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When the United States of America was created as an independent country at the end of the Revolutionary War against Great Britain, the roots of an entirely new American identity took hold. Though taking influence from its former parent country, the United States began its own system of representative government. Furthermore, the American identity (shaped in the early years of 1775 to 1830) incorporated the ideals of agrarian farming, laissez-faire economic standpoint, and capitalism. Religion, though not a primary influence on the government, also contributed to the shaping of this identity. While this largely benefited American citizens, another group in the United States ^{was} affected in other ways. African slaves and their American-born children were ignored by the Constitution (which, in its original form, only referred to slaves as "other persons"), but the contradictory nature of the new American identity both led to ^{greater} freedom and more widespread bondage. Slaves and freedmen alike suffered under, ^{were} exploited, and coped with the aspects of agrarian farming and agriculture in general, capitalism, and Christianity in America.

The American Revolution began the contradictory nature of the American identity as it applied to blacks. The event that began the independence of the American personality also triggered the first opportunities for freedom and assimilation for Black Americans. For example, in Virginia

Context

transition

classic liberal

transition

thesis

realms of suffering

topic sentence

17 of Am. Rev.

nuance

Conclusion

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1775, Lord ~~Dunmore~~ ^{Doc A (purpose) (Context)} Dunmore, British Governor, declared that all slaves ~~and~~ (as well as indentured servants) were free (provided they were the property of rebelling colonists) and should report to fight for Britain. In addition, blacks fought for the opposite side. An example of this occurred in Vermont in the early days of the war. Black soldiers fought bravely against the British with Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Men. This event caused the state of Vermont, though technically it was not ^{yet} a state ~~yet~~, to pre-emptively ban slavery. Another piece of evidence support black participation in the Constitutional Army is shown in ^{Doc B} Paul Cuffe's petition, in which he notes that ^(purpose with pers) black people helped the colonial cause despite their lack of protection and equality under the law. It is significant to note that this occurred in Massachusetts one of the states that would later proclaim slavery illegal in the emancipation (or manumission) trend ^{(Doc C (Context))} that followed in the late 1780s and early 1790s. However, despite acting initially as a force for freedom, this war would eventually lead to the Constitution that would ignore slavery in Southern states and the issue of black franchise. In addition, the formation of the new government nullified the previous Proclamation of 1763, which limited American expansion. This expansion would be another

O.K.

Doc C (Context)

O.K.

contrast (nuance)
nuance

segue to next q

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Factor affecting slaves. — you do not yet know that — em dash

As the early country grew — so did the desire for expansion. A factor affecting this is the importance of farming/agriculture on American life. The country's first secretary of state and later third president, Thomas Jefferson, having idealized the yeoman farmer — a small landowner who farmed to little profit. However, another type of farming occurred — ~~that~~ plantation agriculture. This widescale type of farming required great amount of land and great amounts of slaves. Greater expansion of the United States allowed for this. However, this, too, was contradictory in nature. The Old Northwest (Ohio, ~~Indiana~~, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan) was established as entirely free by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In addition, the Mason-Dixon line and later Ohio River became the line distinguishing free from slave states (this can be seen by the map of slavery in 1830 America, which shows greater slave concentration in slave states). This division would be prove helpful for freedmen and most importantly, minority slaves, who would migrate north to escape masters and hope for ^{employment} job opportunities in industry. However, the spread of this new country also led to greater slave states and

Doc context

spread of slavery

W/S (decline of slavery?)

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not yet
o.k.

greater slaves as evidenced by the Missouri Compromise of ~~1800~~ 1820, which allowed slavery in that state despite its location above the Mason Dixon line.

All reports

Another significant aspect of American identity was capitalism, as described in Adam Smith's 1776 book Wealth of Nations. This was again a contradictory ~~factor~~ factor, it led to the ability of slaves to earn their freedom through hard work, as shown in Venture Smith's Narrative of 1798. However it also established

due F
✓ compare context

laissez-faire style of economic ~~government~~ governing, which reduced possible interference by the government in ~~slave~~ the sale of slaves. In addition, industry in the north, founded on ideals of capitalism, led to harsh working conditions for freedmen.

Protestantism became a big aspect of American culture through the first and second Great Awakenings. Southern masters used Christianity to justify their ownership of slaves and encourage passivity and obedience in their slaves. However, this had an ^{a converse effect as he} overall contradicting effect, slaves, blending African traditions with Christianity, used the religion as a unifying force of identity and a source of hope. One of the conspirators from Gabriel Prosser's 1800 planned rebellion cited

due
context
purpose
due

6
(with pass context)

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religion as the source of his belief that their rebellion was justified. In addition, it acted as an assurance of eventual freedom through belief. The community aspect of African-American religion is seen in the painting Negro Methodist Meeting in Philadelphia in the 1790s.

Overall, the American identity had very contradictory effects on black Americans and slaves. The expansion of land, as influenced by agriculture, forces of capitalism, and religion all acted in this manner. Even the very founding of the American identity ~~acted~~ had this effect.

In addition, the American identity had very negative aspects that would harm black Americans. Chief among these was the racism blatantly evident in both the North and the South. Used to

"empower" poor whites and continue dominant, wealthy white control, racism would often prevent freedmen from obtaining jobs in factories or on smaller farms for pay. This uniform racism would lead to

movements of blacks "returning" to Africa, such as Monroë's movement of freedmen to Monroëville (now Monrovia) as described in the letter to ministers from the Vermont ~~and~~ Colonization Society.

However, despite this uniform racism, the contradictions of the American identity revealed in this trend

conclusion

psych. wage

doc

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H
(not full context)

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foreshadowed the sectionalism of the antebellum period that would lead to Civil War

extended thesis

