

Essay on Slavery in the United States

By : jellaroo

Topic: Why was slavery such a difficult issue to resolve in the United States?



Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/jellaroo

Copyright © jellaroo, 2015

Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

Essay on Slavery in the United States

During the nineteenth century, slavery was a very controversial and prominent issue in the United States. White people were enslaving black people, believing that blacks were inferior. White people may have rationalised the way they treated black slaves by leading themselves to believe that working as a slave was the best they could get in life. This led to serious difficulty in resolving the issue as perceptions were so different.

The United States was incredibly divided over the notion of slavery. The North wanted to abolish slavery, whereas slavery was essential to the Southern economy. According to the 1860 Census, there was a total population of 31,429,891 in the United States, including a total of 3,953,801 slaves within that population. Most of these slaves were situated in the South, where slavery was more common. The North didn't have many slaves, as they were creating the Abolition Movement – a movement intended to abolish slavery. People in the South worried about political and economic power in the North, and what would happen to the South if slavery was abolished (documentary). The North and the South failed to reach a compromise, and this made it difficult to abolish slavery.

The South was dependent on slavery for cheap labour, but also because slavery stabilised the economy – unlike the North, there were no strikes or protestations for better pay. As Congressman John C Calhoun said, *“political condition of the slaveholding states is more stable and quiet than that of the North”* (work booklet). Thomas Jefferson said that *“Slavery was like holding a wolf by the ears – you don't like it, but you don't dare let it go”* (documentary). His wording portrayed the feelings of people very effectively – slavery was immoral, but as it was essential to the economy and their individual businesses, they wouldn't dare take part in the Abolition Movement. However, most of the people in the South didn't see an issue with slavery – and a dispute cannot be resolved if one side doesn't see that something needs to be resolved.

Slaves were forced to work under brutal conditions. They were treated as though they were animals or objects, and were forced to work 14 hours a day (documentary). They were malnourished, receiving the minimum amount of food a day to sustain them. Slaves were beaten or flogged if they disobeyed their masters. Being a slave was described as being in *“permanent night”* (documentary) – there was no hope, and there was almost nothing a slave could do about it. They were often shot if they protested. A slave could attempt to escape using the Underground Railroad (a network intended to help slaves escape into free states) but only around 1000 would successfully reach free states every year. One man said *“I'd rather be dead than be a nigger on these plantations”* (documentary). The crippling routine of slaves made it very difficult for slaves to attempt to better their situation. The conditions of slaves made the issue of slavery incredibly urgent, and this made it harder to resolve the issue.

In conclusion, slavery was a very difficult issue to resolve due to three predominant factors; the inability of the South to accept that slavery was a problem, the conflict between the North and the South, and the desperate situation of the slaves. All of these factors contributed to the abolishment of slavery in the United States.

Essay on Slavery in the United States

Essay on Slavery in the United States

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2015-02-01 19:18:14