Incidents In The Life Of A Slave Girl: The Effects Of The Fugitive Slave Act Of 1850

As America begins to grow, the United States soon became known as the land of the free and opportunity. While this seems like an amazing way to be known, one thing that gave a major push was the Civil War which was ironically caused by the lack of freedom and opportunity. This caused great divisions throughout the still-young nation with the different views and ideas on how the government should respond to the growing problem of slavery. This time period can be best represented by Harriet Jacobs' ability to effectively inform the reader and put into perspective on the struggles of being a slave during the Civil War era in her novel, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Harriet Jacobs' story accurately represents the time period that it was written in by showing the way women were treated, the effects of the Fugitive Slave Act and white supremacy in the 1800s.

One example is the way that African women were often treated during the period. Jacob talks about how no slave girls will 'learn to tremble when she hears her Masters's football. She will be compelled to realize that she is no longer a child' (Jacobs 45). This quote is able to connect to the. Of the Civil War because it shows how quickly a young woman had to be expected to live. This also reveals how many were exposed to the inappropriate behaviors of many. Jacob also shows how women were viewed as if they had no value and were often whipped, raped and or shot unless they consistently benefited their owner.

Another example is Howard Jacobs is able to show the effects of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. In the book, linda states that she '[had] but one hesitation, and that was my feeling of insecurity in New York now greatly increased by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law' (Jacobs 285). In the beginning of the passage, Linda, the main protagonist, had little to no worries when it came to walking around, even on her own until further into the book, when the law is introduced Linda soon begins to watch her back at all times. Not only was this law passed but many feared for their safety whether they were free or enslaved, causing Linda became more cautious because her previous owner or Master, Dr. Flint was on the hunt for her. This law is important in the book because it causes Linda to be apprehensive throughout made you already of the book. The saw is also important to the period because it was a major trigger for the Civil War and caused extreme tensions between the North and the South.

Furthermore, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl gives great emphasis on white supremacy that existed and had a major impact on society and how it was run. The whites option view themselves as a higher rank of being and belittled the natives and African-Americans. Jacob's often refers to the amount of racism in the eighteen-hundreds. In both history and in the book, whites often treated those of color terribly and were used as inhuman animals. In the book, a slave owner says to his slave, 'Do you know that I have the right to do as I like with you, -that I can kill you, if I please?' (Jacobs 62). This shows that most slave owners felt as if they were more Superior and that slaves were nothing but disposable property.

Taking the readers through the life of a slave girl, Jacobs was able to show the point of view of a slave girl who was often physically, mentally and sexually abused. Jacobs was able to successfully depict the ways women were treated, the effects of the Fugitive Slave Act, and

white supremacy during the Civil War era in her book, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.