

Slavery and Indentured Servitude: Are they forms of immigration?
Draft one

The dictionary definition of immigration states “the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country”, which says nothing about whether immigration, to be considered immigration, has to be of free will. So, technically speaking, slavery is immigration because slaves were brought to live permanently in a new country. This also makes indentured servitude a form of immigration.

While discussing these concepts with my sister (Serena), she brought up the term “natural immigration”. While slavery and indentured servitude are forms of immigration they aren’t natural immigration. Though slavery is a lot of what gives modern America diversity, it was at a huge cost, people were kidnapped from their homes and denied every form of basic human rights.

Chattel slavery, or traditional slavery is when a person is treated less than human, and is owned by another person. Slavery was based on the belief that African American people had smaller brains than white people and didn’t deserve the privileges white people had (and still have today). People also believed that people of color had uncontrollable sex drives and were dangerous, specifically to white women. As we know now, none of this is true. Slaves are servants who are treated like animals and are bought and sold like objects. In colonial times, slavery was considered acceptable and was widely practiced. Slaves were brought on ships from Africa and during the ride, were kept chained together in stalls. Almost all slaves never learned how to read or write or got much education at all. This was because the slave owners knew the slaves were more dangerous if they were literate. Some slaves were very valuable, young healthy males being the most valuable. Though slaves were of value, their happiness didn’t effect value, so their treatment was horrible. Slaves were whipped, lynched , raped, publicly humiliated and much more. Punishments were brutal.

Indentured servitude is when someone came to the colonies to start a new life, but they didn't have enough money to go, so they came to the colonies anyway and worked off their debt. Indentured servants were entered into a contract with land owners, often for around 7 years. The servants would then be provided with food, water and a place to stay while they worked for the landowner. Once the contract was completed the owner gave the servant some money and a small piece of land to start their new life, there were instances where indentured servants were paid for their services there were also many accounts of servants not being paid, or worse. .

Indentured servants didn't have value the way slaves did and couldn't be sold for money, sometimes the landowners would intentionally kill the indentured servants just as the contract was ending, so they didn't have to give up land.

Out of fear of the indentured servants and slaves joining together to form a rebellion, owners would make indentured servants to be above slaves. They would tell the servants that they were more important, and the servants clung on to this, having nothing else to feel good about.

In December of 1865 slavery was officially abolished in America. The civil war how slavery ended. Some prominent figures in the abolitionist movement are: William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Beecher.

In modern times, immigration is treated like it's optional, when really it's usually not. Modern immigrants often immigrate to escape an unsafe situation. In the constitution, the terms "people" and "person" are used, not citizen, so even undocumented immigrants have constitutional rights. Though the right to pursuit of happiness is not written directly in the constitution (it's in the declaration of independence), it is treated as a constitutional right in court. Every person on American land also has the right to life. Sending immigrants back to unsafe situations is unconstitutional. People trying to come into our country have recently been separated from their families at the borders when trying to reach safety here. In the times of slavery, families were often separated, even children as young as eighteen months old were separated from their families. I cease to understand how anyone could ever justify

ripping families apart the way the American government does. How did we not learn from the mistakes of slavery?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1narr3.html>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/05/31/barbaric-americas-cruel-history-of-separating-children-from-their-parents/>

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/slavery-abolished-in-america>