Nation More United Than in Past Crises

Throughout the Revolution, in War of 1812, and During Mexican, Civil, and Spanish Wars Our Internal Dissensions Were Continuous

By ALLEN SINCLAIR WILLIAMS

American history has been full of war, revolution, and unrest. Perhaps, that is why we are embarrassed by the present war more united than in the past. The war has united us, perhaps, in a way that it never did before. It has caused us to stand together, as we have never stood before, despite the irreconcilable differences that have divided us in the past. The war has brought us closer together, as it has united the people of all walks of life in support of the cause.

The war has not only united us, but it has also revealed the strength of our nation. It has shown us that we are capable of coming together to face a common enemy. It has also shown us that we are capable of working together to achieve our goals.

The war has not only united us, but it has also shown us the importance of unity. It has shown us that we are stronger when we work together. It has also shown us that we are weaker when we divide ourselves.

The war has not only united us, but it has also shown us the importance of communication. It has shown us that we need to communicate with each other to understand each other's perspectives. It has also shown us the importance of listening to each other and respecting each other's opinions.

The war has not only united us, but it has also shown us the importance of cooperation. It has shown us that we need to cooperate with each other to achieve our goals. It has also shown us the importance of working together to overcome our differences.

The war has not only united us, but it has also shown us the importance of sacrifice. It has shown us that we need to be willing to make sacrifices for the greater good. It has also shown us the importance of respecting those who have made sacrifices for our country.

The war has not only united us, but it has also shown us the importance of unity, communication, cooperation, and sacrifice. It has shown us that these are the qualities that make a strong nation.

New England, then a much greater proportion of the population than it is today, was united in its devotion to the cause of independence, and remained in open discontent throughout the war. The war also marked the beginning of the Jeffersonian era, and some of the most extreme conservative elements were even more aggressive, and Governor Trumbull summoned the legislature to discharge its duty of providing protection against the madness and excesses of the people and the assumed powers of the government.

Studies by Henry Adams in the British archives show that Foster, the British Minister at Washington, was not entirely satisfied with early in 1812 by leading Federalists, who visited him of their own accord, and conferred with him as to a "thorough amalgamation of interests between Great Britain and America." They urged that Great Britain should make no concessions to the demands of President Madison, and seemed to think that "that Great Britain can by management bring the United States into any connection with her that she pleased." These Federalists told his Excellency that if there should be a war it would be short; and the Madison Administration would be overthrown. Fortunately for General Madison and his leaders, after Germany's declaration of ruthless submarine war in February last, calling on the Confederacy to make a full statement and present such suggestions.

New Englanders denounced the war in strong terms and in June and July, after a series of several States refused to call out their militia. In Baltimore there was a great riot, brought on by attacks on a Federalist newspaper, and in the Maryland election which followed in October the Federalists won a notable victory, sending to Congress Alexander C. Hanson, one of the editors of the newspaper, in question.

New England banks withheld subscriptions to the national loans. Although New England was the home of the three-quarters of the banking capital of the country, it subscribed during the war to less than $3,000,000 of the loans, while the Middle States took $35,000,000. Meanwhile, New England bought British drafts with specie sent to Canada, supplied beef to the British armies there, and subsistence to the British fleets off the coast, of which Madison complained in his message to Congress Dec. 9, 1813. Madison's mind, wrote William Wirt, was "full of the New England sectionalism."

Nor did New England's opposition abate as the war proceeded. The Hartford Convention, which was its climax, met Dec. 15, 1814, only three days before the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the conflict, was concluded. The story of that Convention is one of the most famous in American history, and it is one of the many examples of the power of sectionalism.

General Jackson was defeated at New Orleans, says Babcock in Volume XIII of Hall's "American Nation," "or had the war not been carried through in 1815, General Jackson would have been elected President. When the treaty was signed at Ghent, it was signed by the President and the United States, but it was not signed by New Hampshire and Vermont, which were independent states. The United States was created as a confederation, and it was not until 1787 that the Constitution was adopted, which created a stronger, more powerful government.

The Mexican war was violently opposed by the anti-slavery element, and...
was vehemently denounced, not only by that element but by many who did not favor the policy of national expansion, as an act of wanton and wholly unjustifiable aggression. Like the war of 1812, it was, in effect, submitted to a referendum. The Presidential election of 1844 turned almost wholly upon this issue. Polk's popular plurality was less than 40,000, and he did not have a majority of the popular vote, although his electoral majority was 65.

John Quincy Adams and twelve other members of Congress signed an appeal to the people of the free States in protest against the annexation of Texas, asserting that it would be identical with dissolution of the Union. The resolution for annexation passed the House of Representatives by the comparatively close vote of 120 to 98, and the Senate by 27 to 25. Congress was almost overwhelmed by the deluge of petitions against the admission of Texas as a slave State. Abraham Lincoln, then a member of the House of Representatives, was opposed to the war, but after it was begun he voted for the supply bills. Throughout the conflict there was no enthusiasm by the anti-slavery men for it, nor was any disposition shown in large sections of the North to enlist.

It is difficult to gather any correct impression from the average history of the civil war of the extent of the opposition in the North to beginning it or carrying it on. The Democrats, who were numerous in the North and had many Representatives in Congress, had no desire to invade the South, but insisted on means of conciliation to bring about a restoration of the Union. The "Copperhead" element, of which Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio was one of the most conspicuous examples, could not be wholly suppressed, even when suppression was attempted. The dead in the New York anti-draft riots in July, 1863, were more numerous than those of not a few battles.

The climax of the anti-war movement came in the Presidential campaign of 1864, when the Democrats nominated General George B. McClellan for President. The Democratic campaign was based on failure of the Lincoln Administration to bring about a reunion of the States by the methods it adopted. The success of that campaign was conditioned, therefore, on continued failure. While the Baltimore Convention which nominated Lincoln was in session, details came of the severe repulse at Cold Harbor, and before the month ended Sherman was beaten back at Kenesaw Mountain. But the turning of the military tide soon brought a political transformation.

While there was a long period of hesitation before embarking upon the Spanish-American war of 1898 for the freeing of Cuba, the blowing up of the Maine coalesced national sentiment so that there was no important opposition, especially as the fears of those who were against a war of conquest were allayed by the passage of the Platt amendment. Thus it may be said that in 1898, after nearly a century and a quarter of national existence, we were at last practically united in a resort to arms. The real opposition in this case came after the purchase of the Philippines and the acquisition of Porto Rico by the peace treaty had aroused the so-called anti-imperialists, who made their fight for Bryan in the Presidential campaign of 1900, thus, in effect, calling upon the American people to pass judgment upon the war after it was over. The verdict for McKinley at the polls settled the issue. Had the actual outcome of the conflict with Spain been anticipated, we should have had another divided House in the prosecution of the war.