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During the 1850's slavery was an enormous controversial issue that impacted American politics and culture in the events leading up to the civil war and even until contemporary day. The pre-civil war days were known as the " antebellum years". Those years were the most riotous among all of American history. At this point in time, America was going through the most significant changes that had a lasting impact on our country and on American lives. Throughout these years the country transformed from a farming production to an urbanized economic industry making the North and South grow further and further apart. This caused political, economic, and cultural differences within America.

To continue, there were many ways the slavery question impacted American culture and politics in the decade leading up to the civil war. Some of these were the Market revolution, the changes of our urbanized era, political struggles, states' rights issues, and the westward expansion. All of these controversies heightened the tension between Americans in the Northern and Southern regions. Overall every action and decision made in the decade leading up to the Civil War were from the effects of the slavery question.

The first way in which slavery impacted American culture was from the shift of the Market Revolution. Between 1820 and 1860 the North experienced a manufactured boom. This split the North and South even more. The improvement of transportation helped the flow of goods and crops move around the states in the North easier and cheaper. The North urbanized drastically during this era. American society was wrapped entirely around farming until millions of immigrants started moving into cities and finding

jobs in the industrialized economy. During this time the middle class began to grow and from this a variety of reform movements started to arise.

This was a driving force for the ban of slavery which elevated tensions within both American regions. The growth of the North also generated the wage labor system. On the other hand, the South needed slaves for labor in their fields. Southerners were reliant on their cotton based economy and wanted the money to keep coming in. While the North began going through these changes and becoming more aware of the injustices of slavery, the South became fearful that their way of life would come to an end. Many people in the North felt strongly that Slavery was wrong and evil. These people who believed slavery was preposterous were called abolitionists. One significant individual who had an impact on black freedom, wrote an Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World.

David Walker proclaimed that us Americans are constantly enforcing freedom of the land and liberty, yet we are doing the opposite. We violate our own constitution, we are hypocrites he says. Walker insisted that blacks should have as much right to live freely as anybody else does in the United States. Walker's pamphlet definitely impacted the American culture.

He made people angry and increased the intensity between the North and the South. Walker once said “ The result of my observations has warranted the full and unshaken conviction, that we, are the most degraded, wretched, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began; and I pray God that none like us ever may live again until time shall be no more (Foner,

pg 233). Walker is saying that through his observations black have been given the least power and put into the least position he has ever seen.

He says that he hopes nobody ever has to go through this ever again. It is obvious that Walker coming out and speaking against the white and accusing them of hypocrisy increased more struggle between the North and the South. " When free black sailors were found carrying copies of Walker's pamphlet, southern states issued a reward for his arrest or his death... Walker died, apparently of natural causes, in 1830, but his words inspired a generation of black abolitionists" (Foner, pg 233). Moreover, major political issues influenced America leading the up to the civil war. There had been arguments over how much power should be given and who the power should be given to.

" State righters" aka Southerners argued that the federal government was taking away too many of their rights. They believed that the individual states should have a final say in the constitution. John C. Calhoun who was a leading theorist of nullification fell behind the rest of the southerners who felt that the Congress was exceeding their powers.

He said that states had the right to nullify anything they feel is unconstitutional because the states were the ones who drew up the constitution. On the contrary, Jackson's stance believed in the opposite. " To jackson, nullification amounted to nothing less than disunion... He dismissed Calhoun's constitutional arguments out of hand: " Can anyone of common sense believe the absurdity, that a faction of any state, or a state, has a right to secede and destroy this union, and the liberty of the country with it?"

(Foner, pg 300). This created even more tension between the North and the South. Nevertheless, these trends split the North and the South completely and the first fighting over slavery occurred in Kansas of 1854. The Kansas Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri compromise. The government passed the Kansas- Nebraska Act which allowed territories to vote through popular sovereignty whether they should be a free state or a slave state.

In Nebraska things were easy. They decided to be a free state. However, in Kansas two legislatures wouldn't accept each other. This led to "Bleeding Kansas". One war in particular that increased tension before the Civil War was the Pottawatomie Massacre, May 1856. An army from the North led by John Brown, entered a pro slavery town. Him and his armed forces entered the houses of their enemies and mercilessly killed and cut up these helpless men.

Pro slavery forces attacked anti-slavery forces and fought over the issue for years. Eventually Kansas entered as a free state in 1861. From here on out the North and South were serious on starting a war. Ultimately, each debate on the slavery question only drove the North and the South further apart resulting in the Civil war. The North and the South were in two different places politically, socially, and culturally. However, slavery is wrong, was wrong, and will always be wrong. It is inhumane and unethical to treat a certain group of people violently and unfairly merely because of the amount of melanin in their skin.

Enslaved black people were denied from their way of life, they were denied of their goals, their dreams, and their dignity. All humans should be born

free, equal in dignity and in rights. Just as the constitution says everyone has a right to life, liberty, and security of a person. Nobody will ever understand, why America never followed their own constitution and gave everyone the equal rights they were supposed to be given the moment they stepped on American soil.

To conclude, not only did the slavery question affect the lives during the 1850's leading up to the war but it will also affect America forever.