



GCSE HISTORY

Paper 1A/A: America, 1840–1895: Expansion and consolidation

Interpretations Booklet

Interpretations **A** and **B** for use in answering Questions 01, 02 and 03

Interpretation A Thomas Johnson, from his book, *Twenty-Eight Years a Slave*, published in 1909.

Johnson was born a slave in 1836 in Virginia where he was bought and sold several times. After the Civil War he was freed and moved north, where he became a church minister and eventually a missionary in Africa.

In 1860, there was great excitement over the election of Mr Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. The slaves prayed to God for his success. We knew that he was in sympathy with the abolition of slavery. The election was the signal for a great conflict in which the question was: Shall there be slavery or no slavery in the United States? The South said: Yes, there shall be slavery.

Interpretation B Jefferson Davis, from his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* written in 1881.

Davis was the son of a plantation owner who, in 1845, entered Congress for the state of Mississippi. When Mississippi and six other states left the Union and set up their own Confederate government in 1861, Davis was elected as its President.

The Confederates fought for the defence of a fundamental right to withdraw from a Union which they had, as independent communities, voluntarily entered. On reading what has recently been written, people might be led to the conclusion that the war was caused by efforts on the one side to extend and keep human slavery, and on the other to resist it and establish human liberty. The Southern States and Southern people have been represented as 'defenders' of slavery, and the Northern as the champions of universal freedom. This is a falsehood.

END OF INTERPRETATIONS

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