

Local Politics Matter

The American Civil War

It's Not Over Yet



The **American Civil War** was a civil war that was fought in the United States from 1861 to 1865. As a result of the long-standing controversy over slavery, war broke out in April 1861, when Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina, shortly after U.S. President Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated. The nationalists of the Union proclaimed loyalty to the U.S. Constitution. They faced secessionists of the Confederate States, who advocated for states' rights to expand slavery (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). I am starting this article against that backdrop to lay the foundation for where we are today. There are many people who look at Donald Trump's Presidency and lay the blame at his feet, but this goes far beyond Trump and Trumpism. Donald J. Trump took advantage of and bene-

fited from the fact that a large percentage of people in the Country are still fighting a war that many of us thought ended in 1865.

After the Emancipation Proclamation and subsequent end of the Civil War the United States went through several periods of great turmoil. Initially there was the reconstruction period that saw the passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments abolishing slavery, providing equal protections under the law and banning discrimination in voting. We also saw the formation of the Ku Klux Klan during this period. The reconstruction period was quickly followed by the passage of "Jim Crow" or segregation laws. The "Jim Crow" laws were followed by a period during which lynching became a fact of life to intimidate and control African

Americans. This took us to the 1900s, a period marked by court cases, legislative battles and violence, all tied to Civil Rights. Finally, in 1968 we saw the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act the Country remained a powder keg being ignited by White Supremacists who continued to fight against the notion of freedom and equal rights for African Americans and any other racial group excepting whites. If you follow the history of this Country it is quite easy to see how we arrived at Donald Trump and Trumpism. After the turbulent 1960s African Americans and other non-white racial groups began to make positive strides toward freedom and equal rights. These advances culminated in the election of Barack Obama, the first African American President of the United States. As

the Country celebrated this historic election and proclaimed the movement into a post racial America there remained a large percentage of the population who continued to fight the Civil War. They flew under the radar as we waxed euphorically during the Obama years. Well here we are in 2018 staring at a President who is rolling back Civil Rights laws, attacking immigrants and playing to all the bigotry and hatred of white supremacists. Yes, our history and the election of Barack Obama gave us Donald Trump. As a Country we underestimated the power, hatred and conviction of white supremacists. We continue to make the mistake of thinking that the Civil War ended in 1865. Once again, the history books that point to this date are both inaccurate and incomplete. The Civil War rages on and it is time for this Country to deal with that fact. Until we deal with slavery and all its horrors as well as the race of people who so willingly participated in this heinous act, the War will rage on.

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