

Causes of the Civil War Guided Notes *Foundations*

Unit 8: Civil War

Name: Date: Period:

Part I: Slavery, Sectionalism, and States' Rights

On April 12, 1861, **Confederates** opened fire on **Union** troops at Fort Sumter off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. This action began the **Civil War**, which would last **four long years**, destroy miles of land including entire towns, and take **750,000 American lives**.

The Civil War was caused by increasing sectional divisions between the free states of the North and the slave states of the South over the issue of slavery. As the country expanded **westward**, both the North and South worked to increase the political power of their own region. Many people in both sections of the country viewed the other as harmful to their own region's interests and way of life.

By the 1850s, **sectionalism** in the U.S. was at an all-time high. A series of events throughout the decade brought the nation to the brink of war. In this lesson, we will examine several of the most significant events that led to the outbreak of the Civil War.

Place a checkmark next to each TRUE statement about the Civil War. Choose **FOUR**.

- ☐ The North and the South shared essentially the same economic systems, which caused a great deal of competition between the two sections.
- ☐ Southerners wanted their system of slave-based plantation agriculture to be permitted to expand into new western territories.
- ☐ Northerners supported slavery because it kept wages for White workers high.
- ☐ New states in the West could increase political power for the North or the South, depending on whether the new Western states allowed slavery or not.
- ☐ The North and the South fought the Civil War because of the issue of Texas annexation.
- ☐ Sectional divisions increased during the 1850s, which ultimately led to a deadly war between the North and the South.

The Missouri Compromise

- **What:** An 1820 law addressing the issue of slavery in the territory of Missouri.
- **Terms:**
 - Missouri admitted to the U.S. as a slave state
 - Maine admitted as a free state
 - Slavery was prohibited in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of the 36°30' line.

The Northern / Southern states were probably happy that (*choose all that apply*)

- ☐ Missouri was a slave state
- ☐ Maine was a free state
- ☐ Slavery was not allowed in the rest of the Louisiana territory.

The Compromise of 1850

- **What:** An 1850 law addressing the issue of slavery in the Mexican Cession Territory
- **Terms:**
 - California joined the U.S. as a free state.
 - Slavery would be decided by popular sovereignty (vote) in Utah and New Mexico.
 - Decreased the size of Texas
 - Ended the slave trade in Washington D.C.

The Northern / Southern states were probably happy that (*choose all that apply*)

- ☐ California outlawed slavery
- ☐ People in Utah and New Mexico could vote on slavery
- ☐ Texas was smaller
- ☐ People couldn't trade slaves in Washington D.C. anymore

The Kansas Nebraska Act

- **What:** An 1854 law addressing the issue of slavery in the territories of Kansas and Nebraska
- **Terms:**
 - Slavery would be decided in Kansas and Nebraska by popular sovereignty (vote)
- This law effectively repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

The Northern / Southern states were probably happy that (choose all that apply)

- ☐ People in Nebraska and Kansas could vote on slavery
- ☐ The rest of the Louisiana territory was now open to slavery

Bleeding Kansas

- Northerners and Southerners flooded into Kansas to try to influence the vote on slavery.
- From 1855 to 1859 violence broke out in Kansas between pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups.
- May 1856, a radical abolitionist named John Brown and his sons killed 5 pro-slavery supporters at the Pottawatomie Creek.

This event proves that sectionalism was increasing / decreasing because (choose ONE)

- People are attempting to solve sectional issues via legal compromise.
- People are resorting to violence to try to accomplish their goals.
- People are taking are pushing for secession of Southern states.

The Dred Scott Case

- **What:** An 1857 Supreme Court case about the status of an enslaved man named Dred Scott.
- **The Case:** Scott argued that he should be free, because his master brought him into free states and territories.
- **The Verdict:**
 - The Supreme Court ruled that Scott was **not** free, and that he had no rights in court because Black people were not citizens of the U.S.
 - The court also ruled that Congress had no authority to ban slavery from a U.S. territory

The Northern / Southern states probably supported this ruling because (choose all that apply)

- ☐ The courts ruled that the government can't stop slavery.
- ☐ The courts ruled that enslaved people did not have the right to bring a case to court.
- ☐ The court ruled that even free Black people were not citizens.

John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry

- **When:** October 16, 1859
- **What:** Radical abolitionist John Brown led a raid on a federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.
- **Why:** He wanted to steal federal weapons at the arsenal to arm slaves so they could revolt against Southern slave owners.
- **Outcome:** Brown and his men were captured and executed.

This event probably increased / decreased sectionalism because (choose ONE)

- It demonstrated the pro-slavery Southerners wanted to abolish slavery in the South.
- It demonstrated that all Northerners were unwilling to compromise on slavery.
- It demonstrated that more people were turning to violence in support of their goals.

The Presidential Election of 1860

- A Northern, anti-slavery Republican named Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States.
- Southern states opposed the election of an anti-slavery president and began to secede from the Union.

Why do you think Southern states began to secede after **THIS** event, and not any earlier one?