

AIM: What was New York State's role on the Underground Railroad?

BACKGROUND: Students will explore upstate New York as a place of communities engaged in resistance. They will use map skills to identify significant centers of resistance and to trace routes on the Underground Railroad. They will read excerpts from memoirs of Reverend Thomas James, Jermain Loguen, Samuel Ringgold Ward and Frederick Douglass. New York State offered a safe haven to many Africans who escaped from slavery and a place where free African Americans could organize politically with White allies to end the slave system and achieve full citizenship. New Yorkers, Black and White, were active participants and national leaders in political campaigns to end slavery and to resist the oppression of Black people. Because of their proximity to Canada, work opportunities, and religious and other social movements, regions of New York State and cities located along the route of the Erie Canal played major roles on the underground railroad and in anti-slavery agitation during the nineteenth century. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, the availability of land in the North country made it a safe haven for free Blacks and escaped slaves who sought a place where they could build families and communities. Abolitionists and those involved in the Underground Railroad felt the injustice of slavery was so great that they were willing to risk their lives.

DO NOW: Play song, "Follow the Drinking Gourd" while students read lyrics. What is the "drinking gourd"? What do you think the song is about?

MOTIVATION: How do we navigate to our destinations today? What are the various methods and technologies available to us when we need to find our way from point A to point B?

ACTIVITIES:

Discuss students' suggestions as to what the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd" is about. Distribute the document explaining the meaning of the song. Students should read and discuss the explanation as a class.

Working with a partner, students look at three maps of Underground Railroad routes on the activity sheet. Answer the ten questions that follow.

Working in teams, answer the questions below and prepare to report on participants in the Underground Railroad.

1. What do these stories have in common? How are they different?
2. In your opinion, who had the most difficult experience? Explain.

SUMMARY: What was the purpose of the Underground Railroad? How did it function? What were some of the routes in New York State?

HOMEWORK / APPLICATION:

1. Read about the code terminology used to communicate on the Underground Railroad. Imagine you were alive in those times and working with the Underground Railroad, construct a letter to another Underground Railroad worker in the North.
2. New York State was an important route on the Underground Railroad. Write additional verses to this song explaining how escaped Africans can safely travel across New York State until they reach Canada.

Lesson developed by Stephanie Sienkiewicz

A. Underground Railroad Routes

A. Underground Railroad Routes in Eastern U.S.



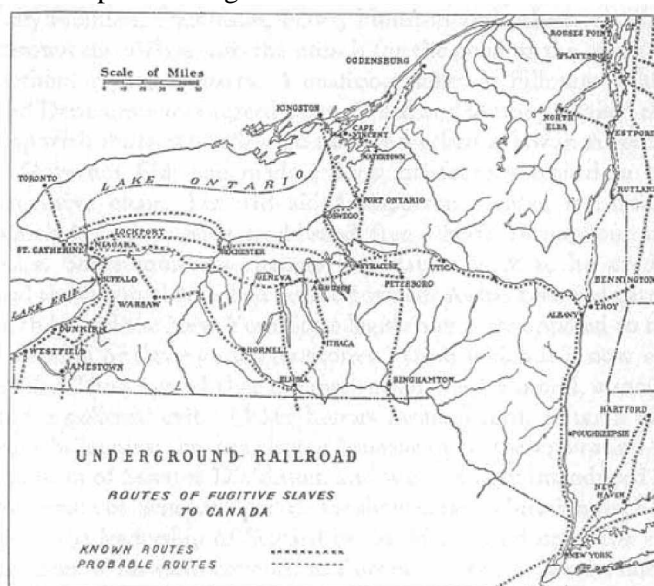
Source: www.fsu.edu/~CandI/ENGLISH/webq/truenorth/Skit.ht

B. Underground Railroad Routes in Northeastern U.S.



Source: www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/map.html

C. Map of Underground Railroad Routes in the NYS



Source: Flick, A., ed. (1933). *History of the State of New York*.

1. In which states could escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad cross the border to Canada?
2. What river did Underground Railroad travelers follow on their route from New York City to Albany?

