

A CLOSER LOOK AT MYTHS ABOUT SLAVERY

Contrary to popular belief:

- **Slavery was a *northern* institution**
 - The North held slaves for over two centuries
 - The North didn't abolish slavery until shortly before the Civil War
 - The North dominated the slave trade
 - The North built its economy around slavery
 - The North industrialized with slave-picked cotton and the profits from slavery
- **Slavery was a *national* institution**
 - Slavery was practiced by all thirteen colonies
 - Slavery was enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and found in all the "free" states, "from sea to shining sea"
 - The slave trade was permitted by the federal government until 1808
 - Federal laws protected slavery and assisted slave owners in retrieving runaway slaves
 - The Union was deeply divided over emancipation until the end of the Civil War
- **Slavery benefited *middle-class* families**
 - Slavery dominated the economies of both North and South during the colonial era and up to the Civil War
 - Ordinary people built ships, produced trade goods, and invested in slave voyages
 - Workers in all regions, including the Midwest and the West, benefited economically from slavery and slavery-related businesses
 - Consumers benefited from lower prices on goods like coffee, sugar, tobacco, and cotton
- **Slavery benefited *immigrant* families**
 - Immigrants found hard work connected to slavery in port cities, on small farms, and in textile mills
 - Immigrants and other white people were often indentured for a term of bound labor, but there were never any "white slaves" (Irish or otherwise)
 - Immigrants flocking to the "land of opportunity" after the Civil War still benefited from what enslaved labor made possible
 - Immigrants pursued routes to prosperity which were closed to the families of former slaves for a century after slavery
 - Federal programs in the 20th century provided white families with aid for education, home ownership, and small businesses

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