

Triggers for the civil war



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Civil War was fought between 1861-1865. Before the war broke out the North and South had very opposite opinions on slavery. The North was anti-slavery and the South was pro-slavery. The people in the South did not want to make adjustments to their way of life, but with the North wanting economic growth it would. The South saw that their way of using slaves for labor was going to change dramatically. When Abraham Lincoln was running for election the South stated that they would secede if Lincoln won. They believed that he would destroy their way of life by narrowing the rights to own slaves. The South was not making empty threats. All eleven southern states seceded (not all at once) after Lincoln won. Lincoln viewed the secession as unlawful. The Civil War started at the Battle of Fort Sumter. The main triggers leading up to the Civil War are the Missouri Compromise, Nat Turner's Rebellion, the Wilmot Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Bleeding Kansas, Dred Scott v. Stanford, John Browns Raid, and Abraham Lincoln's Election.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 is the first spark leading up to the war. In 1819 a high strain between the anti-slavery and the pro-slavery groups was rising. The strain between the two exploded when Missouri made a request to become a slave state. If Missouri turned into a slave state, the ratio of slave to non-slave states would be off. Congress had a plan. To make the north and south happy they devised a two-part compromise. Missouri would become a slave state, but Maine would be a free state. The compromise also set up a "line" along the 36°30' parallel and stated that "no slavery would be permitted in other states developed out of the Louisiana Purchase." ¹ This divided the north and south as free and slave states.

Nat Turner's Rebellion caused a lot of tension to arise and played a part in causing the war. Nat Turner was a slave who was born on a Virginia plantation. While he was growing up his father allowed him to be taught writing, religion, and how to read. Turner became a fierce leader and preacher. He would preach to other slaves that " he was chosen by God to led them from bondage." 2 In August, 1831 Turner believed that the eclipse of the Sun was his sign from God that it was time to rise against the slave owners and the whites. Turner recruited help from fellow slaves. Turner and six of his followers killed the Travis family who had been the plantation owner. After they were dead Turner and his followers got their hands-on weapons and horses. Their success led to the recruitment of roughly seventy-five other slaves ready to fight. The group went on to kill roughly sixty people, and of that the majority was women and children. The rebellion was stopped after two days, but it was one of the bloodiest. Turner and about sixteen followers managed to evade capture for six weeks. Once they were caught they were convicted and executed. Turner was hung on November 11, 1831. Nat Turner's rebellion shot fear through the Southerners. It also resulted in new laws that were stricter and harsher. The laws also caused more tension and stress between the North and South.

David Wilmot was from Pennsylvania. He was a member of the United States House of Representatives and part of the Democratic party. In 1846 David made a " proposal to prohibit slavery in the territory acquired by the United States at the conclusion of the Mexican War." 3 This proposal was known as the Wilmot Proviso. The House of Representatives approved the proviso in 1846, but the Senate denied it in 1847. The reason the proviso first passed

was because most of the representatives are from the North, but when it comes to the Senate the representation is equal between the South and the North. With both sides wanting different things the proviso could not be approved. This caused the strain between the two to intensify, and it further divided them.

In 1849 California wanted to be a slave free state. This caused a mini uproar seeing as it would upset the equal balance between free and slave states. Henry Clay a member of the Senate had a series of resolutions to allow California to be a free state. This was the Compromise of 1850. Along with California being admitted as a free state the slave trade in Washington was abolished. The compromise also created territorial government in Utah, settled a boundary dispute between New Mexico and Texas, and it revised the Fugitive Slave Act. Revising the act in the compromise is what really caused the tensions to enhance. The Fugitive Slave Act allowed slave owners to go out and capture their runaway slaves. The new changes “ added more provisions regarding runaways and levied even harsher punishments for interfering in their capture.”⁴ There was a law put in place in order to see that the act was being enforced. An agent would be paid a lot of money for returning suspected runaway slaves, and less money for free slaves. This led to arguments that the law was bias and that it was solely in favor of the South. This act was meet with resistance from the North, some states passed new laws in their state in order to get around the act. This also led to the abolitionists to speed up their efforts in the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape their horrible conditions.

When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was first released it was in *The National Era* as a serial in 1851, and then in 1852 it was published and sold to the masses. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to show how cruel the conditions and punishments really were for slaves. The novel is about a slave named (Uncle) Tom. He worked on a plantation and listened to his slave owner. He was eventually sold to pay off some debt that his "master" got stuck in. Tom's new slave owner had a daughter and the two became close. The daughter made her father promise to release all his slaves, but he died before he could release them, and they were all sold to new owners. While Tom was at his new "masters" plantation some slaves ran away. Tom refused to give up information, so he was whipped to death in front of everyone. The story goes into vivid detail about what Tom went through, and the struggles that African Americans faced during this period in time. Harriet's story reached a lot of people, but the success came with a downside. The southerners during this time were not happy at all. They wrote propaganda pieces that stated that her story was full of lies. One southerner said, "Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually." 5 The northerners had a different reaction. For most of them it was their first real insight to what goes on in slave states, and how the slaves were treated. Harriet's novel solidified the tension between the north and south. It also created more anti-slave followers.

In 1854 an act was passed that overturned the Missouri Compromise. This act is known as the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Instead of using the parallel in

deciding if a state was a free state or slave state the act allowed the residents of the state determine which of the two they wanted to be.

