

The war of northern aggression



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Since the end of the American Civil War it has long been thought of as a war of freedom. The victorious Union declared that they were fighting to free the slaves in the South. However, in fact, the Civil War was actually a major breaking point in American History because it was really a power struggle between the old and the new. The new, just as it had done in the previous generations, was replacing the old and was using so called "justice" as its spearhead.

This division, based upon several distinct factors, led to conflict and sectionalism within the country and ultimately started a war. The Southern states eventually seceded from the Union because of differences in cultural expansion, political beliefs, and authority. Culturally, the South and the North were almost always at odds. However, it didn't escalate into a serious matter until the admission of California and a growing interest in the West.

This expansion created the question of whether or not slavery was allowed in the West, and although many people thought that the conflict was solved with the Missouri Compromise, they were sadly mistaken (just ask the Native Americans and how compromises worked out with them). The truth of the matter was that the majority of Northerners didn't really care if the South had slaves or not in the beginning. Odds are that the institution of slavery would have died out anyhow with no need for a war.

However, if the nation was expanding and growing into a respectable country around the world, slavery was what many people believed was holding America back. This created tensions between the North and the South which often led to violent encounters such as the raid on Harpers Ferry led by John Brown, as well as violent disputes in the West, particularly in <https://assignbuster.com/the-war-of-northern-aggression/>

Kansas, over popular sovereignty which eventually led to the nickname “ Bleeding Kansas. ” With industrialism circulating in the North and new ties being made between the North and the West due to advancements in railroads and transportation, along came with it a sense of superiority.

The North was advancing along with the West, and the wicked South with all its impurities and old-fashioned traditions was holding the nation back. Although, what many Northerners couldn’t comprehend is that slavery was a necessary evil in the South. Slavery, along with technological advancements such as the cotton gin and short-staple cotton, were the main reasons for an influx of wealth in the region. In short, the livelihood of many Southerners was based on slavery and with the expansion in the West, and the question of slavery in the West, there was definite reason for Southerners to feel threatened.

If people would fight to keep it contained then they would eventually fight to abolish it. In fact, in an excerpt from a speech given by Albert Brown he states that, “ The Northerners hate us now, and they teach their children in their schools and churches to hate our children.... The John Brown raid, the burning of Texas, the stealthy tread of abolitionists among us, will tell the tale.... The North is accumulating power, and it means to use that power to emancipate your slaves (Doc 2).”

This not only gives an example of how many Southerners felt threatened and infuriated but also shows the division of the country due to a prodding Northern agenda. Actually, in an excerpt from Jefferson Davis he said just that. He stated that, “ Sectional hostility manifested in hostile legislation by states and raids of organized bodies sustained by Contributions... of

Northern Society furnish to us sufficient cause”, which basically means that Northern Society was backing Southern Society into a corner (Doc 7).

Politically, the division between the two sections of the country was much greater than their already distant cultures. In fact, in the 1860 presidential election the popular vote was almost split right down the middle between the Northern Republican, Lincoln, and the Southern Democrat, Douglas. Not only was it divided in numbers but as well as the different sections of the country almost exactly (Doc 4).

In fact, during the presidential campaign in 1860 the Republican party stated that, “ we deny the authority of Congress, of a territorial legislature, or of any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States” whereas the Democratic party stated that, “ all citizens of the United States have an equal right to settle with their property in the Territory, without their rights, either of person or property being impaired (Doc 1)”, ultimately showing the reader the different opinions held by each half of the country.

This gradual disunion of the country and its politics eventually led to a series of events, including the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and such abolitionist literature as Uncle Tom’s Cabin, that started a war. In a passage written by George Templeton he reassured this when he said that, “ we might have forgotten it had not Douglas undertaken to get Southern votes by repealing the Missouri Compromise. That was the final blow (Doc 5). ”

Despite the cultural and political differences of the war, to many people, it was about honor and integrity. The South felt as though the North had no right to tell it what it can and cannot do, and rightly so. Who were they to tell

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Southerners that after ages of building up their own Southern society and culture, they had to tear it down and conform to the rest of the country and its own beliefs and practices? In theory, the real reason behind the war was authority, and who exactly had it.

Whether or not it was the pressure from the Federal Government to take control, or it was the states themselves who craved freedom from the government, or a combination of both didn't matter because it was too far-gone at that point. However, the truth of the matter was summed up by a quotation from the Pittsburgh Press when it stated that, " The Republicans claim the right to make a code of laws for the South, not only in the States, but in the Territories (Doc 3)."

This gives us the basis for what the war was truly about, which was the right to protect oneself and their way of life. So in conclusion, the Southern states seceded due to large differences in culture, politics, and faulty authority. This gave way to one of the bloodiest wars this country has ever seen with over half a million deaths on its own soil between its own countrymen. This tragedy led to resentment between both sections of the country, but allowed for the reestablishment of the Union to commence, giving way to the foundation of our present, somewhat unified country.