

Causes of the Civil War (Part 2)

This is the second part of the cause and effect diagram for the Causes of the Civil War. The two parts together will be used to create one diagram.

(¶7) Weaknesses in the Compromise of 1850 and escalating tensions were worsened throughout the 1850s eventually resulting in the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Below are explained the more short term causes of the Civil War that occurred during the 1850s.

(¶8) Things got a lot worse in the 1850s, and many additional problems caused the Civil War to happen when it did. The terms of the Fugitive Slave act angered many northerners and they sought ways of getting around the law. Many Northern states passed personal liberty laws, which prohibited the imprisonment of runaway slaves and guaranteed that they would have jury trials. Northerners angry because of the Fugitive Slave act also organized the Underground Railroad, a secret network of people who would aid fugitive slaves in their escape. Harriet Tubman became a conductor on the Underground Railroad soon after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed. Personal liberty laws and the Underground Railroad angered southerners as their slaves were slipping away and northerners seemed to be going back on the Compromise of 1850. Furthermore, the admission of California as free state had upset the balance of power in the Senate giving northern states two more Senators than southern states.

(¶9) In the mid-1800s, Senator Stephen Douglas wanted to organize the western territory because he was in favor of the construction of a railroad between Chicago (his hometown) and San Francisco. He proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in order to organize the western territory in hopes of getting the railroad. The Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854 allowed residents in those territories to choose (vote) on whether to allow slavery. After this law was passed, many people from the North and the South went to Kansas. When there were enough settlers for an election, some people from Missouri voted illegally, and the Kansas territory became proslavery. Instead of solving the problem, this led to increased violence and tension as cheating and murders on both sides, resulting in the nickname, Bleeding Kansas. This brought the country closer to Civil War.

(¶10) Published books and speeches also helped drive the country apart. Books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* angered Southerners by portraying slavery as horrible. Northerners who read the book often were appalled by the cruelty of slavery and became abolitionists. Pro-slavery books by people like George Fitzhugh caused Southerners to defend the institution of slavery. All this pushed the country farther apart, leading to Civil War.

(¶11) The Dred Scott case was a huge cause of the Civil War. Dred Scott was a slave from Missouri (a slave state). Scott's owner took him north of the Missouri Compromise line in 1834. For four years they lived in free territory in Illinois and Wisconsin. After they returned to Missouri, Scott's owner died and Scott sued for his freedom. When Scott and his family were denied freedom, and all African Americans were told they could never be citizens, many in the South celebrated the Supreme Court's decision. However, in the North, the decision was widely criticized as unfair and racist. The North and South became even more separated by this court case, also helping to cause Civil War.

(¶12) John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry was also significant. His attempt to incite and lead a slave rebellion in Virginia using violence failed, and he was executed after a trial. His execution was celebrated in the South, while in the North, anti-slavery people viewed Brown as a martyr, and were inspired to never rest until slavery was ended. This event further divided the country, leading to Civil War.

(¶13) The election of Abraham Lincoln as President in 1860 was perhaps the final straw leading to Civil War. The vote clearly shows that the South opposed Lincoln, who was against slavery. After his election, the South felt they had lost their voice in the federal government, which caused states to secede. The war started when the other states tried to stop the southern states from seceding.