

## **Introduction**

The timeline of events from 1776 to 1861 that in the end prompted the American Civil War describes and relates a number of subjects modern historians acknowledge as origins and cause of Civil War. In fact, the pre-Civil War happenings encompass both long-term and short-term build over to the War, such as election of Abraham Lincoln as the American president in 1860 that led to the Fall of Fort Sumter in April the same year. In that period, contentions that surrounded state's rights progressively exploded in the Congress since it was the initial event formed after independence. The Congress focused on deciding significant issues that affected the states, which led to issues coming up. In that order, the US history from 1776 to 1861 provides a rich history, as politicians brought forth dissimilarities, dissections, and tensions between the Southern US and the people of the slave states as well as the people of slave states. 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 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 of 1776 to the 19th century yielded interested other nations and eventual arrival of many visitors. In 1776, the settlements became free from the ruling of the English powers following the approval of The Declaration of Independence, mainly documented by Thomas Jefferson. The piece declared all American as identical, even though there were many slaveholders at that time. According to Civil War Trust (2013), the idea that the new America became more favorable made the travelers to arrive in Boston, which had progressed in agricultural growth, public works, and commerce. As the years progressed, the disagreeing interest 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. In the event, the north declared slavery the “peculiar institution” because it was essential to the economy. As such, the sectional crisis hardened across the question of slavery while the abolitionists also grew powerful in the northern states. Slave trade is a major event that increased political tensions from the beginning of the 1770s in Vermont as the first regime to end slavery. Later, in 1780, Pennsylvania was the immediate state to obliterate slave trade after passing laws calling for steady obliteration.

In 1787, the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia brought together delegates from the states to debate whether the Congress should end slavery. In the meeting, tensions went high as delegates from South Carolina and Georgia exposed their states would resist a union underway in the event there was need to restrict slave trade for 20 years (History.Net, 2016). Congress later came to pass the Fugitive Slave Act in 1793, which legalized the recovery for runaway slaves as well as arrest or annexation of escapees besides creating 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, increased valuing of slavery led to rebellion in August 1800 when Slave Gabriel Prosser planned to capture Capitol Square in Richmond, Virginia and taking the Governor, James Monroe a captive in protest for freedom from authorities. Meanwhile, the slave population increased towards the in 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, the Congress raised tariffs with the Tariff of Abominations passed to support the American industry and the northern economy to benefit from slave trade. Overall, the passing of the Fugitive Slave Act that allowed the right of a master to recover runaway and help return to fugitive slave and the Eli Whitney’s Cotton Gin in 1800 stands as latent backer to the Civil War.

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Further, the invention of the Second Great Awakening in 1800 promoted social Reformation by Christian revivalists' movement that helped spark political tensions. A major event then came in 1820, the Missouri Compromise, which admitted Missouri as a slave state as well as Maine as a free state. As such, the retaining of balance between entry of slave and free state Union prompted political divisions between the South representatives that demanded the North acknowledge their right to own states admitted to the Union described in the US Constitution. Even though the 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 further scaled the slave debate. In fact, the Abolitionists struggled to have slavery avowed prohibited in the territories, especially in the states of Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan. On the reverse, advocates of slave trade expressed their concerns that prohibiting slavery in any state would make new territories emerge as political powers. During the Mexican-American War, the Western US acquired high number of territories that became "slave power" that prompted obscure Pennsylvanian congressional representative to submit an amendment to the war, popularly known as the Wilmot Proviso.

Following the Missouri Compromise events, in 1828, the formation of Tariff of Abominations worked against the South that depended more on agriculture than the North that was predominantly focusing on manufacturing. In 1831, the Nullification Crisis prompted the sectional interests of the South and North, which brought an open conflict. During that period, the politics of America became entirely sectional coupled with dangerous business and pitting of the North against the South. The admission of the Southern fury at California later led the 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 economy and increased the sectional tensions. The Southerners, such as John C. Calhoun demanded the nullification of the Tariff of Abomination, which led to a rift between the South and the North. In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska

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Act overturned Missouri's Compromise by using the principle of sovereignty that the residents were to become the slaves or they are to obtain their freedom (Maier, 1972). The Bill's sponsor a presidential hopeful, Stephen A. Douglas, permitted the settlers in the Kansas Territory to choose either being free of slaves. The Congress halls at that time were full of feuds, duels, and insults that prompted the divisive gag rule that forbade discussion on slave matters.

The US Supreme Court in 1857 delivered the infamous Dred Scott decision that enraged Northerners and elated Southerners. In essence, the court rules that a slave was not a person or a citizen thus had no rights that a White man had to respect. Even though the ruling relived the Southerners, later in 1859, John Brown of Bleeding Kansas led a murderous raid to the US arsenal in a bid to inspire slave uprising. As the crucial election approached in 1860, the Democrats split into Southern and Northern contingents, providing slate of candidates. However, as Sectional Conflict History 1954 reports, the Republican presidential hopeful, Abraham Lincoln appeared as a south rabid abolitionist, leading to fears of federal government control by anti-slavery and Free State politicians. While the perception about Lincoln was inaccurate, there was a Southern secession because they thought the President would abolish slavery institution. 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 convoy to Fort Sumter, leading to a 34-hour attack on the stronghold. At this point, the Civil war was underway and in 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 weakened the US.

Conclusively, 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 war and work out a solution had the Southern segment had trust. Nonetheless, it was unfortunate that the high level of mistrust led to a bombastic fog of blame, abhorrence, offensive announcements, and allegations from

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both sides. Overall, the series of events that promoted the Civil War entrenches deep from the beginning of slave trade in 1776 to growing political tensions over individual interests that were dissimilar for both the North and the South.

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