
The Controversy Between The North And South: Missouri Compromise

Political parties began to form because of the mounting dispute over agreement of the federal Constitution of 1787. Resistance between these new parties increased as attention moved from the creation of the new federal government to the question of just how controlling this new federal government should be. The Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, sought a strong central government, while the Anti-Federalists or the Democratic-Republican Party led by Thomas Jefferson, supported the right of the states' as an alternative to a centralized controlled government. Federalists supported the commercial sector of the country while their opponents, the Anti-Federalists, drew their influence from those supporting the farming communities, the backbone of the society. A significantly touchy issue between the two parties was that the constitution had defined the privileges and the purposes of the government but did not shape the rights of the people as a whole.

Comparison of Whig and Democratic Parties

The Whig and Democratic parties both had their beginnings from the Democratic-Republican Party that ruled politics in the early 1800s. Both were groups that split from the Democratic-Republicans after the 1824 elections. The Democratic Party was founded in 1828 and it has not changed since it was created meaning it is the same party that exists today. Andrew Jackson was the party's first leader. The Democrats support the right of the states' and they did not like the federal government's participation in societal and financial dealings. They were against the Protective Tariff and the national bank that Andrew Jackson wanted to bring down. The Democrats hyped individuality and believed anyone could hold public office. Democrats also preferred quick territorial and external development. They supported the Mexican War. Democrats believed that the model citizen was a regular farmer who made his living off the land.

The Whig Party lasted from 1833 to 1856, until it broke apart into even more groups. At the start, the party was held together by a resounding disapproval of what Andrew Jackson was doing. The Whigs wanted a strong federal government that was controlled by Congress. They supported the Protective Tariff and the national bank and believed in the value of community. Whigs were entrepreneurs and nationalists, and were more prevalent in the north. They were in favor of steady regional expansion and core enhancements, like public schools and transportation. Ultimately, the Whig Party broke apart and formed the Free Soil Party, the Know-Nothing Party, and what is considered as the modern Republican Party.

Leaders and Constituents

The two party's political platforms were noticeably different, so therefore the constituents of each party were different in their religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Each party's platforms appealed to the different views and lifestyles of different voters. The Whig leaders were Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. The Democratic Party was created by Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren.

The Whigs appealed to evangelical Protestants and free black voters. The Whig's slow and measured settlement of western lands appealed to black New Englanders and slave owners in the Upper South. On the flip side, Democrats associated with religions other than evangelicals such as Mormons and Catholics, even non-religious people who were atheists, antagonists, and rationalists. The Democrat's platform of acquiring additional land to the west quickly, appealed to a wide range of people such as frontier slave owners, yeoman farmers, wage earners, and immigrants.

Increased Democratization of American Politics

Changes to voting laws across the United States increased the number of males that were able to vote from the late 1820s to the 1840s. The right to vote during this time was almost solely limited to white, property owning men with a moderately tiny amount of African-American men able to vote in the Northeastern United States. During this time, however, the requirements to own property had greatly changed and by 1840 over 90% of white males were qualified to vote.

In addition to the right to vote, there was also elevated voter turnout during these years. The turnout of voters improved dramatically after 1824. While this is mainly attributed to the bigger number of voter's available, American politics also changed to appeal to the wider range of available voters. Politicians like Andrew Jackson have been able to appeal to voters from a multitude of areas and financial backgrounds. Democracy, rather than the republicanism during the time of the founding fathers, was the leading political sentiment.

Also during this time, the United States had seen several political and economic changes. South Carolina's Nullification Crisis was the divisive and violent removal of the Native American tribes from their tribal lands, including the Cherokees, to a newly created 'Indian Territory' and the collapse of the United States ' Second Bank all highlighted the political and sectional divide in the United States.