Bleeding Kansas is the name they use to describe the violent actions that happened in Kansas during the settlement. Slavery and anti-slavery settlers raced to Kansas each trying to gain more support. Tensions rose between the two groups and violence erupted.

Dred Scott was slave who sued for his freedom and the freedom of his family. Dred stated that he and his family should be freed because they lived as slaves in a free state for four years. This was the Dred Scott v. Stanford case in 1857. When the Supreme Court came to a decision they confirmed that a slave owner can bring their slaves into western free states and still have them as slaves. The court also stated that African Americans were not consider people. They are consider property therefore they have no rights, and “ property could not be taken from a person without due process of law.”⁶ The decision of the court caused more strain and tension to run throughout the region.

John Brown was an abolitionist. He was born in Connecticut and grew up in an anti-slavery household. “ In 1837...he attended an abolition meeting in Cleveland...he was so moved that he publicly announced his dedication to destroying the institution of slavery. As early as 1848 he was formulating a plan to incite an insurrection.”⁷ On October 19, 1859, he put years of planning into action. Brown and his supporters took hold of a federal complex in Harper’s Ferry. The complex had weapons that he and his followers would use to fight off the enemy. Brown sent some supporters to gather slaves for their fight, but none came. Also, Brown captured hostages

while waiting for the fight to begin. A little while later gunfight broke out between Brown and his men against the citizens of Harper's Ferry and the militia. Eight of Brown's men were killed (two of which were his sons) along with two townspeople. Some time had passed and troops from Washington had arrived to put a stop to Brown and his followers. The troops seized control of the engine house inside the complex, Brown and his supporters were captured and were tried for treason. Brown was sentenced to death by hanging on December 2. Brown's rebellion was over in less than thirty-six hours. The strain he caused for the North and the South would last a lot longer. People in the North thought his actions were crazy, but some saw him as courageous, and many people created things to honor Brown's nobility in trying to liberate the slaves. Although, the South viewed his actions as a horrible disturbance, and were furious with the North for being sympathetic and supportive. This small rebellious act is known as John Brown's Raid and even though it was not a successful rebellion it helped lead the United States into the Civil War.

Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky. He was also a lawyer and represented the Whigs in Congress. In Illinois of 1858 before the election Lincoln and Stephen Douglas were fighting in a campaign for a seat in the U. S. Senate. The campaign was over slavery. This battle between the two is known as the Lincoln-Douglas debates. During the debate Douglas stuck with the way things were. He believed that the states should decide if they wanted to be a free or slave state. Lincoln on the other hand believed that the spread of slavery should be stopped. Lincoln did not win the seat in the Senate, but his efforts in the campaign did not go unnoticed. Lincoln got

national attention and two years later he was elected as the sixteenth president of the United States on November 6, 1860. He was the first president from the Republican Party. He won in a country that was full of Democratic supporters. The victory for Lincoln was a death blow to the South. The thought of Lincoln winning was unbearable, and secession of southern states began. “ President Lincoln saw the first state to succeed when South Carolina voted to secede on December 20th , 1860.”⁸ By March of 1861 seven of the eleven southern states seceded, and not long after the last four followed.

The Civil War was a long four-year battle between the Union (North) and the Confederates (South). The war between both sides was caused by conflicting interest with the rights and usage of slaves. When the state of Missouri applied to become a slave state in 1820 the North and South were unhappy because, they did not want the ratio of free to slave states to be unequal. Nat Turner’s Rebellion led to the death of roughly sixty people. Turner and his fellow slaves act of rebelling was ended in two days, but it still shot terror through the people in the South. David Wilmot came up with the Wilmot Proviso to help stop the spread of slavery into Texas. His vision was denied. The Compromise of 1850 allowed the state of California to be admitted as a free state along with revision of the Fugitive Slave Act which gave more power to slave owners in the capture, return and punishment to run-away slaves. The story of Tom in the book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* shined a bright light onto the inhumane conditions inflicted onto slaves by their owners. This novel allowed the North their first experience in seeing what it was like for the slaves and led to more support for anti-slavery. In 1854 the Kansas-

Nebraska act led to horrific acts of violence for land between anti and pro-slavery supporters who were trying to gain the population advantage to have the state labeled as free or slave states. The Dred Scott v. Stanford case was about Scott and his family trying to gain their freedom because they had lived as slaves in free states with their slave owner as he traveled. It led to the conclusion that slaves are considered property and that they do not have rights. John Brown's Raid lasted less than two days. He and some followers were trying to liberate the slaves, but his plan failed, and he was sentenced to death. Lincoln election led to the secession of all eleven southern states. These events resulted in intense tension and strife between the North and South, and caused the Civil War they are the Missouri Compromise, Nat Turner's Rebellion, the Wilmot Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Bleeding Kansas, Dred Scott v. Stanford, John Brown's Raid, and Abraham Lincoln's Election.

- <https://www.history.com/topics/abolitionist-movement/missouri-compromise1>
- <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/nat-turner2>
- http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Wilmot_Proviso 3
- <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts> 4
- <http://66753557.weebly.com/reactions-of-southerners.html> 5
- <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dred-scott-decision6>
- <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/john-browns-raid-on-harpers-ferry> 7
- <http://www.historynet.com/abraham-lincoln-election8>