

What caused civil war?



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Abraham Lincoln's election of 1860 was that start to something new and very different for the nation. Lincoln, former member of the Whig party but now a member of the republican party, understood how divided the union was and believed it was his duty to keep the union together, at all costs. Although this election was not the actual start of the Civil War, it was the start of different ideas and conflict between the parties that would soon lead to a breakout. This election made it clear that the division would become greater and eventually start a war.

Along with Lincoln's election, there were many other events that led up to that start of the civil war, including Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Kansas-Nebraska Act, Bleeding Kansas, and the actual start of the war with the attack on Fort Sumter. A main event that occurred and is known to have begun the idea of having a war is the book that was written entitled Uncle Tom's Cabin. This book was written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, and according to The Sixth Edition: The American Promise, she had never been to a plantation and was a white northerner (364).

This book exposed the truth behind slavery and the conditions that the slaves had to live in. Due to the slavery being in the south, the southerners shut down what was said about them and pronounced the information to be lies. The southerners stood together but they no longer received condolences from the free states due to the tragic and detailed description in Stowe's reading. On the other hand, the northerners believed the information to be true which confirmed their opinion and helped them stand taller by their anti-slavery ideas. Although the two groups stood closer together with themselves, they stood farther apart from each other. This separation of the

two sides is what is believed to have started the controversy, which is why Lincoln said to Stowe as he met her in the White House, ? So you are the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war (364). As this meeting between Lincoln and Stowe occurred a decade after the publication, many events occurred during that time and it was believed to have all started with this exposure of the way slaves were treated.

Even though it is believed that the start of the war was from Uncle Toms Cabin, there were many other events that occurred in between the publication of this book and the beginning of the fighting that led up to the outbreak. One of these events is known as the Kansas – Nebraska Act, in which a railroad was the incentive for it. Stephen A. Douglas, Illinois Democratic senator, wanted a railroad for Chicago but any railroad that ran west would pass through a region that Congress in 1830 had designated a ? permanent Indian reserve (365). This Indian reserve would be named Nebraska, which was a huge area between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains, and the Indians would soon be thrown out. As this land became open and no longer had Indians, it would have to collect southern support so that the Nebraska legislation would be passed. This support helped not only Nebraska but also the southerners due to this new land becoming part of popular sovereignty which would allow the people going there to choose if the land would be for or against slavery. This act caused the government to push the Plains Indians farther west, and make way for farmers and railroads (365). There was a huge division between this land, and this large piece of land started out as only Nebraska but turned into Nebraska and Kansas due to the different beliefs for slaves. This separation caused further tension for

the result of having a war. The conflict of the anti – slavery and the pro – slavery in this newly separated land caused an event which is known as Bleeding Kansas.

Bleeding Kansas was similar to a small civil war in the one area of land, Kansas. This small breakout started when multiple hundreds of pro – slavery men invaded the center of the free state settlement entitled Lawrence. Due to this invasion, a fight broke out between the anti – slavery and the pro – slavery. There was also a division with the north and south that was connected to Preston Brooks, who was a member of the house of South Carolina. The day after the fight broke out in Kansas, May 22, 1856, he beat senator Charles Sumner in order to make him resign his position in the House. This treatment put on a northerner and performed by a southerner was a reflection of how the south handled their situations. This torture emphasized and solidified the horror that was mentioned in Uncle Toms Cabin. This small violent act gave us a taste of what would soon happen on a much larger scale and with everyone involved.

As we got a little taste of what a war between the northerners and the southerners was about, it started to become more real about five years later. Fort Sumter was located at the Charleston Harbor entrance in South Carolina, this was a small island where about eighty United States soldiers stayed. This was the place that history would be made, and the true beginning of the civil war would start. Lincoln had to make a big decision of whether or not to relieve the fort, although there was a dilemma that he had to consider. He had to investigate what risks would come with relieving the

fort which was risking war, but he also wanted to consider the plan he had of defending federal property and avoiding military force.

As this decision was difficult for Lincoln to look at and make, he turned it over to Jefferson Davis who wanted military action but had people telling him that it was almost like walking into death and no longer having support of the north. As Davis thought about the decision that was now put on him, he soon decided that the Confederate troops needed to take the fort before the others would show up to Charleston and relieve if themselves. As the Confederate troops took the fort, they took Fort Sumter after a bombardment that lasted thirty-three hours. Although the Confederates had Fort Sumter, the idea of war was also present and came with it. Five years later from Bleeding Kansas on April 12, 1861 the civil war officially started.

With each of these events came many different ideas that made the idea of the civil war come closer to reality. The election of Abraham Lincoln started even the smallest thought of a war eventually coming, due to what he believed. He wanted to be a free nation and not have slaves, but with his one very strong opinion also came the south who all also had strong opinions about being for slavery. This election caused the nation to become stronger and more passionate about their beliefs because they wanted what they believed in to be put into play everywhere. Uncle Toms Cabin was important to the division that was already in play, because it exposed who the south was and what they would do in order to have their slaves. Harriet Beecher Stowe did not hold back when it came to explain the treatment these slaves had to deal with every day.

This deep explanation caused the north to believe further into being anti-slaves because of how horrifying and terrible they believed this treatment to be. It also caused the south to deny what was being said about them with proof of it being true and it expressed who they were to the north. This book caused the north to become stronger for their opinion and did not want to have anything to do with having slaves. There was also the Kansas – Nebraska Act that expressed how this idea was so powerful and moving for the people, that it caused one piece of land to split into two due to the northern and southern ideas. Along with the Kansas – Nebraska Act came Bleeding Kansas which gave us a small taste for what the actual war would be like when it came to play. This idea of anti-slavery versus pro-slavery became personal and a member of the house, Preston Brooks, decided to beat Charles Sumner to force him into resigning and the decision of pro-slavery being put into play.

Yet this idea did not work as Brooks had hoped and Sumner got places back as a senator soon after he resigned. This was a major event that led to the attack on Fort Sumter which began the true civil war. The start to this was is very significant because it did truly start with this attack but, yet it had started before when Lincoln came into play. The start of the civil war was long awaited, and it had a lot of buildup which caused this war to be one of the most significant wars in history.