3. If an escaped slave on the Underground Railroad traveled from Springfield, Illinois, to Chicago, Illinois, how many route options would he/she have to continue north from Chicago?
4. Compare the number of escape routes in Virginia in Map A to the number of escape routes in Virginia in Map B.
5. Follow the Underground Railroad from Albany to Niagara. What are the stops along the way?
6. How many exit routes from Pennsylvania does Map C depict?
7. How many possible routes were there from Binghamton, N.Y., to Kingston, Ontario? Describe the two different routes one could take.
8. How many shipping routes transported escaped slaves along the east coast?
9. Describe a route that a traveler on the Underground Railroad could follow to get from Elmira, N.Y., to Ogdensburg, N.Y.
10. Judging by Map B, what are two Canadian cities that an escaped slave on the Underground Railroad coming from Baltimore would likely end up in?

B. Follow the Drinking Gourd

This song is supposed to contain an oral map of the Underground Railroad. The “drinking gourd” is the star constellation known as the Big Dipper.

When the sun comes up and the first quail calls, follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom, if you follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus- Follow the drinking gourd, follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom, if you follow the drinking gourd.

The river bank will make a mighty good road, the dead trees will show you the way,

Left foot, peg foot, travelin’ on, follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus- Follow the drinking gourd, follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom, if you follow the drinking gourd.

The river ends between two hills, follow the drinking gourd,

There’s another river on the other side, follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus- Follow the drinking gourd, follow the drinking gourd,

For the old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom, if you follow the drinking gourd.

Questions

- 1- Why does the song tell passengers on the Underground Railroad to follow the “drinking gourd”?
- 2- Why would runaway slaves prefer an oral map to a written map?
- 3- What does this song tell us about the experience of enslaved Africans?

C. Underground Railroad Lingo

Information about the movement of escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad needed to be kept in extreme secrecy. For this reason, the transportation methods, routes, stops along the way, and anything else involved were given code names. Since the transport worked much like a railroad, people used a lot of railroad terminology. When a slave escaped, he/she tried to contact people who were willing to help. The escaped slave then became a part of the Underground Railroad and would hopefully make it north to freedom.

The average distance a newly escaped slave traveled to a “station” was from 10 to 15 miles, but the distance from “station” to “station” was shorter in the north. At the “stations,” the tired, weary slaves could eat, rest, and change their clothing. The distance escaped slaves traveled from southern states like Maryland to New York state is over 200 miles.

Packages/freight - Fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad

Lines - Routes from safe-house to safe-house (houses where fugitive slaves could stay)

Stations - Stopping places, places of safety and temporary refuge, safe-houses (houses or churches for example)

Station Master - A keeper of a safe-house

Conductors - Those who aided fugitive slaves

Shepherds - People escorting slaves

Agent - A coordinator, plotting course of escape, making contacts

Preachers - Leaders, speakers on the Underground Railroad

Drinking gourd - Big Dipper and the North Star

Freedom train or Gospel train - Code name for the Underground Railroad

Heaven or Promised land - Canada

Stockholder - A donor of money, clothing, or food to the Underground Railroad

D. Follow the Drinking Gourd – A Song that is Secretly a Map

Source: adapted from NASA Quest

*When the sun comes back and the first quail calls, Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom, If you follow the Drinking Gourd.*

“When the sun comes back” means winter and spring when the altitude of the sun at noon is higher each day. Quail are migratory bird wintering in the South. The Drinking Gourd is the Big Dipper. The old man is Peg Leg Joe. The verse tells slaves to leave in the winter and walk towards the Drinking Gourd. Eventually they will meet a guide who will escort them for the remainder of the trip. Most escapees had to cross the Ohio River which is too wide and too swift to swim. The Railroad struggled with the problem of how to get escapees across, and with experience, came to believe the best crossing time was winter. Then the river was frozen, and escapees could walk across on the ice. Since it took most escapees a year to travel from the South to the Ohio, the Railroad urged slaves to start their trip in winter in order to be at the Ohio the next winter.

