fast flowing rivers, non-cash crops, industrialists, and an egalitarian society whereas the South was comprised of a small number of vast, widespread towns, cash crops, farms, and no industrialization. There was no engagement in internal trade between the North and South. The South performed regular trade with England, who took their raw materials, manufactured them, and sold the products back to the U.S. Due to their differences, the Northern Congress and Southern Congress did not get along with each other. One of the major arguments that erupted between the two was to how to spend the money. The North wanted to build roads and canals to provide linkage between the towns and make traveling by rivers easier. The South on the other hand, possessed the luxury of slow flowing, wide rivers and needed no roads because there were not so many towns. Another problem that arose was about tariffs. North wanted high tariffs to protect their local goods, most importantly their iron industry, but this angered the South because they wanted low tariffs to be able to export their goods to England and import manufactured products. Tariffs were a common way to raise revenues during the 1820s to the 1850s and had been rising for 30 years. The South felt that the

Northern industrialists were profiting at the expense of Southern farmers. The difficulties regarding internal improvements and tariffs was a big deal because the entire nation's economy depended on it and disagreements within that realm helped bring about war.

Next, slavery majorly existed in the South, ideal for cotton production. Even after the declared illegality of the African Slave Trade in 1808, 4 million slaves still existed in the U.S. by 1860 as slavery itself was legal by the constitution. The abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison founded the Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 to protest. Although they were largely unsuccessful in gaining white support in the South, they still brought the issue of slavery to public attention. While some people considered slavery a ruthless reality, other believed that it was marked by kind and gentle slave owners. To balance the argument of slavery, the Missouri Compromise was passed in 1820 which drew a line at 36 degrees 30' N Latitude. This determined that everything above the line was free, and everything below the line was subject to slavery. Trouble came along when California requested to be admitted as a free, undivided state, which completely undermined the duty of the Missouri Compromise. To solve this problem, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John Calhoun, with the help of Stephen Douglas enacted the Compromise of 1850. This bill admitted California as an undivided free state, overruling the concept of the Missouri Compromise. Another part of the Compromise included the Fugitive Slave Act, which required all slaves to be returned to their owners. This statute angered the North as it seems as one more advocate to the process of slavery, and prevented the freedom of runaway slaves. The fact that there was no major slave revolt does not mean that slaves were with content with their lot, but it is testimony to their reality. A slave revolt was impossible to conduct, as slaves were not permitted to own fire-arms or meet in large groups. Additionally, The Wilmot Proviso, an amendment that banned slavery in all acquired territories from Mexico

failed to become a law after being rejected by Congress. Slavery is often widely debated to be the main cause of the Civil War, as it further increased hostility between the North and South and contributed to political upheaval.

Finally, the disagreements within the nation caused political turmoil. The Kansas-Nebraska act launched by Stephen Douglas permitted citizens of Kansas to vote for the state's slavery status, it not only repealed the Missouri Compromise, but the idea of popular sovereignty created further disturbance between the North and South. Pro-slavery citizens from other states moved to Kansas to vote for their cause, which made the abolitionists to boycott the election and set up a new election for freedom. To address the issue of the vote, a pro-slavery bill known as the Lecompton Constitution and an anti-slavery bill known as the Topeka Constitution was sent to Congress. This was a time of ineffective leadership, with the great minds such as Clay, Webster, and Calhoun all dead. President James Buchanan, a pro-Southerner refused to take other people's viewpoints into consideration which caused further mayhem. Also, Northern attacks followed by Southern counterattacks led to a brutal war in Kansas, often dubbed "Bleeding Kansas". The failure of the government to stabilize the situation foreshadowed the entrance of the U.S. into Civil War.

The Civil War was yet another inevitable event in our nation's history which saw the entities within the disagreeing factions fail to compromise. It followed differences within the North and South, arguments over slavery, and political disorder.