

In the early days of the American colonies, the headright system encouraged indentured servitude as the preferred method of human labor: white immigrants, without land ownership in the new colonies, were the prime participants bound to this labor system. Yet once Bacon's Rebellion erupted, the realization that indentured servitude was simply not a stable labor source dawned. Therefore, wealthy American plantation owners began to employ the African slave trade as a source of human labor, leading to an association of race with slavery and establishing one of the most prevalent forms of systematic racism in the world. As the colonies gained independence and began to expand, it was clear that sectionalism between the agricultural, slave-dependent South and the industrial, increasingly abolitionist North was a dividing factor in the era of Manifest Destiny--particularly with the South as a proponent of the spreading of slavery to new territories as a method of preserving their 'King Cotton' economic system by tipping representation in Congress. Meanwhile, the North was set on not allowing slavery to spread--for not just moralistic but also political reasons. As tensions began to escalate, the South began to justify their system of slavery by branding it as a positive good to not just the economy but also the slaves themselves, while the North rejected slavery because it was in violation of economic and moralistic progress.

An example of southern justification for slavery can be found in an account from Governor George McDuffie in 1835. According to him, African slaves were not as badly treated as northern Irish factory workers--in fact, McDuffie goes so far as to claim that slaves were "entirely exempted" from the starvation and poor working conditions that the factory workers faced. What this account conveys has been historically echoed throughout the South, with many wealthy southerners claiming that industrial "wage slavery" was a far greater evil than chattel slavery as a way to fight back against abolitionist arguments that slavery was immoral.

Southerners who perpetuated McDuffie's argument likely weren't genuine in their claim that slaves never starved: accounts from former slaves themselves, such as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, prove otherwise. In his words, Douglass recounts life under "kind" slave owners (who were still characterized so even though they still treated him as an inferior and beat him as punishment) and cruel slave owners, like Mr. Covey--who starved and abused Douglass, eventually prompting his escape. Accounts of slavery as "evil" were not difficult to find, but nevertheless, the southerners persisted.

The southern justification of the "morality of slavery" is also present in Doc C, where a slave nurse is pictured embracing a white child, showing how slaves were integrated into southern life. Although there is no context behind this photo, it is likely that white slave owners would have probably cited it to show that slaves were not mistreated and were actually able to develop loving and nurturing relationships as caretakers of children.

The main reason southerners did try to uphold the morality of slavery was to preserve their economic system, dubbed 'King Cotton'. King Cotton, a result of sectionalism and the historically agricultural economy of the South, was popularized through Eli Whitney's cotton gin, which made the process for harvesting cotton so efficient that the industry became so popular to warrant a huge demand for slavery. A common fear was that abolition would "put an end to the cultivation" of cotton (Doc B), as the profitability of cotton was so heavily dependent on slave labor. However, the North retorted that a cotton-centric economy would lead to the downfall of the South's economy because it showed a lack of economic diversification.

In Doc E, this argument is especially present: Hinton Helper, author of *The Impending Crisis* claims that the South is dependent on cities like New York and Philadelphia for industrial commerce and that slavery has forced the South to focus their economy on one thing--which can be dangerous in the long run. The effects of this were apparent later in the Civil War, where the seceded South struggled to keep up with the Union's military technology and production due to their lack of diverse industrialization, eventually leading to their defeat.

This sentiment is similarly echoed in Doc D, where Abraham Lincoln himself denounces slavery by saying that to use slavery as profit, the South is also destroying the "white man's charter of freedom." Not yet president at the time, Lincoln at this moment in his life was actually not opposed to slavery for moral reasons: in fact, he wouldn't even outwardly support emancipation until the Civil War had already started. His 1854 speech here reflects that the majority of the North saw slavery as an inhibition to progress, such as economic diversity... social equality was not yet an issue on Lincoln's mind.

Yet in pursuit of social equality, some in favor of the North's stance were also opposed to the spread of slavery. Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, founder of *The Liberator* (an abolitionist newspaper) and supporter of immediate emancipation for all enslaved black people, were particularly vocal in their disdain of slavery in regards to human rights. Garrison put forth the idea that slavery was immoral and a great evil, and that emancipated slaves would be able to assimilate into society seamlessly. Through advocating immediate emancipation, Garrison and his persuasive editorials were instrumental in rallying up the North in their anti-slavery beliefs.

While enslaved African Americans did eventually lose their shackles, the divide between the North and South remained. Starting with the passing of racist Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, as well as the sharecropping system that increasingly enforced a rigid social hierarchy, the South was still trying to enforce a pseudo-slavery system even in the late 19th century. Segregation, backed by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, would also survive until its death by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Policies like these, all derived from slavery, have upheld a certain degree of institutionalized American racism which has, unfortunately, survived to this day and is particularly associated with the deep southern regions of the US--another form of sectionalism in and of itself. Yet as the US has changed, the mindset which was once a social norm in the early 19th century is now a social atrocity, showing that progress in regards to racial equality is tangible--and here to stay.