

Why were the decisions made in the 1850s pushing us towards the Civil War?

One reason decisions made in the 1850s pushed us towards the Civil War is because they built tensions amongst free and slave states for congressional control. By 1850, Northerners outnumbered Southerners 3 to 2. The House of Representatives is determined by population. These facts illustrate that the North and South populations had influence on who controlled the House. It can be inferred that tensions were sparked between North and South for control of the House, creating incentive to build their populations. Stephen Douglas passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, separating Nebraska territory. Nebraska was not appealing to Southerners because the cold climate was unsuitable for plantation. Kansas, however, was suitable and appealing. This denotes that the Southerners were drawn to the new state of Kansas created by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In assessing, Southerners were moved to populate Kansas and gain control of the House. Missouri, a slave state, was bordered by 2 free states, Illinois and Iowa. Missouri also bordered Kansas. They did not want to be bordered by a third free state. Kansas' status as a free or slave state would be determined by popular sovereignty. These excerpts reveal that Missouri's bordering of Kansas created concerns for the state. When calculating, it is evident that Missourians would find incentive to populate Kansas for it to be voted in through popular sovereignty as a slave state. A final judgement can be made that the decision to pass the Kansas-Nebraska act in the 1850s created tensions for Congressional control that pushed us towards the Civil War.

Another explanation is that states and citizens were resisting federal legislation, leading to disagreement that swirled into the Civil War. This can be shown in the example of the failure of the Compromise of 1850, specifically through the strengthening of the Fugitive Slave Act. In the 1850s, 9 Northern states passed personal liberty laws. These liberty laws prohibited the imprisonment of fugitive slaves in state prisons, against the will of the Fugitive Slave Act. These points disclose that states were resisting the passing of the federal Fugitive Slave Act by enforcing their own laws that countered it. In the assessment, it is clear that (Northern) states disagreed with federal legislation, and their resistance of it resulted in conflict. Furthermore, in 1850, Minkins (a fugitive slave) escaped from his slave home in Virginia. In 1851, abolitionists liberated Minkins from the Boston Courthouse. These points highlight an instance of the Fugitive Slave Act being rebelled against among citizens. It can be calculated that the uprising of citizens against the Act sparked conflict and controversy that would burst into flame. Lastly, in 1854, an organization formed called Boston Anti-Man-Hunting league. That same year at an Independence Day event, abolitionist William Garrison publicly burned copies of the Fugitive Slave Act. These facts exhibit that active efforts were being made to fight the will of the federal government through the Fugitive Slave Act. In assessing, citizens, specifically abolitionists, were ready to fight against Southern-rooted laws. It can be judged, therefore, that the actions of people and states in the North against federal legislation, like the strengthened Fugitive Slave Act, created the perfect storm for the Civil War outbreak in 1861.

One last decision was that of abolitionists to make statements against slavery. This brought up the controversial topic itself that led us to tumble to the War. This is shown in the instance of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who lost her son Samuel at 18 months old due to cholera. She found parallels in her grief to that of enslaved mothers whose children are sold away. These excerpts show how Stowe's tragedy led her to sympathize for slaves. In assessing, the passing of Stowe's son foreshadowed Stowe's decision to take

further action against slavery. A newspaper asked her in 1850 to author a 5-part essay on slavery because of her experience and knowledge as an abolitionist. She agreed, and the essays were combined into the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852. These facts reveal the series of events leading up to the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In calculating, this chain of events brewed the perfect concoction for a storm of uprisal and controversy. The book sold 1 million copies in the first year of publication. Once the Civil War began, Stowe even met Lincoln, who greeted her by stating "so you're the little lady who wrote the book that started this great War." This denotes the influence of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the people of the United States. When assessing these points, it is evident that statements of influential abolitionists including Stowe ignited doubt and conflict in the minds of Americans that foreshadowed disagreement and action. In the final judgement, the decision of abolitionists to speak against slavery brought up a controversial topic that stormed the minds of the people and resulted in the Civil War.

Ultimately, the decisions made in the 1850s led us to Civil War because they built tensions amongst free and slave states for congressional control, states and citizens were resisting federal legislation, and the topic of slavery was continuously mentioned and argued over, creating the perfect climate for war. This was shown through the instances of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the failure of the Compromise of 1850 through the Fugitive Slave Act strengthening, and the actions and influence of one Harriet Beecher Stowe. In assessment, the decisions of governments and people in the 1850s sparked a swirl of opinions and actions that foreshadowed a riot. A final judgement can be made that these decisions, and those who made and fought against them, pushed us towards the Civil War.