The Civil War

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Introduction

The civil war in the United States of America in the 19th century is one of the most deadly civil war the Americans had ever gone through (Blight, 2001). They are many issues that led to the civil war between the north and south of United States of America. However, the idea of slavery was one of the biggest problems that the north and south disagreed upon, which eventually led to the civil war. What made the civil war inevitable was the continuous disagreement between the north and south, which created a huge gap between the two states.

According to the South, slavery was a means of cheap labor, which elevated the economic power of the south over the north. Slavery in the south was considered more of the property of an individual rather than a human being. The North believed that slavery was a violation of the human right and every person in America was equal. These made the war inevitable, especially after the invention of the cotton gin in the 1790s (Heidler & Heidler, 2002 ).

The civil war demonstrated that the north and the south were on an entirely different path, both economically and socially. The two regions were further driven apart after the publication of certain books such as the fugitive slave, Uncle Tom's Cabin and Bleeding Kansas were the few books that led to the disagreement between the two states before the civil war (Linderman, 2008). However, there were few major political comprises between the years 1820 and 1850 when north and the south tried to reconcile their differences, but both political compromises failed. The escalation of the tension between the north and south continued by 1850. At this point, the civil war gained much popularity between the north and the south making it inevitable (McPherson, 2003).

Economic and social differences

In the 1800s, the South majorly relied on cotton as 60% of its export profits were mainly from cotton farming (Linderman, 2008). The south were mainly farmers and adoption of cotton farming grew very fast in the south due to its international market making the business lucrative, whereas the north were mainly industrialist. The South relied on cheap labor from slavery as planters purchased more slaves from Africa and West Indies before the banning of the slave trade in 1808 (Foner, 2013). The South transported thousands of Africans to cater for their cotton field leading to an extensive slave trade in the United States. As slavery increased in the United States' South, the size of cotton plantation also increased rapidly as hundreds of slaves were forced to work per plot. During this period, the entire southern part of the United States entirely relied on cotton farming to support their economy.

The economy of the south also relied much on the slavery to support their exportation of cotton as it was considered a lucrative business internationally. On the other hand, the northern part of the United States also benefited indirectly from slavery (Heidler & Heidler, 2002 ). However, their social norms were entirely different from that of the south, as the north did not depend on enslavement to prosper in their economy.

The northern economy was more industrialized, and few plantation firms existed. Therefore, this means that the north did not depend on slavery to boost their economy. The north were also focusing on promoting equality within their economy as African-Americans were receiving payment for their labor in the industries. The social norm of the north started to spread to the south, as farmers in the south who relied on slavery for cheap labor saw the move as a threat to their business. This is because abolishing slavery will mean slaves were to be paid which increases expenses and reduces profits (Heidler & Heidler, 2002 ).

Major contributors for the civil war

In the 1850s, the events that took place in this period proved that the south and the north slavery divide was irreconcilable. In 1852, the north were awakened to the plight of slavery in the south by one of the north’s bestseller novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher" (Blight, 2001). The novel is one of the most popular books in the North before the American civil war in 1852. However, the book was only accessible in the north, as the book was banned in the south. This is because of the differences in opinion amongst the north over the slavery issue. Harriet Beecher was encouraged to write about slavery after the fugitive slave act was in the American political system. In this law, the north and south were prohibited from assisting slaves who ran away from their master. Many people in the north disagreed with the act even to those who had shown sympathy to the abolitionist cause (Foner, 2013).

In 1856, violence between the proslavery group and free spoilers demonstrated how the north and south strongly opposed each other when it came to slavery (Linderman, 2008). At this point, the violence demonstrated their belief on humanity and how the United States of America was viewed in a global perspective. In 1857, the differences in opinion between the north and south further escalated after the introduction of the Dred Scott decision, which opened the north to slavery. The decision declares Missouri Compromise unconstitutional, which angered the north leading to the escalation of violence (Linderman, 2008).

In 1859, John Brown, who was considered a "martyr" by the North, after the raid and execution due to his actions in the fight for freedom for the slaves (McPherson, 2003). His death outraged the north, which also proved to be the last straw for many people on both the north and the south. The South celebrated his death as they considered the death of John Brown a victory while the northern mourned. Therefore, the events that took place in 1850 proved that the north and south could not allow any compromise on the slavery issue.

Political Compromises

One of the significant political compromises between the north and the south, which was active for a few days, was the Missouri compromise in 1820 (Foner, 2013). The agreement indicated the border between the slave states and the Free states in which both the south and the north agreed to it. However, over time, the South saw the borderline as too restrictive leading to another disagreement with the Northside (Heidler & Heidler, 2002 ). In addition, another compromise established in the 1850s, which sought to end the great debate on slavery, was also short-lived after the Mexican war. These because the south considered the compromise unsatisfactory leading to the dissolution of the peaceful resolution (McPherson, 2003). Due to the political, economic and social divide over the past years, the civil war between the north and the south was inevitable. The best evidence for the inevitability of the civil war was the numerous failure of the compromise attempts that was meant to make amends between the two states.

The civil war

In 1861, the war between the north and south broke out as both regions had the idea that they would win the war easily and quickly (Blight, 2001). However, the North had a greater advantage over the south due to the experience and international recognition they received, a thriving economy, a strong federal government and a population larger than that of the south. In comparison, the South boast of the thriving cotton plantation which boost the economy and they believed cotton was more superior to the north’s industrial economy (McPherson, 2003). The south also boast of better commanders and had the idea that it could influence Britain’s on their side. According to the southerners in the civil war, they believed they were fighting the tyrannous government in the north and believed they were protecting their homes and families from the north.

Conclusion

However, in 1864, the civil war ended as the South lay in ruins and the once proud cotton kingdom was largely in destruction throughout the war (McPherson, 2003). The south's economy was primarily affected by the war as the price of goods escalated, and money in those states was worthless since the south would spend many Confederate dollars to buy a single loaf of bread. Many slaves refused to work in the south and flocked in the north as the south were mostly affected by increased malnutrition and hunger. Therefore, the north was much better off in 1864 as compared to the south (Linderman, 2008).

The north still were able to enjoy the enormous economic boom during the civil war and the industrial sector experienced a significant transformation. The south, which was governed by Confederate states, were defeated in the civil war, and slavery was abolished in the south (Foner, 2013). Many of the slaves even escaped the Confederate States towards the north, which offered compensation for their work. These contributed to the economic boom in the north making the union much stronger (McPherson, 2003).

# References

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