

SLAVE HISTORY STILL NOT ON FRONT PAGE



Life on the plantation of the once glorious South in the U.S. is two-faced. The splendor and luxury of the lucky few is displayed in many local museums, yet the word slavery still seems to be missing in the tour guides' vocabulary.

Slavery is a topic which even today, more than 150 years after its abolition still makes many people uncomfortable. The blessed life of the great 'Southern' families, the luxury they raised their children in, their easy life where everything comes for granted, their magnificent mansions - the experience of being privileged has its appeal even today. Many museums are scattered around the former South and present the life of the fortunate to many visitors. What seems shocking is the fact that only an embarrassing few of these altars to long lost grandeur actually mention the word 'slavery'.

Plantation tourism seems to be attracting considerable attention these days. Many of the museums do admit that they are not consciously trying to ignore slavery. Simply, the subject is so painful and sensitive, they willingly choose not to 'go down that road'. On the other hand, there are a **few museums that deliberately focus on the dark aspect of plantation life** and present it truthfully. Even though this may make many people uncomfortable, slavery is an undeniable historical fact which should be dealt with, faced and understood. Ignoring it is simply not fair. Colonial Williamsburg features many aspects of the old South. In the Benjamin Powell House, visitors may actually observe an actress, dressed as a slave, perform the average day duties of an actual 19th century slave. The experience is surprising to many - especially the children who come here on school trips. It is not pleasant to see what the Southern fame and glory was actually based on.

Museums, that owned up to the past have actually recorded a **massive increase in visitors**. Perhaps, telling the truth is the way to go, after all. The past cannot be undone, though it deserves to be faced - not in the celebrating kind of way, but in the way which simply states: "it's true and we will not turn out back on it'.

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