

Harriet Beecher Stowe Takes a Stand

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe was a young woman living in a little town in Maine. She had been concerned for a long time about slavery. She believed it was immoral, and she couldn't understand why everyone else did not agree with her. Over the years, she had gone to many lectures about the need to give slaves their freedom. She had read many newspaper articles saying the same thing. But the lectures and articles always annoyed her. They were dry and hard to read, using complex legal arguments.

“Why couldn't someone write a good, readable story?” she asked herself. “Why couldn't a writer show, in dramatic fashion, how terrible slavery is? Why couldn't a clever author show exactly what was going on?” She finally decided to do it herself. She vowed that her story would catch the attention of everybody in the country.

Finally, she finished her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It not only told about the slaves' struggles but it showed them in vivid detail. The book caused quite a disturbance throughout the country. People who had been against slavery without taking action suddenly became active and voiced their objections to it.

The Civil War broke out a few years after the book was published. During the war, President Abraham Lincoln met Harriet Beecher Stowe. He looked at Stowe and smiled. “So you are the woman who wrote the book that made this great war,” Lincoln said with a wide grin.

1. What caused Harriet Beecher Stowe to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?
2. What effect did Harriet's book have on the country?