*The river bank makes a very good road, The dead trees show you the way,
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on, Follow the Drinking Gourd.*

This verse taught enslaved slaves to follow the bank of the Tombigbee River north looking at the dead trees. One interpretation of the verse is that drawings of a left foot and a peg foot could be found on the trees. These markings distinguished the Tombigbee from other north-south rivers that flowed into it.

*The river ends between two hills, Follow the Drinking Gourd.
There's another river on the other side, Follow the Drinking Gourd.*

These words told escaped slaves that when they reached the headwaters of the Tombigbee, they were to continue north over the hills until they met another river. Then they were to travel north again along the new river, the Tennessee River. A number of the southern escape routes converged on the Tennessee River.

*Where the great big river meets the little river, Follow the Drinking Gourd.
For the old man is awaiting to carry you to freedom if you follow the Drinking Gourd.*

This verse told escaped slaves that the Tennessee River would join the Ohio River. They were to cross the Ohio River and walk along the north bank until they met a guide from the Underground Railroad.

Activity: New York State was an important route on the Underground Railroad. Write additional verses to this song explaining how escaped Africans can safely travel across New York State until they reach Canada.

E. Narratives About the Underground Railroad

1. Life of Reverend Thomas James, By Himself (1887)

Thomas James was born a slave in Canajoharie, New York, in the year 1804. When he was eight years old he was separated from his mother, brother and sister who were sold away to another owner. He escaped from slavery when he was seventeen. Source: “North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920” at the “Documenting the American South” website of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *docsouth.unc.edu*.

While I was still in the seventeenth year of my age, Master Kimball was killed in a runaway accident; and at the administrator’s sale I was sold with the rest of the property, my new master being Cromwell Bartlett, of the same neighborhood. As I remember, my first master was a well-to-do but rough farmer, a skeptic in religious matters, but of better heart than address; for he treated me well. He owned several farms, and my work was that of a farm hand.

My new master had owned me but a few months when he sold me, or rather traded me, to George H. Hess, a wealthy farmer of the vicinity of Fort Plain. I was bartered in exchange for a yoke of steers, a colt and some additional property. I remained with Master Hess from March until June of the same year, when I ran away. My master had worked me hard, and at last undertook to whip me. This led me to seek escape from slavery. I arose in the night, and taking the newly staked line of the Erie canal for my route, traveled along it westward until, about a week later, I reached the village of Lockport. No one had stopped me in my flight. Men were at work digging the new canal at many points, but they never troubled themselves even to question me. I slept in barns at night and begged food at farmers’ houses along my route. At Lockport a colored man showed me the way to the Canadian border. I crossed the Niagara at Youngstown on the ferry-boat, and was free!

Once on free soil, I began to look about for work, and found it at a point called Deep Cut on the Welland Canal, which they were then digging. I found the laborers a rough lot, and soon had a mind to leave them. After three months had passed, I supposed it safe to return to the American side, and acting on the idea I recrossed the river. A farmer named Rich, residing near Youngstown, engaged me as a wood chopper.

2. Samuel Ringgold Ward, Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro (1855)

Source: “North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920” at the “Documenting the American South” website of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *docsouth.unc.edu*.

I was born on the 17th October, 1817, in that part of the State of Maryland, commonly called the Eastern Shore. My parents were slaves. I was born a slave. They escaped, and took their then only child with them. . . . I grew up, in the State of New Jersey, where my parents lived till I was nine years old, and in the State of New York, where we lived for many years, my parents were always in danger of being arrested and re-enslaved. To avoid this, among their measures of caution, was the keeping their children quite ignorant of their birthplace, and of their condition, whether free or slave, when born. . . .

