

CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR

The North and South consistently took opposing positions on the issues during the years leading up to the Civil War. The industrial North and the agricultural South disagreed over slavery, the tariff, internal improvements, cheap Western land, the banking system, and states' rights. The agricultural West, where political power was in the hands of small farmers rather than plantation owners, usually sided with the North. Northerners and Westerners were against slavery. Both sections traded extensively with each other. The North sent manufactured goods to the West, and Western farmers shipped food and other products to the North.



The issue that created the most controversy between the North and South was slavery, especially the extension of it into newly acquired territories. Congress tried to ease tensions by enacting the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. But during the 1850's, relations between the rival sections rapidly deteriorated. This happened for many reasons:

1. The abolitionists continued to demand an immediate end to slavery.
2. Many Northerners refused to obey the Fugitive Slave Law which required them to help return runaway slaves. The Underground Railroad became more active than ever.
3. Harriet Beecher Stowe, an abolitionist angered by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin. The book used sympathetic characters to portray the evils of slavery. When cruel overseer Simon Legree beat old slave Uncle Tom and caused his death, it stirred the emotions of hundreds of thousands of readers in the North. The story created such an uproar that years later, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln referred to Mrs. Stowe as "the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war."
4. The Kansas-Nebraska Act established two new territories -- Kansas and Nebraska -- previously closed to slavery by the Missouri Compromise. The people in these territories could decide for themselves if they wanted slavery. Both proslavery and antislavery settlers soon poured into Kansas. Violence broke out between the rival groups. There were so many people killed that the territory came to be known as "Bleeding Kansas."
5. The Republican Party was organized to oppose the further spread of slavery into the territories.
6. A slave named Dred Scott, who had been taken into free territory by his master, requested that he be declared a free man. But the Supreme Court ruled that slaves were property and could be taken into any territory. This decision delighted the South, but angered the North.
7. John Brown, an abolitionist who had fought against slaveowners in Kansas, attacked the government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. He and his followers planned to arm the slaves and lead them in revolt. But Brown was captured by federal troops, convicted of treason, and hanged. Southerners viewed John Brown's raid as part of a plan by abolitionists and Northern Republicans to destroy the Southern way of life.
8. During the 1850's, three new states joined the Union. All were free states. This meant that there were 18 free states, with 36 Senators in Congress, and 15 slave states, with only 30 Senators. The North, with its larger population, also controlled the House of Representatives.
9. Throughout the 1850's, both the North and South demanded that Congress pass laws supporting its own sectional interests.
10. Southern leaders threatened to secede from the Union if a Republican was elected president in 1860.

QUIZ: CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR

Multiple-Choice

- (1) _____ On the key issues of the 1850's, the North and South: (a) usually agreed with each other (b) sometimes agreed (c) took opposing positions
- (2) _____ Political power in the West was in the hands of the: (a) small farmers (b) plantation owners (c) factory owners
- (3) _____ The West carried on a busy trade with: (a) Great Britain (b) the North (c) the South
- (4) _____ The two sections of the country that sided with each other on the slavery issue were: (a) North and South (b) West and South (c) North and West
- (5) _____ According to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Kansas and Nebraska territories: (a) were closed to slavery (b) were open to slavery (c) would have slavery if the people there wanted it

Completion

- (6) The _____ were people who demanded an immediate end to slavery.
- (7) Many northerners refused to obey the _____ which required them to help return runaway slaves.
- (8) The Kansas territory came to be known as " _____ " because of the fighting between proslavery and antislavery groups.
- (9) The _____ Party was organized to oppose the expansion of slavery into the territories.
- (10) _____ was the first Southern state to secede.

Matching

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| (11) _____ John Brown | (a) a slave who was taken into free territory by his master |
| (12) _____ Harriet Beecher Stowe | (b) politician who opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories |
| (13) _____ Abraham Lincoln | (c) told how cruel overseer Simon Legree caused the death of Uncle Tom |
| (14) _____ Jefferson Davis | (d) the president of the Confederate States of America |
| (15) _____ Dred Scott | (e) attacked the government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to capture weapons to arm the slaves |

North or South?

- (16) _____ Wanted a high protective tariff.
- (17) _____ Was angered by the Dred Scott decision.
- (18) _____ Accused the abolitionists and Republicans of supporting John Brown's raid.
- (19) _____ Controlled both the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- (20) _____ Strongly supported the principle of states' rights.