

# The root of civil war



The years leading to civil war were unpleasant for millions of Southern and Northern Americans. While a few basked in wealth and power, a selected population suffered poverty, slavery, and insecurities. A majority experienced social, cultural, and economic differences.

Political and religious aspects also clashed among colonies and the situation grew profoundly towards civil war. Other than slavery, the Northerners and Southerners had a significant difference in the political arena. Politics was a common agenda that stimulated the economy, drove power, and profoundly affected cultural and religious concepts. During this period, slaves were willing to fight for labor rights while other people sought confrontation due to biased government interferences. Based on Bruce Levine's book, the Northern and Southern Americans were devoted to their cause in pursuit of political goals. A majority during the antebellum era desired peace in the state as well as better economic times. They also wanted an end to slavery and a new dawn of harmony where color, religious background, or power did not cause chaos (Levine, 2005).

The North and South differed in various ways. Historians identify three significant aspects that set both sides apart socially, culturally, economically, politically, and religiously. They include:

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In the North, slavery was not as common as in the South. Many elite people within the region grew wealthy from the slave trade, but it was not widespread. The situation in the South was substantial such that when the Northern state abolished slavery between 1774 and 1804, the south side

remained adamant. The practice was an economic stepping stone for the area because slaves were essential for running agricultural activities. Politically, both sides disagreed about the oppression aspect such that the Northern side began antislavery movements. The Southern region still maintained the practice in that it became a cultural concept and social divide between the rich and poor. Religious wise, opinions clashed among influential individuals. According to Levine, (2005), some northerners considered slavery “ repugnant to humanity.” George Washington was among those on the forefront against the practice, but some southerners criticized their ideologies. They even tried to prevent the north side from outlawing the importation of African slaves. Protestant clergies created societies aimed at gradually eradicating slavery.

In both regions, freedom was limited, but it was practiced more in the north than the south. While the northerners expressed their rights in the open, southerners whispered in the dark for fear of government confrontation. The latter had significant limitations such that freedom offer came with many restrictions. According to Levine’s book, the British government of Virginia gave freedom to slaves who supported their movement. In North Carolina, freedom came at a price where masters (slave owners) carried the bargaining chip. Political opinions among poor southerners became disregarded. Economically, the black population lacked trade entitlement. The wealthy considered them handy enough for casual labor such that they had limited time personal and professional development. Regardless, the African-Americans in the south had not freedom for education. The Northern region considered the children of the slaves for fulfilling essential duties.

Some slave owners took interest and sponsored their training. Religious groups were diverse before the civil wars and, therefore, both regions embraced the concept. The difference emerged due to political influence. The Quakers and Methodists were highly involved in antislavery movements while others cowered.

Cities in the North were centers of trade while most southerners owned large farms. The former was more socially friendly than the latter due to slavery. Workers lived in poor conditions while the elite accumulated wealth. The north did not have a shortage of large towns compared to the south, and therefore, northerners seemed more politically, economically, and culturally advanced. Increased migration to the north led to massive development in education, culture, and art. However, the cities became dirty and crowded, unlike the south side where plantations were self-sufficient and well-tended. Economic differences between the regions existed due to southerners being agriculturally-based while northerners specialized in manufacturing. The former grew cotton which was traded to the other side for production. Ideally, the Northern and Southern development progress emerged due to manufacturing and agricultural practices respectively. The political expansion was more advanced in the North than South because in the latter, the rich held power and influence against the less privileged. Significant decisions became the elites' responsibility while the poor followed suit.

Levine (2005) explained the differences above grew more profound in the decade leading to civil war than other periods. People had become tired of the oppression by influential individuals. The North no longer considered slavery an ethical practice. They openly condemned slave owners while the

victims gained a voice. During the period, newspapers were becoming popular, and opinions could get printed. Movements began to emerge as the oppressed claimed labor and entitlement rights. Levine quotes Thomas Jefferson in his attempt to express how freedom of expression triggered conflict. He initially failed to publish Notes on The State of Virginia because the article would stir issues (Levine, 2005). He was unwilling to share the material in public because slave abolition appeared impossible despite support from fellow southerners. Suffice to say, both regions became devoted to eradicating various issues. After Jefferson became the president in 1800, the tension between the areas spurred to new heights.

Many slaves gathered at the state capital of Richmond where a few were captured and hanged. The rebels were not deterred from their cause such that they proclaimed “ Death or Liberty” to show their commitment. While the Northern states granted slaves emancipation gradually, the southerners remained adamant. The tension led to economic differences and the rise of discrimination. The tension between the regions heightened further after validating the constitution officially. The social atmosphere became heavy because the north and south political cooperation was contradicting. Carl Schurz was a political immigrant who observed that the slavery concept rather a struggle between two states rather than the geographic difference. Ideally, the antebellum era had enough tension in the political, social, economic, and social arena to trigger the civil war. Citizens were willing to die than live under oppression. Additionally, many migrated from the south to the north seeking freedom and a better lifestyle.

The root of civil war dates back to the early centuries, and as decades passed, states began to realize ideal ways to coexist. The northern and southern regions had contradicting approaches that caused a rift. As a result, political and economic differences emerged accompanied by social, cultural and religious conflicts. Although slavery was the most significant issue, the political platform triggered more problems than initially intended. Levine's book explores both regions' history from a different perspective. He covers the antebellum era at large as well.