
It is no accident that a struggle over trade protection was the direct antecedent to the US civil war.

The tobacco and cotton people-owning South had no interest in paying high tariffs to protect infant free Northern industry from cheap imported British manufactures, while the North sought to undermine people-owning so as to break the South's political dominance at Federal level, and thus its ability to impose free trade in goods nationwide from there.

It was not a fair fight. Not only did the South have all those "houses" at stake, but 1860 census data show that as a result, the median wealth of the top 1 percent of Southerners was more than three times that of the top 1 percent of Northerners. *Average free per capita wealth in the Confederate South was double that in the Northern States.*

An unusual set of sectoral preferences on free trade even at the time—as illustrated by the contrast with the British struggle over the Corn Laws in the 1840s—spawned civil war.

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March 24, 2019