At the time of my parents’ escape it was not always necessary to go to Canada; they therefore did as the few who then escaped mostly did, aim for a Free State, and settle among Quakers. This honored sect, unlike any other in the world, in this respect, was regarded as the slave’s friend. This peculiarity of their religion they not only held, but so practiced that it impressed itself on the ready mind of the poor victim of American tyranny. To reach a Free State, and to live among Quakers, were among the highest ideas of these fugitives; accordingly, obtaining the best directions they could, they set out for Cumberland County, in the State of New Jersey, where they had learned slavery did not exist, Quakers lived in numbers, who would afford the escaped any and every protection consistent with their peculiar tenets, and where a number of blacks lived, who in cases of emergency could and would make common cause with and for each other. . . .

We lived several years at Waldron’s Landing. However, in the spring and summer of 1826, so numerous and alarming were the depredations of kidnapping and slave-catching in the neighborhood, that my parents, after keeping the house armed night after night, determined to remove to a place of greater distance and greater safety. Being accommodated with horses and a wagon by kind friends, they set out with my brother in their arms for New York City, where they arrived on the 3rd day of August, 1826, and lodged the first night with relations, the parents of the Rev. H. H. Garnett. Here we found some 20,000 colored people. The State had just emancipated all its slaves on the fourth day of the preceding month and it was deemed safer to live in such a city than in a more open country place, such as we had just left.

3. Jermain Loguen and the Underground Railroad in Syracuse, New York

Jermain Loguen was trained as an abolitionist, teacher and minister at the Onedia Institute in Whitesboro, New York (near Utica). In 1841, he moved to Syracuse, where as the “station master” of the local underground railroad “depot,” he helped over one thousand “fugitives” escape to Canada. In 1859, he published his memoirs, *The Rev. J. W. Loguen, as a Slave and as a Freeman* (Syracuse, NY: J. G. K. Truair).

In the month of September, 1839, J. Davenport, of Mississippi, accompanied with his wife and child, and another white lady, arrived, with much show of importance, in Syracuse, and took lodgings at the Syracuse House. . . It was soon learned by the servants, and communicated to outsiders, that this beautiful southern girl was a slave - the property of Mr. Davenport. The fact that a woman so white and attractive was held as property, awakened curiosity and indignation among some who had no objection to black slavery. . .

Two citizens, . . . having learned that this young lady felt keenly the restraints of slavery, and that rich dresses, and expensive baubles in her ears, and on her fingers and bosom, were no compensation for liberty, signified to her through the colored servants of the hotel, that if she dared, they would put her into Canada, and she should be free. She consented, and a plan was concocted . . . to put her out of the reach of her master. . . . She was aware her master had been importuned to sell her for \$2500, for the worst of purposes, and she knew he had no conscientious scruples to deter him from yielding to the base intents of the purchaser.

Mr. Davenport now fixed the day of his departure to Mississippi. A single day intervened - the evening of which was spent at a select party at Major Cook’s, as a sort of closing fete of the Syracuse fashionables to their southern friends. Harriet was at the party to take charge of the babe, and at a certain hour of the evening - which had been settled as the hour for her escape - she passed through the assembly, very naturally, and placed the babe in its mother’s lap, and told her she wished to step out. The mother took the child without suspicion, and the beautiful white slave disappeared from her sight forever. . . .

The rage of the man Davenport, so soon as the escape was known, was beyond bounds--and political and sectarian snobs, officials, and citizens, joined these mad ones in a chorus of indignation. Every man and horse was put in requisition to find the beautiful Harriet, who had so slyly and foolishly fled from happiness and duty. No afflicted King or Queen ever had more, or more genuine sympathizers among their subjects, than had Mr. and Mrs. Davenport on that occasion.

The tide of feeling took two directions - one to find the track of the girl, and hunt her down and replunge her into slavery; and the other to hunt out the villains who dared to put their abolition in practice in Syracuse, and subject them to the terrible penalties of slave laws. But it was vain. The white and black men managed this enterprise so prudently and bravely, that no trace of the one or the other could be scented by the blood hounds. . . .

No crime was ever committed in Syracuse that excited so much blustering and active indignation as this. Expresses were sent to Oswego and in other directions, to had and capture the fugitive. The outrage was published through the press, then decidedly on the side of slavery; and the enraged slave-holder issued a circular, describing the person of Harriet, her ornaments and dresses, and offering a reward of \$200 to whoever would return her to him, and \$100 to any one who would inform of her whereabouts, that she might be captured.

