

The old view of  
slavery in the u.s.  
was that it was  
economically ine

[History](#)



The paper "The Economic Reasons That Would Have Put an End to Slavery in the USA" is a spectacular example of a term paper on history. Slavery in the nineteenth and twentieth century was used by the Americans as a means of free labor though it was not literally free. The US government abolished the practice since they regarded it as efficient and backward. However, some famous scholars argued otherwise. Considering the conditions and the overlooked facts, they pointed out that slavery had some economic advantage and should not have been abandoned. This issue brought debate, and other scholars argued otherwise.

This study tries to explain how slavery could have been transformed into freedom without merely abandoning it. This means considering the work that was done by the slaves and making better policies. The study is quite narrow in that it only explains the usefulness of the slaves in terms of agricultural activity.

The analysis considers the work done by the slaves and compares them with the free men. It also tries to explain the factors that determined the agricultural output as a measure of the effectiveness of slaves, like the working hours, strategies used, type of plant/livestock, and working intensity among many other factors. This tries to find out if there were any economic conditions that would have put an end to slavery.

### Analysis

The slaves did a lot of work as compared to free men. Their outputs were very high, and they were able to withstand long working hours, harsh weather conditions, and poor living standards among other difficulties. These men were forced to work and had no motivation to work in firms. Suppose

these men were free and some consideration was offered to motivate them to work harder. Wouldn't they be highly productive and efficient? Fogel and Engerman (1977) defined efficiency and argued that slaves were efficient. Fogel and Engerman used a geometric index of the relative factor productivity to measure the contribution of slaves to the total production of firms. The northern and southern indexes derived, assumed that some factors were equal like the distribution of men, women, and children; the land quality etcetera. This was a framework for comparison between the free people and the slaves. The slaves worked for more hours than the free men (generally from sunrise to sunset). They also worked with a higher intensity per unit hour than the free men. This is evident from the study done by Fogel and Engerman.

Furthermore, the slaves were engaged to more domestic work than free men. This shows that there was a lot of inefficiency in measuring the productivity of the slaves. There are some criticisms about the measurement criteria since they used the output. Between 1857 and 1860, there was a boom in the market for cotton and demand was very high. This raised the prices and revenues acquired, thus, the output compared with the north could have been biased.

From a subjective point of view, through social interactions, the slaves could have turned into free men and start behaving as free men. It would be difficult to separate them from the other free men. This means that they would find this opportunity as an avenue for freedom and less work. This would then reduce their efficiency. However, the managers could adopt policies to create a different motivational force to drive them. This includes

payment of wages, provision of better working conditions, health facilities and better living standards.

Fogel and Angerman used land values instead of rental land rates. This left out the factor of land depletion. Some parts of the land could have been depleted than others thus; the measurement of land productivity could have been erroneous since their study assumed that there was no much variation in land productivity. Since the production was large scale and widespread, I would argue that the differences balanced in some way and that the total difference in the influence of the productivity index by land was minimal. Major factors were actually labor and the farming methods used.

Jacob Metzger and John Olson did a study and found out that slaves worked for fewer hours per year than the free men. However, other studies showed that the slaves worked with high efficiency. They also showed that slaves could work for more days in winter than free men. This helped increase their outcome. According to the thesis of this study, there is a proof that slaves could work more and at harsh weather conditions thus, their productivity is higher than that of free men.

### Conclusion

The analysis shows that there is more room for study into the issue, though we overlooked the adoption of more recent technologies, that are cost-effective and less labor-intensive than the traditional ones. According to current laws and regulations, there are laws that fight for worker's rights and unions that empower them. Slaves would then get the power to return home or demand compensation for their work after passing of these laws. The use of these slaves would bring conflict between the locals (free men) and the

slaves. These factors are enough proof that the idea could have been viable, but with time, the long-run results would be hazardous. This is due to evolution in the agricultural production industry.