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Events That Triggered the Civil War

The timeline of events from 1776 to 1861, that, in the end, prompted the American Civil War, describes and relates to a number of subjects modern historians acknowledge as the origins and causes of the Civil War. In fact, pre-Civil War events had both long-term and short-term influences on the War—such as the election of Abraham Lincoln as the American president in 1860 that led to the Fall of Fort Sumter in April of the same year. In that period, contentions that surrounded states' rights progressively exploded in Congress—since they were the initial events that formed after independence. Congress focused on resolving significant issues that affected the states, which led to further issues. In that order, the US's history from 1776 to 1861 provides a rich history, as politicians brought forth dissimilarities, dissections, and tensions between the Southern US & the people of slave states, and the Northern states that were loyal to the Union. The events that unfolded from the period of 1776 to 1861 involved a series of issues because they promoted the great sectional crisis that led to political divisions and the build-up to the Civil War that made the North and the South seem like distinctive and timeless regions that predated the crisis itself.

To begin with, the period between 1776 to the early 1800's brought upon the arrival of many visitors. In 1776, settlements became free from the ruling of the English—following the approval of the Declaration of Independence, mainly documented by Thomas Jefferson. The piece declares all Americans as equal, even though there were many slaveholders at that time. According to the Civil War Trust (2013), this idea made the new America become more favorable and encouraged travelers to arrive in Boston, which had progressed in agricultural growth, public works, and commerce. As the years progressed, the disparate interests between the South and North emerged progressively apparent. Congress, from the two regions, began to resent the large paybacks the northern executives amassed from cotton marketing.

The North declared slavery a "peculiar institution" because it was essential to the US 's economy. As such, the sectional crisis hardened across the regions as the question of slavery's prominence became more apparent and abolitionists grew increasingly powerful in the northern states. Slave trade was a major long-term event that increased political tensions from the beginning of 1777 in Vermont, as it was the first regime to prohibit slavery. Later, in 1780, Pennsylvania was the next state to obliterate slave trade after passing laws calling for its steady eradication.

In 1787, the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia brought delegates together from the states to debate whether the Congress should end slavery. In the meeting, tensions were high as delegates from South Carolina and Georgia let it be known that their states would resist the union in the event that slave trading be restricted and that there was no need to restrict slave trade for the next 20 years (History.Net, 2016). Congress later came to pass the Fugitive Slave Act in 1793, which legalized the recovery for runaway slaves and the arrest of escapees. They also created a penalty of \$500 for an individual found assisting a fugitive. Subsequent to that, the period of the Cotton Gin in 1794 amplified disemboweled cotton production, which made the crop increasingly lucrative for the first time, along with the necessity to value slaves. As such, the increased valuation of slavery led to a rebellion in August 1800 when a slave named Gabriel Prosser planned to capture Capitol Square in Richmond, Virginia and take the Governor, James Monroe, captive in protest for freedom from authorities. Meanwhile, the slave population increased towards the 19th Century, especially in the Southern cotton plantations. After a mix-up in the US, with some states becoming free while others joining the Union as slave states, Congress raised tariffs with the Tariff of Abominations passed to support the American slavery industry and the northern economies began to benefit from slave trade. Overall, the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act that allowed the right of a master to recover runaways and help return fugitive slaves in 1800, stands as a prominent backer of the Civil War.

Furthermore, the invention of the Second Great Awakening in 1800 promoted social Reformation by a Christian revivalists' movement that helped spark political tensions. A major event then came in 1820, the Missouri Compromise admitted Missouri as a slave state, as well as Maine as a free state. As such, the retaining of balance between slave states and the free state Union prompted political divisions between the South representatives and the North, which acknowledged their right to own states admitted to the Union described in the US Constitution.

Even though Congress agreed to the demands of the South, the Missouri Compromise led to political divisions after becoming a law (Maier, 1972). The addition of territories expanded from the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and further escalated the slave debate. In fact, the Abolitionists struggled to have slavery prohibited in the territories, especially in the states of Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan. On the opposite side, advocates of slave trade expressed their concerns that prohibiting slavery in any state would enable new territories to emerge as political powers. During the Mexican-American War, Western United States acquired a large number of territories that became "slave power" and prompted an obscure Pennsylvania congressional representative to submit an amendment to the war, popularly known as the Wilmot Proviso.

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Following the Missouri Compromise events, in 1828, the formation of the Tariff of Abominations worked against the South (which depended more on agriculture) than the North (which was predominantly focused on manufacturing). In 1831, the Nullification Crisis prompted the sectional interests of the South and the North, and brought upon an open conflict.

During that period, the politics of America became entirely sectional, coupled with dangerous business and it pitted the North against the South. The admission of the Southern's fury directed at California later led Congress to pass the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 that made the Northerners answerable for returning the runaway slaves. The geographic position of the Nullification Crisis founded on the Tariff of Abominations affected the Southern states' economies and increased sectional tensions. Southern politicians, such as John C. Calhoun, demanded the nullification of the Tariff of Abomination, which further rifted the South and the North. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act overturned Missouri's Compromise by using the principle of sovereignty- where residents were to become slaves or obtain their freedom (Maier, 1972). The Bill's sponsor was a hopeful presidential candidate, Stephen A. Douglas, who permitted the settlers in Kansas' Territory to choose to be free of slaves. Congress' halls, at that time, were full of feuds, duels, and insults that prompted the divisive gag rule which forbade discussion on slave matters.

In 1857, the US Supreme Court delivered the infamous Dred Scott decision that enraged Northerners and elated Southerners. In essence, the court ruled that a slave was not a person or a citizen and thus, had no rights that a white man had to respect. Even though the ruling relieved Southerners, later in 1859 John Brown of Bleeding Kansas led a murderous raid against the US's arsenal in a bid to inspire a slave uprising. As the crucial election approached in 1860, the Democrats split into Southern and Northern contingents, providing a slate of candidates. However, as the Sectional Conflict History of 1954 reports, the Republican hopeful presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln appeared as a southern rabid abolitionist-which further led to fears of federal government control by anti-slavery and Free State politicians. While the perception of Lincoln's stance in regards to slavery was inaccurate, there was a Southern secession because most thought the President would abolish slavery institutions. With the secession in 1861, a number of federal forts, such as Fort Sumter of South Carolina, emerged as surprise outposts in the overseas land. In April 1861, Confederate warships began to supply convoys to Fort Sumter, leading to a 34-hour attack on the stronghold. At this point, the Civil war was underway and, on April 14, the beleaguered garrisons submitted. Overall, the cause of the war was the determination of Lincoln to permit the South to withdraw their membership from the Union, which then weakened the US..

With respect to the timeline of events from 1776 to 1861, the civil war helped in molding the political dimensions of the US, with the growth of both the Republicans and Democrats. There was a possibility that the US could avoid the Civil War and work out a solution. Nevertheless, it was unfortunate that the high level of mistrust led to a bombastic fog of blame, abhorrence, offensive announcements, and allegations from both sides. Overall, the series of events that promoted the Civil War has been entrenched deep from the beginning of the slave trade in 1776 and growing political tensions over individual interests that were dissimilar for both the North and the South.



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