The friends of liberty quietly but firmly pursued their course, notwithstanding the threats of their numerous and powerful opponents - who appeared before magistrates, and searched their houses, and disturbed their wives and children, to find the beautiful slave.

Harriet had enjoyed her asylum but a short time, ere her saviors learned that Davenport & Co., by means of some treachery not yet explained, were informed of her whereabouts. Happily, this information was given late at night, and the anti-Abolitionists determined early next morning to take and return her to slavery. Her liberators, however, were informed of the treachery the same night, and sent an express and . . . carried her to Lebanon, Madison county, and concealed her with a friend.

The next morning, the agents of Davenport & Co. arrived at Mr. Shepard’s and demanded Harriet - not doubting she was in the house. Mr. Shepard made very strange of the matter, and so conducted that the agents, after searching the house, left for Syracuse - cursing the traitors, as they charged, who had humbugged them. The result was as it should be - the informer lost all credit for truth and honor, by all parties, - and what was worse than that in his esteem, he lost the one hundred dollars bribe which Davenport offered to quiet his conscience if he would assist in re-enslaving Harriet.

4. Life And Times Of Frederick Douglass

In his memoirs, Frederick Douglass explained his decision to settle in Rochester, New York, edit an abolitionist newspaper and his work on the underground railroad.

One important branch of my anti-slavery work in Rochester, in addition to that of speaking and writing against slavery, must not be forgotten or omitted. My position gave me the chance of hitting that old enemy some telling blows, in another direction than these. I was on the southern border of Lake Ontario...and [being] the editor of an anti-slavery paper, naturally made me the station master and conductor of the underground railroad.... Secrecy and concealment were necessary conditions to the successful operation of this railroad, and hence its prefix "underground." My agency was all the more exciting and interesting, because not altogether free from danger. I could take no step in it without exposing myself to fine and imprisonment, for these were the penalties imposed by the fugitive slave law, for feeding, harboring, or otherwise assisting a slave to escape from his master; but in face of this fact, I can say, I never did more congenial, attractive, fascinating, and satisfactory work. True as a means of destroying slavery, it was like an attempt to bail out the ocean with a teaspoon, but the thought that there was one less slave, and one more freeman,--having myself been a slave, and a fugitive slave--brought to my heart unspeakable joy. On one occasion I had eleven fugitives at the same time under my roof, and it was necessary for them to remain with me, until I could collect sufficient money to get them on to Canada. It was the largest number I ever had at any one time, and I had some difficulty in providing so many with food and shelter, but as may well be imagined, they were not very fastidious in either direction, and were well content with very plain food, and a strip of carpet on the floor for a bed, or a place on the straw in the barn loft.

The underground railroad had many branches; but that one with which I was connected had its main stations in Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and St. Catharines (Canada). . . . [There] were forwarders from Albany; . . . agents in Syracuse; and J. P. Morris and myself received and dispatched passengers from Rochester to Canada. . . . When a party arrived in Rochester, it was the business of Mr. Morris and myself to raise funds with which to pay their passages to St. Catharines, and it is due to truth to state, that we seldom called in vain upon whig or democrat for help. Men were better than their theology, and truer to humanity, than to their politics, or their offices.

On one occasion while a slave master was in the office of a United States commissioner, procuring the papers necessary for the arrest and rendition of three young men who had escaped from Maryland, . . . the law partner of the commissioner, then a distinguished democrat, sought me out, and told me what was going on in his office, and urged me by all means to get these young men out of the way of their pursuers and claimants. . . . A swift horseman was dispatched to Farmington, eighteen miles distant, another to Asa Anthony's farm about three miles, and another to my house on the south side of the city, and before the papers could be served, all three of the young men were on the free waves of Lake Ontario, bound to Canada.

AIM: Was Dred Scott a human being or private property?

