The Repercussions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
Allyson Gregory

**Abstract**

*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is a novel written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. This novel is arguably one of the most influential pieces of literature in America’s history. Harriet Beecher Stowe had many objectives when writing this novel, some of them being to end slavery, to be a missionary through the text, and to show others how well the Northern economy was working. This novel gained popularity almost overnight and it also sparked a multitude of reactions from not only Northerners and Southerners, but from people all around the world.

**Introduction**

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was a best-seller. In the first week, 10,000 copies were sold. In the first year, over 300,000 copies were sold. This novel came in second in sales only to the Bible. People were so interested in reading the novel that “started this great War,” as Abraham Lincoln said when he met Harriet Beecher Stowe. This novel evoked several emotions and several different responses.

**Reactions of the South**

Stereotypically, Northerners loved the book and it helped the abolitionist movement. Southerners on the other hand, hated the book and it fueled their hatred towards the North. Realistically, the South had mixed emotions regarding *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. A lot of southern critics describe Stowe’s novel as a book full of lies. They completely reject all of her ideas and claim that she purposefully stirred up the conflict that the novel caused. Other critics, although still disagreeing with the novel, accept it. Some critics believe that the novel needed more sympathy towards the wives of southern slaveholders because they believe that slaveholders’ wives were the real victims. Some hope that although the novel is full of lies, that good will come from it.

**Stowe’s Goals**

Stowe had several goals when writing this novel. First, she wanted this novel to be a missionary for her. She had high hopes that this novel would help readers see that God is the only one who can help them. She references the Bible and God several times throughout the novel. Second, she wanted this novel to be an example of the northern economy. By using characters like Miss Ophelia, Stowe shows how well the capitalist North works. Last, Stowe wanted to help stop slavery. This is an obvious goal of hers.

**The Lasting Impact**

Why is *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* still relevant today? Racial tension is still very prominent in today’s society. The name “Uncle Tom” is a huge racial slur today. In the time of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the name “Uncle Tom” would have been a compliment. Tom is the hero of the book. He is one of the most honorable, trustworthy, pious protagonists in American Literature. Tom has characteristics that readers want to possess. The racial tension in today’s world is why this novel is still relevant. This novel teaches readers that race does not matter and sometimes somebody of a different race has better qualities than the “superior” race.