

Causes of the Civil War

The 1800s were a time of growth and success for the United States. Yet the North and the South were very different culturally, economically, and constitutionally. These differences between the North and the South eventually resulted in the Civil War.

The South was an agricultural society made up of farms and plantations, where slaves did much of the work. The North was mainly an urban society in which people held jobs, and there were no slaves. Because of their cultural differences, people in the North and South found it difficult to agree on social and political issues. The North and South also differed economically. The North was a manufacturing region and its people favored tariffs (taxes on imports) that protected factory owners and workers from foreign competition. The South on the other hand was an agricultural region that opposed tariffs. The South depended on exporting their goods to other countries in order to make money. Planters in the South were worried that England would stop buying their cotton if tariffs were added. The South also purchased many of their manufactured goods from other countries. If a tariff were added to imports, they would have to pay more for these goods. The way of life in one section of the country was threatening the way of life in the other. These differences caused sectionalism in the United States, or loyalty to a particular part of the country rather than the whole country.

An important issue separating the country related to the power of the Federal government. Southerners felt that they had the power to declare any national law illegal. This concept is known as states' rights or the idea that states have the right to make decisions about issues that concern them. Northerners believed that the national government's power was supreme over that of the states. The South also feared that the North would take control of Congress causing even further division between the North and South over the issue of states' rights.

The issue of states' rights and slavery continued to increase sectional tension between the North and the South. The plantations that grew rice, cotton, sugar, and other crops in the South depended on the work of slaves. To make sure slavery would continue, the South demanded that it be allowed in new western states entering the Union. This feeling will cause major debate in Congress and will lead to several compromises. When the Missouri Territory applied for admission to the Union in 1819, it applied as a slave state. Missouri's admission would give the South control of the Senate, since there would be twelve slave states and eleven free states. Northern congressmen opposed admitting another slave state. They proposed that Congress abolish slavery in Missouri. Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky came up with the Missouri Compromise. This compromise proposed that Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state, Maine (who also applied for statehood) would enter the Union as a free state. Clay also proposed that except for Missouri, slavery would be banned in all other territories gained in the Louisiana Purchase north of Missouri's southern boundary. This made the North and South happy until the next territory applied for statehood.

In 1850, Congress had to decide if California would join the Union as a free or slave state. It also had to decide whether the rest of the territory won in the Mexican War would be free or not. Once again, they called upon the Great Compromiser Henry Clay. With the help of Stephen Douglas of Illinois, and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, the Compromise of 1850 was developed. The compromise proposed that California would enter the Union as a free state, the rest of the Mexican

territory would be divided into New Mexico and Utah and then each state could decide whether to be a slave state or a free state. The compromise also made it against the law to buy and sell slaves in Washington D.C., but not to own slaves. Finally the compromise created the Fugitive Slave Act which made it legal for slave owners to go after and capture runaway slaves who escaped to the North. The Compromise of 1850 was made to keep the North and South from splitting apart over slavery. The problem was it was a temporary fix. Tensions between the North and South will spark once again when settlers begin entering the Nebraska Territory west of the Missouri River.

In 1854 Stephen Douglas of Illinois proposed that Nebraska be split into two territories: the Nebraska Territory in the north and the Kansas Territory in the south. Because both territories were north of the Missouri Compromise line, both would be free territories. The problem developed when many Southerners demanded that slavery be allowed in both territories. Douglas proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which would allow the people of each territory to decide whether it should be free or slave, this is known as popular sovereignty. Instead of fixing the problem it created a new one. People who supported and opposed slavery rushed into Kansas to influence the vote (the majority vote would win). The people of Kansas voted to make it a slave state. Northerners argued that the vote was wrong because people had come in from Missouri to vote illegally. The violence that broke out over this issue was one more proof to the North that slavery would lead to violence. Kansas eventually became a free state.

Could war be avoided? Will the North and South put their sectional differences aside for the good of the country? Only time will tell!

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Directions: Using your notes, complete each question by writing the appropriate person, place, or thing on the space provided.

1. The cultural, economical, and constitutional differences between the North and the South led to the _____ War.
2. The South was an _____ region and depended on slave labor.
3. The North was a _____ region where slave labor was not an issue.
4. The North favored _____ to protect the factory workers and owners from foreign competition.
5. The South opposed taxes on imports because they were afraid that _____ would stop buying cotton from them.
6. _____ is the belief that a person has more loyalty to their particular section of the country than to the whole country.
7. _____ theory is the belief that states have the right to declare any national law illegal.
8. The _____ stated that Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state and Maine would enter as a free state.
9. The _____ stated that California would enter the Union as a free state, and it banned the buying and selling of slaves in Washington D.C.
10. The _____ made it legal for slave owners to go after and capture runaway slaves whom escaped to the North.
11. The _____ allowed the people of Kansas and Nebraska to decide on whether the territory would be a slave territory or a free territory.
12. _____ is the idea that a territory would have the right to decide whether it would be slave or free.