History 1301

The picture reflects the historical event when Charles Summer was beaten on May 22, 1856. The event holds great significance in American history because it occurred in the Senate. The picture highlights the savage beating of Senator Summer in the Senate. The member of House of Representatives entered the office and attacked the senator that turned his unconscious. The incident occurred three days after Summer’s comments on the explosive issue of Kansas. The issue addressed the topic of admitting Kansas as a slave or free state. Senator Summer’s hate speech “Crime Against Kansas” promoted negative feelings in the public (Senate).

Representative Preston Brookes who was Kinsman at South Carolina entered the Senate with the motive of attacking Senator Summer. He was against Summer's speech and wanted to protest by responding in a violent manner. Brookes entered the office where Summer was attaching copies of his hate speech. He found the perfect time and approached Summer with his metal-topped cane. Brooke struck him over and over again that caused him injury and made him unconscious. Several beatings caused bleeding and Summer's was carried for rescue. The event is recalled in the American Senate because it made both persons heroes in their respective regions. After the incident, Brooke resigned from his position.

The event gave birth to different views including support and opposition. The opponents of the incident considered the act as a cowardly assault from Brookes. The agenda of Summer’s was to oppose the Kansas Nebraska Act 1854. His concerns were to rectify the Fugitive Slaves Act and Compromise of 1850. Summer’s predictions claimed that Kansas will affect the future due to the issue of slavery. There had been strong opposition against the slavery clash.

Summers mentioned in his speech, “the rape of a virgin Territory, compelling it to the hateful embrace of Slavery; and it may be clearly traced to a depraved desire for a new Slave State, hideous offspring of such a crime, in the hope of adding to the power of Slavery in the National Government” (Alexander). Brookes was absent from the speech and stated that Summer's had disrespected him and his native state because he was southern. He also claimed that Summer's had made a violent speech that disrespected South Carolina. The act of Brooke’s prevented Summer’s from attending sessions in the Senate for the next three years. Summer's availed the benefits when the Senate decided to give the vacant chair as a symbol of power to him. The event reminded aristocrats about the slaveholding of the south.

The event has profound impacts on highlighting the issues of the Confederacy as it was used for raising awareness against injustice and discrimination. The southerners united for Brookes while the people of the north supported Summer. There was a clear division between the two groups. Summer’s determined that were pushing leaders to adopt radical treatment towards the south. The act reflected contentment by southerner elites in which whipping was the right of the powerful. Abraham Lincoln then defeated the south confederacy four years after that incident. The nation gathered against the slavery culture and supported Lincoln in his mission of ending slavery. This incident also has significant impacts on standing against the violence and southern powers. The central concern of the opponents was to criticize the culture of brutal practices in slavery. Brooke contributed to face strong criticism due to his act of adopting a violent attitude.

Work Cited

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