
History Of The American Civil War

America went through ages of struggle and bloodshed to be what it is today. Although, we do come to realise after reading America's history that certain events almost tore the country apart in the past but with the help of some committed leaders the country became stronger than ever. From 1861 to 1865 America was engaged in one of the costliest wars, The American Civil War. Also known as the war between the States. It was a war between the Northerners (the Union) and Southerners (Confederates). Abraham Lincoln, the republican president elected in 1860 was against slavery and the Southerners were not in favour of eliminating the practice of slavery from their lives even though it was illegal to own slaves in the North since 1803, so eleven states seceded from the union to form the Confederate States of America. This was one of the most devastating war in the history of America but it was also the event that brought the states together and united them.

Factors that led to the American Civil War

The Compromise of 1850 required the slaves to return to their owners even if they resided in a free state. This act was passed as a part of The Fugitive slave Act of 1850, it implied that any Northerner federal official that did not capture a runaway slave must pay a fine. It involved the non slave owners to participate in slavery. It only made it easy for the southerners to recapture slaves or simply pick up blacks they claimed had run away. However, the blacks in the North caused an outrage, denouncing President Fillmore, who had signed it.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was released in 1852, a book written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, also known as the life among the lowly, briefed the story of slavery through the eyes of a slave. It brought light to the topic of the evils and sorrow of slavery. This best selling book of the time horrified the Northerners when they read about the cruelty that slaves experienced but the southerners thought it as an exaggerated portrayal.

Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 gave the opportunity for Kansas and Nebraska territories to decide for themselves whether or not they wanted to be a slave state or a free state. The Pro and anti slavery agitators were appalled. The two forces fled to Kansas in order to tip the balance in their favor. However, soon a lot of bloodshed and massacres started occurring to the point where it became popular as "bleeding Kansas". Unfortunately this turned into an ugly war between the two parties.

Dred Scott decision further brought disputes among the nation. Dred Scott was a black man who was sued for his freedom in 1847. After his master died, he tried to buy both his and his wife's freedom but the master's widow kept refusing, Dred decided to go to courts and establish freedoms. Alas, the case was presented in the United States Supreme Court in 1857 but since he had African ancestry, he wasn't considered as a citizen of the US and he had no right to sue.

Raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859: John Brown, an abolitionist led a group of seventeen members including black members on a raid. He wanted to incite a slave uprising. He was determined to start a slave revolt and free the slaves of Virginia. Brown planned to capture the arsenal at

Harpers Ferry and use its cache of weapons to arm his followers. According to his plan they captured the arsenal but were stuck there since they did not have a good plan. Militia of Virginia and Maryland captured them.

Election of 1860: Abraham Lincoln was elected, who was from an anti-slavery party. He is known to be one of the best speakers of the United States. He was elected as the 16th President of the United States. However, a number of secession states who had opposed his election declared to be a separate state, which is an illegal thing to do. South Carolina became a separate state, followed by Alabama, Texas, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana and Georgia. Afterwards a few more states joined.

Effects of the war on civilians

One in five Confederate soldier died so the white women and children were left on their own. In the countryside, armies destroyed and seized property, seized food, burned fences, and turned houses into hospitals. There was no activity in Governments, schools, and churches. In Confederate-controlled cities, overcrowding, shortages, inflation, and hunger plagued everyone. Residents of northern Virginia, the Eastern Shore, and Norfolk were subjected to curfews, confiscation of property, and sometimes exile by occupying Union forces.

During the war, blocked Mississippi and Missouri Rivers stopped the boats or ships that were coming to trade with other states ultimately delaying the cargo on the boats and ships. Both Northern and Southern civilians felt the pressure of economic changes in the government as they had spent too much on the war and had to cover the cost spent. The Union instituted a 3 percent income tax on incomes over \$800 in August 1861. Including the various excise taxes, government increased its progressive rates to a 10 percent levy on incomes over \$10,000 by 1865. The Treasury Department printed large amounts of paper money in the form of greenbacks and created a national banking system.

