

North versus South sectionalism

A fictional encounter between a Northerner and a Southerner, 1835

Directions: Use the Word Bank at the bottom to fill in the blanks with key terms. The Word Bank will tell you how many times a particular word will be used. **Make sure to write in pencil** as you may need to change your answer eventually.

One spring day in May 1835, a Northern factory owner (Bill) traveled down to South Carolina on a small vacation. While there, he was impressed with the amount of **agriculture** that South Carolina had. They were growing cotton, rice, squash, and potatoes, just to name a few. While standing in a field admiring the crops, the owner of the field (John) came up to him. Bill commented, "Wow, what an amazing array of crops you have. Up in the North, we like to think that **industry** is the most important way to make money, but down here I guess cotton could be said to be king!"

John replied, "Yes, we do make a lot of money from our cotton. We were doing great until y'all up in the North decided to only care about your own **sectional** interests. You decided years ago to put a **tariff** on Britain's items because they were selling clothes cheaper to Americans than you were. So, it's your fault that Britain raised their prices on their goods. Why didn't you keep life the way it was?"

Bill was astounded at this, but stated in reply, "What in the world are you talking about?" If it weren't for our **industry** and great products up in the North, this country would NOT be great. You only care about making money off cotton so if anyone has **sectional** interests, it is you all! After all, you were the ones who cried like a baby about the **tariff** that was placed on British goods. And what did you do years ago? You decided to **nullify** the law. You called it the **Tariff of Abominations**. Well, I will tell you right here and now, you have no right to say no to a law that the federal government passes. It is like a child disobeying a command of their parents. If you don't like the law, that's too bad!! "

John was about ready to explode with anger, but replied, "Well, I will tell you something. We here in South Carolina have the right to nullify any law that we don't like. We have **states' rights**. If you read the Constitution, you would read that the 10th Amendment gives rights to the states. What I think is that the federal government should stop sticking their noses into matters that are not theirs to decide. If this **tariff** against Britain doesn't work for my state, we can definitely **nullify** it and we don't need any Northerner telling us otherwise.

Bill responded, "Ah, my friend, but that is where you are wrong. The federal government is supreme, not the states. You must obey the law of the land. It is the right thing to do." At this John shook his head and said, "I guess it is easy for you to agree with the federal government when they pass laws that benefit your **sectional interests** and help Northern **industry** become wealthier and wealthier while the South suffers. I don't call that right at all!"

Word Bank

Tariff (3)

sectional (3)

Industry (3)

states' rights (1)

Tariff of Abominations (1)

nullify (3)

Agriculture (1)