



Revised History

It's Those #\$\$%&() Tariffs!

By Al Benson Jr., July 30th, 2022

I have had Yankee sympathizers howl at me over the years when I brought up the forbidden subject of tariffs as a major reason for the War of Northern Aggression. One of them verbally shouted at me “Tariffs are a dead letter. Period!” He then went on to rant about how slavery was THE cause of the war—to which I say—bovine fertilizer!

Many of these people are nothing but propagandists who have a vested interest in promoting the slavery narrative. That narrative sells books to the uninitiated, and it pays for good speakers’ fees. And it pays because it skirts the real issues safely.

Gene Kizer, in his previously mentioned book has noted: “There were two components of the North’s economic success. The first was simply the luck of having an agricultural region as successful as the South to do for. The South was vast, warm, fertile, and productive. Southerners were as ambitious as Northerners and wanted to make money too. They did so with agriculture. It had been this way since Jamestown when colonists found they could make fortunes with tobacco, then later when the cotton gin made short staple cotton profitable. Per capita income in the South in the years before the war was roughly the same as in the North. So, supplying the successful South with goods and services, and shipping for the South, gave Northerners jobs.”

Kizer continued: “The second was the utterly unfair taxation of the South, for the direct benefit of the North: 3/4ths of the federal treasury was supplied by the South, yet 3/4ths of federal tax revenue was spent in the North. It was mostly Southerners who had to pay the high tariffs that protected Northern businesses and industry. It was a direct transfer out of the South and into the pockets of Northerners... Think about the American Revolution and the taxation without representation issue. Those taxes were miniscule compared to 1860 when millions of dollars per year were flowing straight out of the South and into the pockets of Northerners. Those Northerners had not earned a penny of it. It was through government manipulation that they had managed to get monopoly status for most Northern industries and shipping, which killed competition and allowed Northerners to charge high rates. There was a protective tariff, and bounties and subsidies to Northern businesses that were like tax credits and payments from the federal treasury, even though most of the money in the federal treasury—3/4ths of it—had come from the South.”

Southerners finally woke up and realized they were being shorn like so many sheep, with no way to protect themselves. From that point on, the South would be outvoted by the North and, as Kizer noted: “...any manner of confiscatory economic manipulation could and would continue. The North had four times the white voting population and the Republican Party had rallied them. The North, for the North.” George Washington had warned Americans against sectional political parties and the Republican Party was the party of the North—already pledged against the South!

All this stuff had started right after the War for Independence when Northerners started begging for federal protection to get their industries going so they could then compete with Great Britain. Patriotic Southerners had gone along with it, little realizing its implications for them down the road. Kizer observed that: “It was nothing but Northern greed for other people’s money, and it—not slavery—was the seed that grew into war.”