Slavery has been a fact of life throughout history, and no race has been left untouched by its shackles. When the colonies were first being settled, labor was hard to come by, and it was procured any way possible. For some, it was through indentured servitude. For others, it was through slavery.

In the early years of the United States, many people came over the ocean as indentured servants. They could not afford the money for passage on their own. Instead they would sign a contract agreeing to work a certain number of years for the one who could pay. The term of servitude usually lasted 3-7 years. While many white people came over with that arrangement, several blacks did as well. A few of the first Africans who were sold on those shores were given similar contracts. While they might be treated like slaves, it was bearable because it was for a short time. However, it was not long before all the new black arrivals were designated as slaves for life. As that changed, slavery spread to all the colonies.

The Northern states did not become so heavily dependent on slavery. The rolling, sometimes rough ground did not lend itself to large plantations. It was useful for industrialization. Hills and rivers often provided the location and power for machines to produce goods. This led to a reduced need for slave labor. As the need was reduced, so was the tolerance for slavery.

In the warmer Southern states, the economy was agriculturally based. Slave labor was extremely useful on the plantations or farms with labor-intensive crops. Even so, by the end of the eighteenth century, many people expected slavery to die a natural death. This was especially true after the international slave trade was abolished in 1807.

One simple invention changed that forever. Until this time cotton was grown only along the coast or other places with access to a lot of water. The cotton boles were easy to separate from their seeds. The other variety of cotton which grew in less watered areas was too hard to
separate by hand. It cost more to feed and clothe slaves than the plantation owner would get from profit.

6 Eli Whitney's cotton gin was a simple machine that could do the work of 50 slaves! Suddenly many plantation owners wanted to grow cotton, and they wanted slaves to work in the fields. Cotton growers made huge profits. Slave labor was in greater demand than ever before. More and more plantations were springing up. Each of the planters began growing all the cotton they could, full of hope in getting a large share of the rich cotton market.

7 Since slaves could no longer be imported, the price of existing slaves skyrocketed. When slavery was generally thought of, it was merely considered a time honored tradition. Slaves were chattel. They were possessions, just as animals and land were. While the cost of the slaves had risen, many planters were still indifferent to their lives.

8 The continuation of slavery in the new territories was a key issue of strife. The slave owners wanted to continue the same lifestyle they had known. While many Northerners were against slavery in principle, they had one fear. If all the slaves were freed, would they come north to compete for jobs? They wanted to protect their livelihoods.

9 After the emancipation, a large number of the southern slaves did go north. Many of the plantations had been devastated by war. They could not afford wages, and many of the former slaves wanted to get away from the memories.

10 Slavery had been a financial boon for some, but the price was far too high for many others. An economy based on misery and callous brutality carries the seeds of its own destruction.

Name
______________________________________  Date  ___________________

Slave Economy

1. What two methods were used to increase the labor base in the colonies?
   - Increased population
   - Slaves
   - Advertising for jobs

2. By choosing mainly blacks to be sold as slaves, what did that infer?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
3. Why was slavery not important to the economy of the Northern states?
   - A. Farms were too small
   - B. They were not seeking large profits
   - C. Indentured servants were prevalent
   - D. Industry didn't need them

4. Which of these was not a reason why cotton wasn't grown at first?
   - A. Too labor intensive to grow
   - B. Not cost effective
   - C. It needed lots of water to grow
   - D. Too hard to clean

5. The Southern economy was based on,
   - A. Agriculture
   - B. Slavery
   - C. Industry
   - D. Home industry

6. Which of these best summarize the economics of the North and South?
   - A. Mechanized/Pastoral
   - B. Freedom/Oppression
   - C. Paid workers/Slaves
   - D. Industrial/Agricultural

7. What was the concern some Northerners had regarding the freed slaves?
   - A. That they would not find work at all
   - B. That they would compete for jobs in the South
   - C. That they would compete for jobs in the North
   - D. That they would stay in

8. What did the Emancipation Proclamation mean?
   - A. Freeing of slaves
   - B. Enslavement
   - C. War
   - D. Taxation
Slave Economy
What factors made slavery a less desirable method of acquiring labor in the North?

______________________________________________  __________________

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Name  Date

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Write a paragraph using all of the words that are given.

1. arrangement, strife, heavily, bearable

______________________________________________  __________________

______________________________________________  __________________

Name  Date

______________________________________________  __________________

(Key 1 - Answer ID # 0715551)
2. servitude, boon, dependent, death, provided