Slavery VS Factory Worker

What is slavery? A Closer Look

Slavery is a system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold. The people who own slaves control where they live and the jobs they perform. Often slaves were severely punished for not following a master’s orders, working too slowly, or attempting to run away. Slave owners would make slaves work from sunrise to sunset, have them live in wooden shacks and give them to eat just enough to get through the day. Typically, the treatment of slaves was harsh and inhumane. People living as slaves were regulated by legally authorized violence. Terror was the main motivation for slaves to keep on going. Frequent flogging (beaten with a stick as punishment) reminded every slave of the penalty for inefficient labor, disorderly conduct, or refusal to accept the authority of a superior.

No choice No Freedom No Money No money

Slavery in the United States lasted as a legal institution until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. It had its origins with the first English colonization of North America in Virginia in 1607, although African slaves were brought to Spanish Florida as early as the 1560s. Most slaves were black and were held by whites, although some Native Americans and free blacks also held slaves; there was a small number of white slaves as well. Slaves were spread to the areas where there was good quality soil for large plantations of high value cash crops (crop that is considered easily marketable), such as cotton, sugar, and coffee. Since profit was the main motivating factor for a plantation owner, buying a slave, securing a lifetime of wage free labor, proved to be a popular labor solution. The majority of slaveholders (owner of slaves) were in the southern United States, where most slaves were engaged in an efficient machine-like system of agriculture, with farms of fifteen or more slaves proving to be far more
productive than farms without slaves. Slaves were thought to work more efficiently if guarded by a managerial class called overseers to ensure that the slaves did not waste a second of movement. From 1654 until 1865, slavery for life was legal within the boundaries (limits) of much of the present United States. Labor was used to pay the costs of transporting people to the colonies. By the 18th century, court ruling established the racial basis of the American incarnation (acceptance) of slavery to apply to chiefly to Black Africans and people of African descent, and occasionally to Native Americans. The south had a significantly high number and proportion of slaves in the population because of the initial success of tobacco as cash crop in the southern colonies, it’s labor-intensive character caused planters to import more slaves for labor by the end of the 17th century that did the northern colonies. As the demand for cotton fabric increased in Europe, the main crop in the south shifted from tobacco to cotton in the early 1800s. Raw cotton was shipped to Northern textile (fabric) factories, creating in interdependence between the North and South that drove the US economy. Still, Northerners began to question the morality of the institution of slavery. Slavery was one of the principal issues leading to the American Civil War. After the Union prevailed in the war, slavery was abolished throughout the United States with the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The Life of a Factory Worker

Factory workers included men, women, and children. The hours were long and the pay was very low. Having to work 9-12 hours a day, six days a week, resulted in little energy left over so most often time after work was used to sleep. They didn’t have much time to socialize or to be with family and friends. Large numbers of people were cramped
together in bustling, noisy factories filled with noise, smoke and dirt. Poor working conditions resulted in sickness and bad health. Workers wore their normal day-to-day clothes. In this era, clothes were frequently loose creating an inevitable hazard. Many workers were caught and pulled into heavy machinery. Accidents in the work place were very common in the factories. If the workers could not perform well, they were easily replaced, so the managers did not care for their safety. Many owners were not very charitable as they believed that the workers at their factories should be grateful for having a job. Managers were very harsh and controlling, strictly supervising workers. They persistently enforced regulations with fixed long hours of work and a system of fines and dismissals, leading to the elimination of slacking and unions (labor rights groups). All of the workers were forbidden by law to form any type of union that would raise wages. This type of collaboration was considered to be criminal conspiracy.

The life of a factory worker Overworked Underpaid

As demand for cotton fabric increased in Europe during the early 1800s Northern textile (fabric) factories became profitable, driving the Northern economy. Raw cotton from the south was spun into threads and spooled. Then spools of thread were woven together with looms to create fabric. Complex, worker-operated machines were invented that increased production and profitability. New immigrants (person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country) were chosen because factory owners thought it would be easier to control them. Women and children were especially favored in factories since they had fewer work alternatives, increasing their reliance on their factory jobs. All of the workers were treated similar to prisoners. Children were employed for four simple reasons: there were plenty of them.
in orphanages and they could be replaced easily if accidents did occur, they were much cheaper than adults as

a factory owner did not have to pay them as much; they were small enough to crawl under machinery to tie up broken

threads and they were young enough to be bullied. Factories rarely kept any records of the ages of children and adults who worked for them, due to the fact that new immigrants had little documentation. As employment in cities could be difficult to get, many people lied about their age. Under this system, children in particular suffered. Children were cooped up in a heated atmosphere, debarred (prohibited) the necessary exercise, remaining in one position for a series of hours. Hard factory labor proved to be torturous for both child and adult alike. During their long days of tedious work, they must have daydreamed about a better future.

**Activity**

**Compare and Contrast**

Use an excerpt from each text that best summarizes the life of both a slave and factory worker. Below the excerpt, use your own words to describe what it would have felt like to have been a slave or factory worker.

**Draw**

What similarities do you find? Draw a symbolic representation of the similarities of a slave and a factory worker’s life. If you are not an artist, you may write your answer.
SLAVERY VS FACTORY WORKER

What is slavery? A Closer Look

Slavery is a system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold. This system was once common in many parts of the world. People were often forced to work for extreme wages or no wages at all. Some people were even punished for not following a master's orders, working too slowly, or attempting to escape. Some owners would make their workers work from sunrise to sunset, and they lived in small, dark, and dirty homes. People were regulated by legally enforced measures. Teachers were the same for both slaves and free people in school, but free children were usually punished less than slaves for the same actions.

NO FREEDOM NO MONEY

Slavery is the United States had also a legal institution until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. It had its origins in the early English settlements of North America in the 16th century, although African slaves were brought to Spanish Florida as early as the 1500s. Most slaves were black and white and held by whites, although some Native Americans and few blacks and held by whites, there were a smaller number of white slaves as well. Slaves were used to produce crops and raise livestock. Some were trained to be skilled in agriculture, with a focus on iron and metalworking. African slaves were considered property, similar to livestock and crops. They were forced to work for long hours in unhealthy conditions, and their wages were low. Slaves were often punished for minor infractions, and the punishments were often severe, including whipping, flogging, and even death.

The life of a factory worker

Factory workers had less pay and were treated poorly. They were often forced to work for long hours with little or no breaks. The work was often dangerous and dirty, and the conditions were often overcrowded and unsanitary. Many factory workers were children, and they were often forced to work long hours to support their families. The working conditions were often unsafe, and many workers were injured or died on the job. Many factory workers were poorly paid, and they were often exploited by their employers.

OVERWORKED UNDERPAID

As demand for cotton and tobacco increased in the early 19th century, Southern factory workers became overworked and underpaid. The work was often grueling and dangerous, and the conditions were often unsanitary. Many workers were children, and they were often forced to work long hours to support their families. The working conditions were often unsafe, and many workers were injured or died on the job. Many factory workers were poorly paid, and they were often exploited by their employers.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Use an outline from each text that best summarizes the life of both a slave and a factory worker. Below the example, use your own words to describe what it would be like to have been a slave on a factory worker.

SLAVE

How it would have been in your own words.

FACTORY WORKER

How it would have been in your own words.

DRAW

Do you understand? Draw a venn diagram to compare the similarities and differences of a slave and a factory worker.