

Codey Martinez, 8th



How the Thirteenth Amendment Affects My Life.

"I would fight for my liberty so long as my strength lasted, and if the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me." This quote comes from the very popular historical figure, Harriet Tubman. She was a runaway slave that had freed many thousands of other slaves in the pursuit of freedom. The quote shows that she and many other black people just wanted freedom in much the same way our revolutionary forefathers fought for their liberty. The Constitution states that slavery is outlawed via the Thirteenth Amendment, and this law allows those who share my ethnicity to enjoy the freedoms given to other Americans. First, slavery was made illegal in the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. Next, there are so many ways that the abolition of slavery affects me in my daily life and future.

Ever since the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery and the ownership of human beings have been illegal as dictated by the Thirteenth Amendment. According to Amendment XIII, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Abraham Lincoln and the thirty-eighth Congress targeted the slave-owning South with this legislation to free the

African-American slaves living there. While being slaves, they were not allowed to be citizens and therefore were not given any of the rights as other people. They were completely at the whim of their owners. After the Amendment, black people could marry whomever they liked, move freely anywhere in the country, and earn a wage for their work. Laws did not fully legislate that black people were equal until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 but regardless it was much better than being treated as chattel. It was the first and biggest step in the road to equality.

The 13th Amendment affects the life of my family and me massively because it freed those of my ethnicity. Without it, my family and I would be in bondage under the control of a plantation owner. Since I am not a slave, I can go to school and learn to read and write. In addition my education will enable me to understand or even protest injustice in the world around me. I have a voice and I can earn wages just like any other person. I can choose if I want to go work or I can be an employer, too. I can own property, love whom I want, and I have a right to a fair trial instead of an immediate guilty verdict and often harsh beatings. My grandpa and grandma wouldn't have been allowed to move states or towns to see each other. My mom and dad couldn't have loved each other at all because they are different races. The Thirteenth Amendment, therefore, is what allowed me to be born. My work ethic, not my ethnicity, will dictate how far I go in life. Without the first step, that is the Thirteenth Amendment, many opportunities would be closed.

The Constitution states that slavery is illegal in the Thirteenth Amendment. That amendment affects me on a daily basis in various ways. This is because it allows me and my family to decide my life, go where I like, and say what I want without the

supervision of anyone else. For that, I'll always be thankful to live in America where change can and does happen. In the wise words of Abraham Lincoln, "Where slavery is, there liberty cannot be; and where liberty is, there slavery cannot be."