Pro-slavery and Abolitionist Movements

Before the Civil War, slavery was the most controversial issue in America. Proslavery was rooted in systematic racism. Pro-slavery claimed that blacks were born for a life of servitude, as opposed to 'more intelligent' whites, because they had certain inherent physical qualities. Pro-slavery also used quotations from the Bible to support their claims and insisted that God had made the Hierarchical orders for society and who were they to not follow the word of God. The slaveholders viewed their slaves as property and believed that slavery had a positive benefit on the economy. The abolitionists demanded that the slaveholders should immediately release all those they were holding and keeping as slaves. They believed sincerely that slavery was a sin and that it had to be stopped. They felt that racial discrimination should be eliminated because it violated natural human rights. Abolitionists believed that the slaves too were citizens and they deserved their own rights to freedom.

Role of Westward Expansion

Sectional friction between the North and the South grew further when the United States started to expand to the west. The North and South, already in conflict over slavery and economics, were fearful for their individual economies. Unless slavery were to grow and expand to the west,

the South would gain too much influence and undermine the prosperity of the North; while if slavery were to diminish, the South felt their economy would suffer. Following the War of 1812 and the Louisiana Purchase, the United States began to expand west with the addition to the Union of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama which were all slave states and Indiana and Illinois which were free states. By 1819, as a slave state, Missouri wanted to join the Union; the North feared that if this were to happen, the South would win majority vote in the Senate and have more influence over the expansion of slavery to the West. This became contentious among the sections because Missouri was in the Northern Territory next to Illinois and Ohio. In an effort to avoid chaos and put an end to the ongoing dispute between free state and the slave state, House Speaker Henry Clay arrived at the 1820 Missouri Compromise. Clay suggested in this agreement that Missouri would join the Union as a slave state only if Maine joined the Union as a free state; this would help to keep the balance in the Senate and not allow the South to have majority vote. Additionally slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Territory north of the 36 ° 30' latitude line would be banned. However, the Missouri compromise did not end the controversy between the North and the South about slavery heading west.

Three Major Events

The causes of the Civil War were numerous, but the slavery issue was the most influential cause. The series of events involving law, border disputes, and political debates were all unfolding within the North and South's controversy over slavery.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, for instance, which allowed people to choose for themselves whether or not to allow slavery within their boundaries, was based on popular sovereignty, but this conflicted with the Missouri Compromise, which for thirty-four years had banned slavery from latitude 36 ° 30'north. Because the growth of slavery in the new territories was being fiercely debated, this resulted in dissolving dangerous political sectionalism in the United States and destroyed the political parties. This Act sparked 'Bleeding Kansas,' a brutal war between armed Free-Soil colonists with additional support for the South. 'Bleeding Kansas' is considered to be one of the stepping stones of the Civil War, as it was the first armed conflict between the proslavery and anti-slavery movements.

Dred Scott v. Stanford's court case was another occurrence that strengthened the North's anti-slavery cause. Dred Scott and his wife sued his previous owner for their freedom and contended that the owner had taken him and his wife to into the Missouri territory under the effect of Missouri Compromise. The case was brought before the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court held that the United States Constitution was not meant to include American citizenship for Black people, regardless of whether they were slaves or free, and that the rights and privileges bestowed on American citizens would not extend to them. The Supreme Court justices hoped that the ruling would forever settle the slavery debate, which was progressively separating the American public, however its effect was the complete opposite. The opinion of the Court was greeted with pure anger from every segment of the United States except the slave holding states, and the decision was a contributing factor in the outbreak of the American Civil War.

Finally, the 1860 presidential election played a major role in the beginning of the Civil War. Most Americans assumed that the Union's future was in the hands of the presidential election of 1860. Due to disagreements over slavery, the dominant Democratic Party split in Charleston's 1860 convention. The division permitted the rise of the Republican Party that nominated

Abraham Lincoln, while the Democrats nominated Vice President John C. Breckinridge to lead the West, while Stephen Douglas was nominated to represent the North. Abraham Lincoln eventually won the election as the first Republican president; but those who lost the election refused to accept Lincoln's victory which had never happened before in American history. Lincoln didn't get the majority vote, but he prevailed at the Electoral College, even though in 10 states he was not on the ballots. Lincoln opposed the continuation of slavery, angering the South who began to secede from the Union starting with South Carolina on December 20, 1860. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas were the states that followed. This group of seceded states called themselves the Confederates of America. The nation had officially divided, and this was the beginning of the Civil War.

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