

Slavery in the united states



In the United States there were one million three hundred thousand black slaves in the middle of the second decade of the nineteenth century, out of a total of eight and a half million inhabitants. Only about two hundred thousand blacks were free.

The slaves did not enjoy any civil right in the nation that had been a pioneer in their recognition and guarantee. They could be transferred or sold as a thing.

They could not exercise any legal action: contracts, marriage or ownership.

The personal situation varied depending on the character and treatment of their owners. Many slaves tried to go to the North. Only in Canada could they feel safe.

The slave trade had been abolished at the beginning of the 19th century, but the South needed a constant flow of slave labor. The constant increase in demand caused the value of the slaves. It is estimated that by 1860 a slave could be worth about \$ 2, 000.

The economy of the South was based on the system of cotton and tobacco plantations, supported by slave labor. All the wealth of this part of the United States was generated thanks to slavery. The economy and society were dominated by an oligarchy of landowning families, immensely rich and did not question the use of slaves to maintain and increase their wealth and power. Associated with this, a certain mentality was generated, which was based in the first place on a British aristocratic social origin in front of the whites of the North.

The southern aristocracy also elaborated an entire ideological construction to

justify the existence of slavery. Their approaches mixed arguments with others of religious type.

The blacks, always according to this theory, would be inferior to the whites in intelligence. For their part, the poor whites of the South also defended the existence of slavery because it. In the North, blacks were not slaves, but they suffered from discriminatory and segregationist legislation: restriction of political rights and different public spaces. Even so, those States were anti-slavery and there the fight against slavery began. The American Colonization Society failed in its attempt to repatriate blacks to Africa. The American Anti-Slavery Association founded in 1833, and the main objective was the abolition of slavery. Antislavery began to permeate the northern society, in conjunction with other causes, such as the emancipation of women, both efforts to create a new and more egalitarian model of society.

Between 1835 and 1860, the social and economic models of the North and the South collided. The North, linked to the Republicans, opposed the southern slave system and its plantation economic system, considering it antiquated. The South, on the other hand, defended its interests. The economic issue is very important to understand the disagreements between the North and the South. The southern economic model of plantation needed free trade policies to be able to sell cotton easily with the growth of European textile industrial demand. For its part, the North needed to defend and protect its industrial products from British competition. But, in addition, there are other more complex economic issues in the relations between the North and the South.

Slavery had clear ethical, social and economic dimensions. In 1820 the compromise was reached, through the well-known Masson-Dixon line, to delimit the slave states of those that were not. In 1854 it was approved that it would be the citizens who would make the decision on the character of each State. That caused a strong conflict in Kansas.

The Republicans, decidedly antislavery, managed to take the presidency in 1860 to Abraham Lincoln, against the Democratic candidate, Breckinridge, defender of the slave cause. A month after the proclamation of the new president, South Carolina proclaimed that the Union had been dissolved and opened the slope for which other southern states filmed. Lincoln was not willing for the Union to break. The war did not take long to explode.

In 1863, Lincoln passed the Proclamation of Emancipation, by which all slaves of the Confederate States were freed. Slavery would end the war, but the situation of the black population would not improve substantially.