BANKGROUND: The essential question that the Supreme Court had to answer was whether Dred Scott was private property or a human being who had the right to sue for his freedom. Dred Scott was born a slave. His slave owner Dr. John Emerson took Scott to a free state of Illinois then moved to the Wisconsin territory. While in Wisconsin, He married Harriet Robinson. Scott and his family lived in Illinois with out his master; he felt he was a free man. At that time, he did not make a claim for his freedom. Dr. Emerson called on Scott and his family to move to Louisiana, which was a slave state. They went to Louisiana. Dr. Emerson died in 1843 and his widow hired Scott out to an army captain. It was then that Scott tried to gain his freedom. He tried to buy his freedom, but Mrs. Emerson refused. Scott filed suit for his freedom. The trial in St. Louis in 1847 favored Scott and his family, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. Scott's case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that Scott was not a citizen of the United States and therefore had no right to sue. The court ruled that because enslaved Africans were never addressed in the constitution nor were they intended to, thus have no rights. The students will look at the case and the majority opinion and answer questions based on the opinion. The students will then look at the *Albany Evening Journal* to see their perspective on the verdict and their point of view. It is important to address the status of enslaved Africans because the ruling made them not human.

DO NOW: Read introduction to Dred Scott v. Sandford.

MOTIVATION: Have you every had to compromise with friends or family members? What was the issue? What was the resolution? Why do some issues seem to divide people so sharply that compromise seems impossible? Can you give an example of an issue that cannot be compromised? Why? Do you think slavery could be solved by a compromise? Explain.

ACTIVITIES: Read and discuss Judge Taney's majority decision and compare his view with the editorial from the Albany Evening Journal's response.

HOMEWORK: Students will write an op-ed piece for a local newspaper either supporting or disagreeing with the Supreme Court decision.

Lesson developed by Hanae Okita

A. Dred Scott v. Sandford

Source: <http://www.oyez.org/oyez/resources/case/101/print>

Dred Scott was born a slave. His owner, Dr. John Emerson, took Scott to the free state of Illinois and then he moved to the Wisconsin territory. While Emerson was in Wisconsin, Scott and his family remained in Illinois where they lived as free people. Dr. Emerson later had Scott and his family move with him to Louisiana, a slave state. When Emerson died his widow hired Scott out to an army captain. Scott tried to purchase his freedom, Mrs. Emerson refused, and Scott filed suit in court. In 1847, a St. Louis court ruled in favor of Scott and his family, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. Scott's case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court which had to determine whether it had jurisdiction (the right to intervene) in this case. To resolve this issue, it had to decide whether Dred Scott was a free citizen of the United States with the right to sue in federal courts or a slave, the property of another individual, without any legal rights. The Court ruled that Dred Scott was a slave and not a citizen of the United States. He therefore had no right to sue in federal court. The Court also overturned the Missouri Compromise as unconstitutional because it limited the rights of property-holders (slave masters).

B. The Majority Opinion of Chief Justice Taney in the Dred Scott v. Sandford Case

1. "The question is simply this: can a Negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all of these rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen? One of which rights is the privilege of suing in a court of the United States in the cases specified in the constitution.... We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included under the word "citizens" in the constitution and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States."
2. "It is very clear, therefore that no state can, by any act or law of its own, passed since the adoption of the constitution, introduce a new member into the political community created by the constitution of the United States. It cannot make him a member of this community by making him a member of its own. And for that same reason it cannot introduce any person, or description of persons, who were not intended to be embraced in this new political family, which the constitution brought into existence, but were intended to be excluded from it."

Questions

1. Why was Dred Scott not allowed to sue for his freedom?
2. Why can't a state allow a person to become a citizen of that state?
3. Do you agree with the justice's opinion? Explain.

C. The Albany Evening Journal Responds to the Dred Scott Decision (1857)

The Albany Evening Journal was affiliated with the Republican Party and a major New York State proponent of the abolition of slavery. In 1857 it published a series of news articles and editorials responding to the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case.

