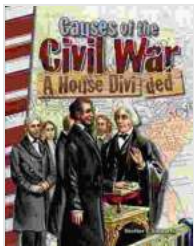


# Unveiling the Roots of Conflict: Causes of the Civil War

The American Civil War, a cataclysmic event in the nation's history, was not merely a spontaneous eruption of violence. It was the culmination of decades of tension, rooted in a complex web of political, economic, and social factors. To fully grasp the causes of this conflict, we must delve into the events and ideas that shaped the tumultuous era that preceded it.



## Causes of the Civil War: A House Divided (Primary Source Readers) by Rob Staeger

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 31667 KB

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Reading age : 6 - 8 years

Grade level : 1 - 2

Item Weight : 3.84 ounces

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Screen Reader : Supported



## Political Divisions

At the heart of the Civil War lay a profound schism in political ideology. The North, largely industrialized and urbanized, embraced the principles of abolition and a strong central government. The South, on the other hand, remained agrarian and deeply committed to preserving the institution of

slavery. This divide was exacerbated by the issue of states' rights, with the South fearing federal encroachment on its autonomy.

## **Economic Disparities**

The economic disparities between the North and South further fueled tensions. The North's burgeoning industrial economy outpaced the South's agricultural system. This imbalance created a trade deficit for the South, making it dependent on Northern goods. The issue of tariffs, which the North favored to protect its industries, became a flashpoint of contention.

## **Social Tensions**

The debate over slavery was not merely a political or economic issue but also a deeply social one. The North increasingly viewed slavery as an abhorrent practice that violated human rights. In contrast, the South defended slavery as a necessary institution for their economic and social well-being. These conflicting views created an unbridgeable chasm between the two regions.

## **Territorial Expansion**

The acquisition of new territories after the Mexican-American War further exacerbated tensions. The question of whether these territories would be slave states or free states became a pivotal issue in the run-up to the war. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which allowed popular sovereignty in the territories, fueled violence and further polarized the nation.

## **The Role of Abolitionists**

Abolitionists played a significant role in galvanizing anti-slavery sentiment in the North. Led by figures like William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick

Douglass, they denounced the evils of slavery and demanded its immediate abolition. Their fiery rhetoric and activism angered Southerners and contributed to the growing divide.

## **The 1860 Presidential Election**

The election of Abraham Lincoln as president in 1860 proved to be the tipping point. Lincoln's anti-slavery stance was seen as a direct threat to the South's way of life. Within months of his election, seven Southern states seceded from the Union, forming the Confederate States of America.

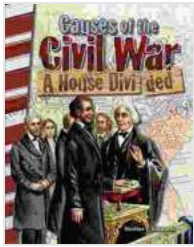
## **Immediate Precipitating Event: Fort Sumter**

The attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861, marked the outbreak of the Civil War. This event symbolized the culmination of years of unresolved tensions and became the catalyst for the bloodiest conflict in American history.

The American Civil War was a multifaceted conflict with roots embedded in the nation's political, economic, social, and territorial realities. The divide between the North and South grew over decades, fueled by conflicting ideologies, economic disparities, and social tensions. The crisis of secession and the tragic events at Fort Sumter ultimately ignited the flames of war. By understanding these underlying causes, we gain a deeper appreciation of the profound impact this conflict had on shaping the course of American history.

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