

# Tariffs And Slavery

Posted on February 8, 2021 by Al Benson Jr.

Member, Board of Directors, Confederate Society of America

The professional South-haters among us, and their number, thanks to horrendous “education” is legion, insist that the War for Southern Independence aka the War of Northern Aggression, was only fought so the South could keep her slaves and for no other reason. Indeed, those folks do not even want to consider looking at any other reason for that war. Other reasons would interfere with their anti-South agenda and so no other reason than slavery for that war need ever apply because it will never be considered.

I have run into these anti-South zealots over the years. Some have even accused me of defending the South so we would be able to reinstitute slavery here should we ever desire to. What balderdash! No one in his right mind wants to reinstitute slavery—here or anywhere else—except maybe some of the political types in Washington via the programs they plan to institute by some of their legislation they hope we are all too dumb to figure out.

Awhile back Dr. Clyde Wilson did an article on <https://www.abbevilleinstitute.org> called *Why The War Was Not About Slavery*. Dr. Wilson is a historian and an expert in his field so he knows whereof he writes. His article states, in part, “Let’s consider the war and slavery. .Again and again I encounter people who say that the South Carolina secession ordinance mentions the defense of slavery and that one fact proves beyond argument that the war was caused by slavery. The first states to secede did mention a threat to slavery as a motive for secession. They also mentioned decades of economic exploitation and the seizure of the common government for the first time ever by a sectional party declaredly hostile to the Southern states. Were they to be a permanently exploited minority, they asked? This was significant to people who know their fathers and grandfathers had founded the Union for the protection and benefit of ALL the states.”



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Dr. Wilson continued: "It is no surprise that they mentioned potential interference with slavery as a threat to their everyday life and their social structure. Only a few months before, John Brown and his followers had attempted just that. They murdered a number of people including a free black man who was a respected member of the Harpers Ferry community and a grand-nephew of George Washington because Brown wanted Washington's sword as a talisman. In Brown's baggage was a constitution making him dictator of a new black nation and a supply of pikes to be used to stab to death the slave-owner and his wife and children." Bet your high school "history" books forgot to fill you in on some of that didn't they?

It was noted by Dr. Wilson that slavery was not under any real threat if they just stayed in the Union. Lincoln had already told them that. He had told them that he had no intention of bothering slavery where it already existed so the idea of the Southern states seceding so they could just keep their slaves is beyond ludicrous.

Another interesting article appeared on <https://www.mightytaxes.com> dealt with the Corwin Amendment, which was the original version of the 13th Amendment. This article noted that "The Corwin Amendment not only protected the institution of slavery, but included language to make itself unamendable so that no future amendment to the Constitution could undo it. Essentially this first version of the 13th Amendment secured slavery as a permanent institution in America." And who, might you ask, was this man the amendment was named after? None other than Thomas Corwin, *a congressman from Ohio!* That's right, Ohio-*not* the heart of Dixie! That could be one reason you never see this dealt with in the "history" books. Had Mr. Corwin been from Alabama rather than Ohio you can bet this would have made it into the "history" books? But the information that a Northerner had introduced an amendment to perpetuate slavery was



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something the court historians long ago decided you didn't need to be aware of. So they made sure you weren't.

This same article quoted Charles Dickens when he said "The Northern onslaught upon slavery was no more than a piece of specious humbug designed to conceal its desire for economic control of the Southern states." I'd say that was a pretty accurate statement.

The article also observed "As you can see, in early 1861 the institution of slavery was secure in America, and Abolitionists were still largely a far-left group of 'crazy liberals,' so why go to war? Well, **taxes** of course. Just before Lincoln took office departing President Buchanan signed a tariff even worse than the Tariff of Abomination of 1832. The new tax in 1861 was called the **Morrill Tariff**, and it was the highest tariff in American history, **taxing imports at over 45%**, with iron products taxed at 50%! Victorious Republicans cheered the heavy taxes that benefited the Northern industrialists who backed Lincoln. **In Lincoln's inaugural address he made no mention of ending slavery, but did promise to collect high taxes in imports in the South under all circumstances and without exception...**The fuse had been lit on the American Civil War. **While the North was willing to live with slavery in the South, there would be no such concession on taxes.** The forts in Southern ports would be used to enforce tariffs and collect taxes even if the South seceded."

Lincoln wanted his pound of financial flesh from the South no matter what. Now, again, I realize facts like this get in the way of the South-haters' "It was all about slavery" agenda and to perpetuate that agenda they cannot afford to be confused with the facts so they ignore them. To paraphrase the comments from a former Obama flunky—"never let a bad agenda to to waste!" And they haven't, nor do they ever intend to.

