

Free essay on the 1861 to 1865 civil war in america destroyed the city of mississ...

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Debates are still ongoing to establish the main reasons that led Mississippi and the southern states to leave the union. Some of the reasons, which are frequently cited to have led to the war, include high tariffs and the rights of states. However, Mississippi has defended itself citing promotion of slavery as the primary reason for its secession (Percy, 1969).

Before the civil war decades, slavery had grown at an alarming rate in Mississippi. By 1860, the population of slave was over 430, 000 as compared to the 350, 000 whites living in the state. Cotton production was the primary driver of the economy and the cotton plantations depended on the slaves who were the only source of labor. Slavery was an economic system as well as a social structure (McPherson, 1988). Most people who held slaves believed that the slaves were inferior and treated them as any other property. The abolitionist movement continued to grow and increased its attacks on the institution of slavery. This made the whites of Mississippi

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heighten their defense for the peculiar institution. The white Mississippians felt that it was their obligation to relocate the slaves in to new territories. Mississippians who felt safe in their territories remained in the union on condition that there was a balance between slave states and free states. There were numerous compromises that maintained this balance in the country. A recruitment of one free state in to the union was followed by another slave state to maintain the balance. The whites of Mississippi were afraid that slave states would be outnumbered by free states into the union. The Mississippians believed that if this happened, slavery would be eventually abolished because the legislation would be limiting. This balance remained the same until in 1840 when the equilibrium was under threats from the new territories acquired by the Mexican-American War in the years of 1846 to 1848 (Potter, 1976).

The American-Mexican War

In 1846, the American-Mexican war had barely begun with the issue of slavery raising more concern. Mississippians were engaged by the new law introduced by Mexicans that prohibited slave trade in all territories gained from Mexico (McPherson, 1988). Even before the legalizing of the bill, it was among the first events that led the Mississippi to move closer to secession. The next round was set off by California, which had a long desire of entering in to the union as one of the free states. The Congress was focused in finding a satisfactory solution to both southern and northern. Mississippi held a meeting in mid 1849. The delegates demanded for an immediate action from the leaders of the states should the new bill be legalized. They also assisted

in the relocation of slaveholders to the new areas of southwest. Furthermore, a southern convention was organized by the delegates and it was held in mid 1850 in the city of Nashville (Percy, 1969).

Before the convention, John Quitman was given the position of the governor becoming the head of Mississippi. He was referred to as the father of secession. He led the state out of the union. Quitman was afraid that the western territories and California would eventually become free states and encouraged the need for Mississippi to retain its sovereignty. He was against the concept that slavery could be abolished in the territories by the federal government. He also believed that the government could not deny slave holders the freedom to arrest slaves who ran. People who made laws in Mississippi were convinced by Quitman and they proceeded to name delegates who would represent Mississippi in the convention (McPherson, 1988).

The meeting was held in mid 1850 and it was presided over by Mississippi's Judge William Sharkey. Despite all the numerous anticipations, few results emerged from the convention. The extension of the line of Missouri Compromise was favored by the delegates. The meeting was adjourned because the delegates wanted to have a look at how California and other issues will be handled by the congress (Potter, 1976).

The Compromise of 1850

The debate was intense and it continued for months leading to the passing of the Omnibus Bill, which is commonly known as the 1850 Compromise Bill (Percy, 1969). California was accepted in to the Union as one of the free

states. There were no restrictions of slavery in the territories of New Mexico. A fugitive law on slave was legalized which saw slave trade abolished in Columbia. Many people lived with the hopes that the crisis of secession had passed as a result of the solution found by the convention.

There were numerous disagreements between some Mississippians and Quitman over the compromising of 1850 bill. Mississippi were optimistic of gaining more slave territories and this is why it was in favor of the American-Mexican war (Potter, 1976). The 1850 compromise did not allow Mississippi to gain anything from the war. The entry of California and New Mexico in to the union was a threat to the balance between free states and slave states. Quitman requested for a special meeting with his delegates with an aim of withdrawing Mississippi from the union. The governor received opposition from one of the state's Senator, Henry Foote who was in support of the 1850 Compromise Bill.

In 1851, voters in Mississippi had the opportunity to make a decision on slavery in the state. In September, the two sides went in to an election that saw the secession's loss. Quitman's position was challenged by Foote, due to Quitman's failure, he quit from the race. Foote was racing against the state's senator, Jefferson Davis. Foote won the position of the state's Governor in a hard campaigned battle. Any hopes of immediate secession came to an end with the victory of Foote (McPherson, 1988).

1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act

Mississippi was further pushed by issues of territories. The 1854 Kansas Act provided a potential solution to the issue of slavery. There was widespread violence as a result of the fraudulent elections. This is because the people

were mandated to vote for or against slavery in the territories. The solution failed as the area was invaded by the advocates of abolitionist and pro-slavery (Percy, 1969).

Conclusion

In early 1861, Jefferson Davis was elected as the city's president. A few months after his election, the civil war begun in South Carolina at a place called Fort Sumter. The journey of secession in Mississippi was similar to that of other southern cities. Ego, passion, and pride were highly weighed than rationality and logic. Finally, Mississippi felt that the only means they could preserve their way of life and slavery was through secession (Potter, 1976).

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