March 10, 1857: "It declares that the slaveholder may take his Slaves and hold them in any Territory under Federal control, and that neither Congress, nor the Territorial Government, nor the people, have the power now or hereafter to forbid him. It declares that the Constitution, though established 'to secure Liberty,' nowhere protects the existence of Freedom, and though it never mentions the word 'Slave,' everywhere legalizes Slavery!"

March 19, 1857: "Five of its nine silk gowns are worn by Slaveholders. More than half its long Bench is filled with Slaveholders. Its Chief Justice is a slaveholder. The Free States with double the population of the Slave State do not have half the Judges. The majority represents a minority of 350,000. The minority represents a majority of twenty millions! It has long been so. Originally there were three Northern and three Southern Judges. But the South soon got the bigger share of the black robes, and kept them. Of the thirty-eight who have sat there in judgment, twenty-two were nurtured 'on plantation.'"

Questions

1. What implication does this have on slaveholders?
2. Do you think that because the judges were slaveholders influenced their decision?

AIM: John Brown: Martyr or Religious Fanatic? Freedom fighter or traitor and terrorist?

SOURCES: Ruchames, Louis (1969). *John Brown, The Making of a Revolutionary* (NY:Grosset & Dunlap).

[Http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1550.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1550.html); <http://history.furman.edu/~benson/docs/jbmenu.htm>;

<http://libwww.syr.edu/digital/exhibits/g/GerritSmith/harpers.htm>

BACKGROUND: John Brown, one of the most controversial figures in United States history, had strong ties to New York State. In 1859, Brown led an armed attack on a federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His goal was to launch a slave rebellion in the United States. Brown and his followers were defeated, tried and executed. While the insurrection failed, it helped precipitate the Civil War and the end of slavery in the United States. John Brown was born into a deeply religious family in Torrington, Connecticut, in 1800. His father was vehemently opposed to slavery. The family moved to northern Ohio when John was five. As an adult, John Brown repeatedly moved his large family (he had twenty children) around the country. Brown worked as a farmer, wool merchant, tanner, and land speculator, but was never an economic success. Despite this, he helped to finance abolitionist publications, gave land to fugitive slaves and raised a black youth as part of his family. He also participated in the Underground Railroad and helped establish an organization that worked to protect escaped slaves from slave catchers. John Brown and his family moved to the Black community of North Elba in the Adirondack region of New York, in 1849. The community had been established by Gerrit Smith, a New York abolitionist, who gave land to 3,000 Black families who were willing to clear and farm the land. Their farm in North Elba remained Brown's home until his death in 1859. John Brown emerged as a leading figure in the anti-slavery cause in 1855 when he and five of his sons organized a band of antislavery guerilla fighters in the Kansas territory. On October 16, 1859, John Brown and 21 other men, including 5 Blacks and 16 Whites, attacked the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Brown was wounded and captured. He was taken to Charlestown, Virginia, where he was put on trial and convicted of treason. Although Northerners were initially shocked by Brown's actions, many prominent abolitionists soon began to speak favorably of his exploits. John Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859. His body was sent to North Elba for burial. During the Civil War, a song commemorating his efforts to end slavery became a battle cry of the Northern forces. Since his failed attack on Harpers Ferry, political activists and historians have debated whether John Brown was a martyr to the cause of freedom or a religious fanatic who thought he was the agent of God? They have argued over whether he should be considered a freedom fighter or a traitor and terrorist? An examination of John Brown's raises fundamental issues for discussion. Do his ends or goals, the liberation of 6 million enslaved Africans, justify his means, revolutionary violence against the government of the United States? Can violence by an enslaved human being or his or her supporters against an individual master or a system that denies their humanity be labeled as a form of terrorism or is the terrorist the person or oppressive system that denies liberty to others?

DO NOW: Read introduction to the document package.

MOTIVATION: When, if ever, is violence or revolution justified? List some hypothetical scenarios in which violence may be justified. If, in your opinion, such a scenario does not exist, explain why that is the case.

ACTIVITY: Student teams should examine the package of documents and prepare arguments for a class debate on whether John Brown and his followers should have been convicted, condemned and executed. In their debate they must take a position and use support from the documents to back up their claims.

