

The caning of charles sumner

[History](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Analytical Review of Caning of Charles Sumner Caning of Charles Sumner by Williamjames Hoffer (55) praises Charles Sumner as a renowned Republican who took his first senate seat as a Democrat. This was because he believed that the Republicans at that time had policies that did not favor everyone. So with his position, he would be able to address certain issues freely especially that of slavery.

During this period, he took that chance as an orator and gave his first speech, stating his position against slavery, insisting that slaves should be given full freedom and equal rights just like the rest. In his quest for total freedom of the blacks, he stated repealing of the Fugitive Slave Act, and denounced it as a violation against the public conscience, constitution and divine law. In his speech, he said that his mistress, who although hideous to others, will always be lovely to him and had been taken. The allegory that he used defined the mistreatment of the black people in the North, and slavery as a whole (88). Hoffer states that it is essential to note the sexual imagery that persisted throughout the oration. He did this to protect the honor of South Carolina.

The speech caused bitterness among the other Senators, and Senator Preston Brooks took it upon himself to teach him a lesson. Brooks beat up Sumner till unconsciousness and until his cane broke. This attack as Brooks claims was to defend his family's honor and that of his fellow citizens of South Carolina (92). After reviewing the circumstances that led to Sumner's beating, and analyzing the cultural pressures to defend the honor within Antebellum in the Southern Society, it shows that the Caning of Sumner event represented a microcosmic instance of the cultural motivations of the civil war.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-caning-of-charles-sumner/>

The speech that had offended Brooks, and he needed to maintain his reputation in South, and without this, he was unlikely to gain campaign supporters or endorsements from the Southern Senates in his motions, in the House of Representatives (112). The concept of honor was the cultural cornerstone of the gentleman's society in the antebellum south. This concept was not any different in the North, but it took a different meaning there. It referred to one's personal morals, honesty, integrity and reliability, just like what Sumner possessed. However in the South, to have honor, one required all the qualities like those of the North and in addition, to be vigorously supportive of the Southern culture.

This desire to support the Southern culture, and of honor to be precise, stood on the basis that their culture was perfect, and an insult to them was not tolerated or taken lightly. This insistence of perfection was evident in the slave supported agriculture, and was against industrialism and abolitionist views that the Northerners had adopted (128). For Sumner to spit on their honor it struck at their Southern identity and pride, therefore; they had a way of dealing with others who opposed it, as they called it the Southern Code. This code prescribed punishment to the Northerners therefore, Brooks only acted according to the culture of the Southern Honor and gave Sumner the beating that he had deserved.

In general, the Southerners concurred with Brook's actions in defense of his honor, and this was indicated by the support that he got from them after the beating. Many canes were sent to Brooks after the beating and notes that encouraged him to repeat it on Sumner and other abolitionists from the North.

Work Cited

<https://assignbuster.com/the-caning-of-charles-sumner/>

Hoffer, Williamjames. The Caning of Charles Sumner: Honor, Idealism and the Origins of the Civil War: Witness to History. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010. Print.