Slavery Versus Freedom: Analytical Essay

In 1842, the last slave had died in Rhode Island, finally destroying slavery in the North of the United States. It was a rough ride getting there as slavery was supposed to end in 1787 in the North, but America got it done. As George Washington himself once put it, “I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery.” The Northern states followed Washington as they created the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 prohibiting slavery in the mid and Northwest. However, free blacks did not have the same freedoms or rights as whites. Blacks were somewhat free in the years just before the Civil War. This can be shown by looking at three areas of society: social, political, and economical.

Northern blacks were somewhat free in the area of economics. In a graduation speech, a young African American stated, “Why should I shrive hard... No one will employ me...” The man had a good point. The North just said they were free because they had a right to get a job, but they didn’t put any restrictions that allowed African Americans to have the same opportunities as whites. Not only did owners give black men disadvantages in job hunting, but life itself took away most of the opportunities for blacks and gave them to whites. Blacks would always make a bad first impression (which can determine whether you get the job or not) because of their skin color, not because of what they do or their background. They were simply judged on a covering. This limitation of freedom because it determined the lives of African Americans with one look instead of the actual interview.

Northern blacks were somewhat free in the area of politics. According to Leon Litwack, slaves were only allowed to vote in New England States without restrictions (besides Connecticut). From inaccurate votes, America’s legislatures were elected by 10% of America’s population (women could not vote either). Charles Mackay makes another claim when he states, “...pay taxes and perform duties... he shall not be free to... represent us in the legislature....” If whites were forcing blacks to pay taxes and not allowing them to serve in legislatures, aren’t they forsaking the policies that built this country (no taxation without representation)? This restriction of freedom was important because it demonstrated how whites believed blacks were inferior to them just because of the color of their skin.

Northern blacks were somewhat free in the area of sociality. In a photograph of a black church, the illustrator shows the segregation of blacks. In the illustration, there is an all-black church which shows how blacks could not go to the same places as whites. Also, in a travel journal written by Charles Mackay, he states, “...the language of the free North... We shall not make the black man a slave... but we shall not associate with him.” This restriction of freedom was important because it showed how the North violated the first amendment and did not allowing blacks their freedom of assembly with whomever they like (blacks could not mingle with whites).

During the years of the Civil War, blacks were somewhat free in the North. In politics, sociality, and economics, Blacks had some freedoms, but many restrictions. Most people don’t research the matter of how free Northern Blacks were. We just think “there was slavery in the South and freedom in the North,” but that was not true. If you were in America, England, Spain, or in the middle of no-where, you were going to be judged based on your skin color. We don’

understand what African Americans went through. Here in Eastvale, you can look around a classroom or even a group of friends and see the different skin colors, cultures, and religions. We need to continue the thought of just looking at two people of different skin colors and knowing they are the same without having to think about it.