The war brought women into industries, shops and factories but were paid comparatively lower wages than men. As a result in late 1863, New York working women held a mass meeting to find a solution to their problems. Thus, a Working Women's Protective Union was formed.

Moreover, there were white slaves as well who worked in semi-slave conditions themselves. They perceived the war to be profiting the new class of millionaires. They sold defective guns to the army by contractors, sand sold as sugar, rye sold as coffee, shop sweepings made into clothing and blankets, navy ships made of rotting timbers and made soldiers' uniforms that fell apart in the rain. The Conscription Act of 1863 provided that the rich could avoid military service: they could pay \$300 or buy a substitute. In the summer of 1863, a "Song of the Conscripts" was circulated by the thousands in New York and other cities. One stanza:

We're coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more;

We leave our homes and firesides with bleeding hearts and sore;

Since poverty has been our crime, we bow to thy decree;

We are the poor and have no wealth to purchase liberty.

Mentioned in Joel Tyler Headley book "The Great Riots of New York" is a graphic day-by-day description of what happened during the time of recruitment in 1863:

" At one time there lay at the corner of Twenty-seventh Street and Seventh Avenue the dead body of a negro, stripped nearly naked, and around it a collection of Irishmen, absolutely dancing or shouting like wild Indians.... A negro barber's shop was next attacked, and the torch applied to it... Old men, seventy years of age, and young children, too young to comprehend what it all meant, were cruelly beaten and killed...."

In June 1865, Fincher's Trades' Review reported: "As was to be expected, the returned soldiers are flooding the streets already, unable to find employment."

Typhus, tuberculosis, hunger, and fire were increasing concerns in the cities that the soldiers were pouring into. In New York, 100,000 people lived in the cellars of the slums; 12,000 women worked in houses of prostitution to keep from starving and the garbages were filled with rats and diseases. In Philadelphia, while the rich got fresh water from the Schuylkill River, everyone else drank from the Delaware, into which 13 million gallons of sewage were dumped every day. At the end, the 13th amendment was finally approved by the Congress and ratified on December 6th, 1865. It officially abolished slavery in the United States.

Historiography

One of the main source i've referred to is the Author "Howard Zinn", one of the most famous American left wing intellectuals of the late 20th century. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia. He participated in Civil Rights, anti-war and anti-Vietnam movements. He frequently got engaged in politics, protests, and debates until he died in 2010. The book that i've referred to, is used as a standard source for Americans to learn their history. His famous publications are: The Politics of History (1970), A People's History of the United States (1980), Howard Zinn on History (2000)

Another Author that I've referred to is "William D Willis". He has explained the events along with eye witness accounts which consists of diary entries, biography mentions, journals, letters from the ancestors and personal papers. I've found him a reliable source for presenting facts in a sensible and comprehensible framework.

The Civil War Trust is a nonpartisan, nonprofit American organization working for the preservation of America's past conflicts. ThoughtCo provides a number of authentic articles about history, arts and science. This website is among the largest and fastest-growing online publishers and only heirs experienced online freelance writers. The author of this website, Martin H. Kelly holds a Bachelor's in History and a Master's in Instruction and Curriculum from the University of Florida. Intellectualtakeout.org the author of the article is Jon Miltimore, he served as a White House intern in the speech writing department of George. W Bush. Devin Foley is the co-founder of this website. He has served as the Director of Development at the Center of the American Experiment. Devin is a contributor to local and national newspapers and a frequent guest on a variety of talk shows. In 2011, he was named a Young Leader by the American Swiss Foundation. I found these sources reliable because they are run by credible people who have a reputable background of education and experience.

This was a revolutionary war which was won by the Union but at the cost of 620,000 soldiers who died during the war, leaving a million casualties behind. The president, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865 soon after the war ended and Andrew Johnson became the next president. However, 13th, 14th and 15th amendments abolished slavery, granted citizenship and voting rights to blacks (African Americans). This war resulted in freeing around four million slaves around the United States. I believe that the American Civil War has clearly achieved something worthwhile, that has changed the lives of people and their perception about African Americans.

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