

The Civil War (1861-1865) was forced on by the Mexican American War, Bleeding Kansas, John Brown raiding Harpers Ferry, Dred Scotts decision and Abraham Lincoln being elected president. Although, the economic differences between the North and the South, lack of good leaders and "Uncle Tom's Cabin" help cause the Civil War, they will not be discussed in this essay.

When the Mexican American War ended, new territories were gained. It was an argument to make the territories slave states or Free states. This brought the Compromise of 1850; which stated that California would become a free state. In return, New Mexico, Utah, Nebraska and Arizona would be territories until they apply for statehood. Once they apply for statehood, whether or not they were a slave or Free State would be decided then by the people who lived in these areas. The Compromise of 1850 didn't let any side to win or lose. Which meant neither the pro-slavery or anti-slavery groups were happy.

Bleeding Kansas was caused by the Kansas Nebraska Act in 1854. Kansas and Nebraska were able to vote to be a free state or a slave state. Many people who wanted to vote for this decision, temporarily moved to these places to vote. Many arguments, feuds and radicals came from this. For example, John Brown believed that slavery needed to end because God told him slavery was bad. John Brown ended up killing five people. Many people heard of the actions took during Bleeding Kansas and they were all appalled. More people started to realize slavery was a huge issue in the North's and South's differences.

John Brown wanted to end slavery so badly that he set up a plan to take all the weapons from the arsenal at Harpers Ferry, give the weapons to all the slaves in the South and inform the slaves to each kill Southerners. The slaves would have had to each kill two people to eliminate the South. John Brown got a few people to help him raid the arsenal. By the time John Brown and his team got into the arsenal, troops were sent to stop him. Commander Robert E. Lee led the troops in capturing or killing John Brown and his team. John Brown was captured and was sent to court; he was charged with treason and as his punishment he was hung. The radical actions John Brown and his team took prove how strongly people felt about ending slavery.

In 1857, the Dred Scott Decision caused many mixed thoughts and feelings about slavery. Dred Scott was a slave owned by an army doctor and his wife; who lived in Missouri (which was a slave state). Scott's owners decided to move to Wisconsin (which was a free

territory). Scott's owner had passed away and the widow wanted to move back to Missouri and bring Scott with her. Scott had been free all the time they were in Wisconsin. This issue was brought to court and Supreme Court (mostly southerners) decided that since Scott was black, he couldn't be a citizen; therefore unable to bring the situation to court. Scott was then bought from the widow and set free, so Scott didn't have to go back to Missouri.

Abraham Lincoln was a republican who was elected president. The Southern states believed he was antislavery and they didn't agree with it. In 1860 and 1861 the South seceded from the Union. April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1861 Southern forces told Union forces in Charlestown, South Carolina at Fort Sumter to surrender. April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1861 the South fired on Fort Sumter and on April 13<sup>th</sup> the Union in Fort Sumter surrendered. Lincoln decided the South could not secede from the Union by law and that firing on Fort Sumter was the last straw.

The war had begun due to the Mexican American War, Bleeding Kansas, John Brown raiding Harpers Ferry, Dred Scott Decision and Abraham Lincoln's election.