

History article review sample

[Countries](#), [England](#)



Article Review

Article Review

Introduction

The article, “ Managing the Transition to a Free Labor Society: American Interpretations of the British West Indies during the Civil War and Reconstruction” by Nichola Clayton is devoted to the analysis of written sources regarding the slavery abolition during the Civil War in America and American isles. The main idea of the article is shown in the summary: American reaction to the abolition, shift in views of the white population and the political parties of the USA, an attitude of the Republicans to the black population freedom and black farmers. Firstly, the author describes the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica. Problems of slavery and the abolition have always been the actual topic for the researchers of American history. This article, however, contains the specific sources: the Republican press of the 19th century. The author provides different views on the problem of the article, tries to depict the way of reaction of the white landowners to the abolition of the slavery and the economical results of this step.

Method

In the article, Nikola Klayton uses several methods of the research in making final conclusions.

1. Historical reconstruction. First is used in depicting the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865. This method helped the author to show the rebellion itself and its results: around 500 black Jamaicans killed, including prominent mixed race politician George W. Gordon.

2. Methods of the historiography analysis: chronological and the problem analysis. Chronological analysis appears in the part of the article, where the author reviews the Images of Freedom in the British West Indies, 1834–1865 and the Political Lessons of West Indian Emancipation, 1865–1866. Problem method is used to understand the main features of the political process in Republicans during the Civil War and after the abolition. The author indicates such problems for analysis: slavery and its productivity, results of the reform and economic possibilities of the sugar production, farming of the black people and its productivity etc.

3. Methods of the economic analysis: effectiveness of the production, economical approach of the Republicans to the slavery abolition. These methods helped to the author to recover the problems of economic development of the West India in the periods before and after the abolition.

Results/Conclusion

In this article, the author comes to the verified conclusions:

1. Nichola Clayton claims that the main results of the abolition are the following: the Morant Bay rebellion, changes in the British policy towards Jamaica, arguing that the island became incapable of governing itself.
2. West Indian emancipation started an argument and counter-argument regarding the economic consequences of black freedom, and in particular the capacity of former slaves to assimilate the values that contemporary political economy ascribed to free workers.
3. Influence of the American abolition on the British policy regarding slavery and its economic results. Although Morant Bay prompted some northerners to cast a more critical eye over the British West Indies, he maintained the

positive image of former slaves as industrious and acquisitive free laborers, albeit in adverse circumstances.

4. The author stressed the American attitudes towards West Indian emancipation. During and after the war, it continued to reflect partisan and sectional divisions and representations of the Great Experiment. A certain level of the hopes and fears of the black freedom engendered the political divide.

5. The real influence of both American and British attitude to the problem of the black population in West India and the problem of its slavery. Firstly, the British experience clearly had an impact on how Americans evaluated the various policy options available for managing the transition to freedom. Secondly, while black military service during the Civil War was undoubtedly the most important factor in the evolving case for equal rights, the representation of former slaves in both the West Indies and the Union-occupied South as effective and self-improving free laborers enhanced their perceived worthiness as the potential citizens.

6. Changes in views of the British landowners changed mostly because of the American approach to the future of the former slaves.

Research Evaluation – Critical Thinking

This research is a good example of the historical sources analysis. The article involves important sources on topic of the history of slavery in the West India and its abolition. This research is important from the point of view of the historical methods and their usage in the economic analysis. I suggest that this research is a good and well organized way of applying economic methods in the historical research. It is specifically important nowadays as

we use a multidisciplinary approach in the social sciences. Nevertheless, I would use an opposite point of view on the problem of the Democrats and their press. I suppose that this approach would contrast the differences between the political opponents and help us to understand better the way of political changes in American and British authorities and economic elites. Another suggestion is: the author would be more persuasive if he noted the reasons of the Morant Bay rebellion and showed us the results of the economic policy on the farmers who were among rebels.

I agree with the author's thesis. Firstly, he was right to note that the abolition movement in the Caribbean region strengthened the same movement in the USA. Then the author pointed out that the antislavery movement led to the new organization in agriculture production. This new wave was directed to the strengthening of the free black farming. He also stressed that the abolition in Caribbean was a sort of the model to other regions that used slavery and had to fulfill the abolition. The author was right as well when he linked the transition in views of the Republicans with these social and economic changes. It is clear that the abolition has led to the economic crisis in the sugar production. The discussion of its reasons and ways of its overcoming were the main points of the sources that were under author's study. The reader clearly understands that the main features of the discussion and the political change concerned the economic issues instead the questions of humanism and human approach to the dependence of the black people to the white landowners.

This research opens the way to the further study of the problem of past-war relations in West India and the problem of the USA and West India economic

development after the abolition of slavery. The topics for further studies could be the following: the Democratic press concerning the Morant Bay rebellion and the abolition, the economic development of the black farmer estates in the West India, the real situation in the region before and just after the Civil War and the abolition.

References

Clayton, N. (2006). Managing the Transition to a Free Labor Society: American Interpretations of the British West Indies during the Civil War and Reconstruction. *American Nineteenth Century History*, 7(1), 89-108.