
Cotton and the civil war

Cotton was often considered the foundation of the Confederacy. The question this essay will examine is 'To what extent did cotton affect the outbreak of the Civil War.' In order to properly address the demands of this questions, this paper will explore events and economic factors from the 19th century until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Cotton's role substantially contributed to the outbreak of the civil war through economic, political and social impact. These factors causing the civil war are influenced by cotton drive in southern economic interests, politically impacting states rights and the social rights of enslaved peoples.

The cotton industry experienced an exponential boom in 1793 when Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. The cotton gin separated seed from the fiber in a much more efficient way. The cotton industry then took off, becoming the most dominant within the south. Cotton's major contribution to southern economy thus engaged the United States with foreign trade to countries like Britain but also engaged the United States in controversial morals through its dependence on slavery. The cotton industry drove the economic interests of the south. The North and South contained many economic differences in regards to industry and urbanization. The North was much more industrial, Massachusetts alone produced more manufactured goods than the entirety of the Confederate states.

The south believed in an agricultural way of life. One example of this is seen in cotton as a cash crop in Mississippi. The entire northern half of the state of Mississippi was settled into when the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians were driven out between 1830 and 1832. This allowed for cotton production to boom, by 1834 Mississippi produced 85 million pounds of cotton. Two years later, production of cotton increased to 125 million pounds.

Through the entire United States, Mississippi produced a quarter of total cotton (Rothman, 2015). The growing capital in the cotton industry expanded into a powerful global export source. In 1850 cotton sales made up 50% of US exports. Cotton trade ensured prosperity amongst the society. The South also used cotton to trade for weapons with Britain, as raw cotton was essential for the European economy (Dattel, 2008).

Cotton's importance in the South provided economic power for a diplomatic strategy in the shifting Confederate states. Cotton was the South's main defense in supporting states rights. The South commonly referred to slavery as a "peculiar institution" and that abolitionists were a threat to a state-governed right. This sparked a quest to preserve the institution of slavery. One factor leading to the outbreak of the war was the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

GET HELP

The Kansas-Nebraska Act was made do to the United States inability to agree on whether or not the institution of slavery would be legal. The Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed for new territories to decide if they were a free or slave state through popular sovereignty while breaking the Missouri Compromise.

The fight over slavery moved to the unrecognized territory. Slavery-supporting Southerners and Northern abolitionists fled to Kansas motivated to either preserve and destroy slavery practices. The voting in determining the outcome of Kansas resulting in seizing of the polls and illegal castings. The increased tensions earned the name "bleeding Kansas".

While many Northern arguments in the quest to abolish slavery were out of the question of human morals, Southerners were determined to keep slavery, which cotton was dependant on, in which their economy was dependant on cotton.

Northern abolitionists were highly doubtful of the human morals regarding slavery. Although many did not believe African Americans should be granted the same rights as whites were, they did not believe in the morality of slavery. The South supported this institution by referring to it as a "peculiar institution". Signifying slavery was "peculiar" distracts from the potentially harmful effects it held against African American lives. Southern whites viewed it as an economic and political factor and not a question of human rights.

This economic and political perspective on slavery was entirely due to plantations contribution to the southern economy as a whole, 50% of which was cotton. These rights were tested in the case of Dred Scott, preceding the civil war. A formerly enslaved man to a cotton plantation, Dred Scott, had tried to earn his freedom by traveling North. After filing for his freedom, with a whole decade of living in the free territory, his case was dismissed as a technicality in 1847.

This decision invalidated the Missouri Compromise, angering Northern states. More than just an issue of one man's freedom, controversy circulated around the issue of slavery. Slavery meant the continuation of the cash crop cotton but at the expense of human freedom.

Although not commonly considered as the main cause of war, cotton significantly impacted the growing tensions resulting in the outbreak of the U.S Civil war. The demands of the paper regarded the question, 'To what extent did cotton affect the outbreak of the Civil War.' Cotton's role substantially contributed to the outbreak of the civil war through economic and political impact. Cotton's importance in the South provided economic power for a diplomatic strategy in the shifting Confederate states, motivated increased tensions in the disputed Kansas territory.

Southerners were determined to keep slavery, which cotton was dependant on, in which their

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

economy was dependant on cotton. The political and economic reasonings and tensions affecting the outbreak of the civil war furthered social tensions by the North. The social tension, is the moral question of slavery, was depended upon by cotton. The political, economic and social reasonings to the outbreak of the civil war connected in a full circle all around a common thread: cotton.

gradesfixer.com

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

GET HELP