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History

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What led to the American Civil War and how it ended?

# Introduction

The United States of America has fifty states in its federal structure. It is the country which is known for its successful model of federalism in the world. The state of America is regarded as the perfect example of a federal system where every federating unit is given a legitimate share in governance structure. This reflects the perfect harmony and equilibrium in the progressive state of America. Nevertheless, the perfect harmony which is apparent today was not the same in the past. The government structure and the adequate place of every federating unit remained unresolved in American history for a long period of time.

Besides, it is not a hidden fact that the outstanding issues between the Northern and the Southern part of America took the country to its notorious first-ever civil war. It was this war which brought notoriety, destruction, and chaos to the American land. The American civil is one of the greatest events which shaped the future contours of the country in the coming decades (Handlin). Apparently, this civil war between the two parts of America looked simple, however, it had several underlying reasons. This tragic event had many dimensions attached to it such as political, social, economic. The civil war lasted for four consecutive years and brought enormous chaos, destruction, and devastation to the American continent. As a result, the prudent and pragmatic leadership of the then US President Abraham Lincoln had to act and took the nation out of this severity of war. Goldfield writes that the American nation offered a different outlook post-civil-war. Many positive features became the part of united America, and this war proved a blessing in disguise for American nation (Goldfield). It is no escaping the fact that the American nation became more progressive after the civil war.

# Discussion

To begin with, the American civil war did not happen overnight. There were many reasons behind this tragedy which proved disastrous for the American people. Everyone is cognizant of the fact that the American leaders were not clear about the issue of slavery in the beginning. When the founding leaders drafted the constitution, they left the issue of slavery open for further debates and discussions. This issue remained unresolved and bereft of any political solution for a long period of time. At that time, it appeared that the American nation is intensely divided on the issue of slavery and slaves in the American continent.

There had been several episodes of unrest in the American political history on this pretext of slavery. At first, it was the confusion of free man vs. other men in America in the US constitution. Later on, this slavey issue was appeared once again in the creation of new states as highlighted by Commager and Cantor in the American continent (Commager and Cantor). There was a consistent tussle between the South and North on the legality of slavery in the country. South wanted more slave states and North -being too religious and too liberal-wanted free states in the newly acquired territory of Louisiana purchase in 1803. The status of slavery was the issue that led to the temporary solution of the Missouri Compromise in 1820 when a short-term measure was adopted to assuage both parts of the country. However, it curbed the chances of war for only twenty years.

Several compromises were sought since the 1789 and 1859 to find a perfect balance between the concerns of agrarian South and industrialist North. Despite the efforts, this issue remained the bone of contention between the two regions as it had different opinions on serious issues. The tfamous Dres Scot case in 1859 and the Kansas-Nebraska issue in 1854 were some of its practical manifestations in US history. Besides, controversial Kansas-Nebraska act brought the prospects of war even closer in american society. The failure of this act proved that the issue of slavery needed some more effective steps rather than any cosmetic approach in solving the crisis (Hummel).

The watershed moment came in American history when Lincoln was elected as the 16th US president who was known for his abolitionist views. This became the breaking point since even before his coronation, the southern states announced their secession from the United States of America. The seven southern states formed their Confederate States of America in 1860. South Carolina was the first state to opt-out of the union. The issue of slavery took the two parts to the brink of war but one cannot ignore the other reasons for this secession. The southern states wanted to have more power in the legislative sphere. The wanted to have more say in governance, and even they wanted to promote their way of life in the country. Daniel writes that economically, this tug of war between North and South was due to the reason that Southern states wanted to generate more revenue from their slave population working on their plantations (Daniels). All these differences-social, political, economic- resulted in the era of civil war that began on April 12, 1861, and lasted till April 1865.

The American civil war began with the occupation of Fort Sumter in the battle of Fort Sumter. The confederate forces attacked on federal forces and forts to control federal arms and ammunition. The military commanders from both sides did not hesitate in fighting their own people. It was a tough battle between the leade commanders Ulysses S. Grant from North, and Robert E. Lee from South. However, the final siege by Grant led to the surrender of Lee after he realized that he could not win the war. After the surrender of confederate forces, efforts began to reunite the country and eliminate the menace of slavery once and for all from the American society. The American Civil War ended after four years of chaos and disorder in the country. All these years had been so distressed for the whole nation as they were fighting their own people for the illegitimate reasons. However, the whole nation was reunited after the culmination of war. This was primarily due to the pragmatic leadership of Abraham Lincoln who was known for his leadership and diplomatic skills (Hummel). His efforts avoided the prospects of secession and the United States of America became an integrated state as it was in the past.

This war ended and there were some natural consequences that followed afterward. The most significant effect of the war was the reunification of the country. Abraham Lincoln played the role in the successful completion of the war and brought unity in the nation. Moreover, this war ended the long-standing issue of slavery in America. This issue persisted since the independence of America and finally resolved with the event of civil war. The long-lasting bitterness between farming and industry was also eradicated with proper strategies. The overall effect of the american civil war was such that it augmented the morale of the American nation to an extent that they became motivated again and focused on the speedy reconstruction of America. This war became a blessing in disguise for American people as this started the second phase of industrialization in the country where more attention was given to the development of the south and its people. Moreover, Black people gained a variety of social, political and economic rights and they became an American citizen with the emancipation proclamation of Abraham Lincoln in 1863. This was the good side of the American civil war because it gave impetus to progressive trends in the country and made it a leading nation in the world in the coming decades.

# Conclusion

It is concluded from the above discussion that the American Civil War is one of the great historical events in American politics. It is the event which shaped the future contours of the American nation and its status in the world. This war injected the new spirit in American society and they worked collectively for their national goals. Furthermore, this war ended the sectionalism and prejudices from American society. Even this event cemented the rights of states in the federation of the United States of America. States were empowered in a real sense. The American civil war is widely remembered for the contribution it rendered for the liberation of black slaves in the south. Southern states had many African -Americans and they were treated as a commodity. They were freed in the progressive land of America and it became the land of liberty and pursuit of happiness for all people in society. This war strengthened the federal system in America and made it a characteristic federation for the world.

All those outstanding issues between North and South were resolved. This was needed as all other means such as Kansas-Nebraska Act and Missouri compromise failed to resolve the legitimate concerns of the black population in the country. Once the civil war concluded, the American witnessed a new glory. Many Americans couldn’t believe that this was the land they actually fought for. The time after the civil war brought enormous changes for America. Americans started taking ownership of their land and they became interested in the development of the country. American history suggests that massive developments took place right after the civil war concluded. Since it ended the yearly long conflicts, therefore Americans became too conscious about their economy. The massive level industrial buildup after the civil war remains of crucial importance till date.

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