KEY QUESTIONS:

Is violence ever justified? Do the ends justify the means?

Was John Brown justified in his actions? Was he a traitor or a freedom-fighter?

Was John Brown a martyr and religious fanatic, or both?

HOMEWORK / APPLICATION: After the debate, individual students will use the documents from the package to write a eulogy (funeral speech) where they express their personal views on John Brown and his challenge to slavery and the federal government. In their essays, students should address the questions: Did John Brown's goal, the liberation of four million enslaved Africans, justify revolutionary violence against the government of the United States? Is violence in opposition to slavery a form of terrorism or is the terrorist the person or oppressive system that denies liberty to others?

Lesson developed by Ron Widelec

John Brown: Martyr or Religious Fanatic? Freedom fighter or traitor and terrorist?

John Brown, one of the most controversial figures in United States history, had strong ties to New York State. In 1859, Brown led an armed attack on a federal armory at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. His goal was to launch a slave rebellion in the United States. Brown and his followers were defeated, tried and executed. While the insurrection failed, it helped precipitate the Civil War and the end of slavery in the United States.

John Brown was born into a deeply religious family in Torrington, Connecticut, in 1800. His father was vehemently opposed to slavery. The family moved to northern Ohio when John was five. As an adult, John Brown repeatedly moved his large family (he had twenty children) around the country. Brown worked as a farmer, wool merchant, tanner, and land speculator, but was never an economic success. Despite this, he helped to finance abolitionist publications, gave land to fugitive slaves and raised a black youth as part of his family. He also participated in the Underground Railroad and helped establish an organization that worked to protect escaped slaves from slave catchers.

John Brown and his family moved to the Black community of North Elba in the Adirondack region of New York, in 1849. The community had been established by Gerrit Smith, a New York abolitionist, who gave land to 3,000 Black families who were willing to clear and farm the land. Their farm in North Elba remained Brown's home until his death in 1859.

John Brown emerged as a leading figure in the anti-slavery cause in 1855 when he and five of his sons organized a band of antislavery guerilla fighters in the Kansas territory. On October 16, 1859, John Brown and 21 other men, including 5 Blacks and 16 Whites, attacked the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Brown was wounded and captured. He was taken to Charlestown, Virginia, where he was put on trial and convicted of treason.

Although Northerners were initially shocked by Brown's actions, many prominent abolitionists soon began to speak favorably of his exploits. John Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859. His body was sent to North Elba for burial. During the Civil War, a song commemorating his efforts to end slavery became a battle cry of the Northern forces.

Since his failed attack on Harpers Ferry, political activists and historians have debated whether John Brown was a martyr to the cause of freedom or a religious fanatic who thought he was the agent of God? They have argued over whether he should be considered a freedom fighter or a traitor and terrorist?

An examination of John Brown's raises fundamental issues for discussion. Do his ends or goals, the liberation of 6 million enslaved Africans, justify his means, revolutionary violence against the government of the United States? Can violence by an enslaved human being or his or her supporters against an individual master or a system that denies their humanity be labeled as a form of terrorism or is the terrorist the person or oppressive system that denies liberty to others?

Activity: Student teams should examine the package of documents and prepare arguments for a class debate on whether John Brown and his followers should have been convicted, condemned and executed. After the debate, individual students will use the documents from the package to write a eulogy (funeral speech) where they express their personal views on John Brown and his challenge to slavery and the federal government. In their essays, students should address the questions:

3. Did John Brown's goal, the liberation of four million enslaved Africans, justify revolutionary violence against the government of the United States?
4. Is violence in opposition to slavery a form of terrorism or is the terrorist the person or oppressive system that denies liberty to others?

Documents

1. To the Friends of Freedom, New York Tribune, March 4, 1857. “The undersigned, whose individual means were exceedingly limited when he first engaged in the struggle for Liberty in Kansas, being still more destitute and no less anxious than in time past to continue his efforts to sustain that cause, is induced to make this earnest appeal to the friends of freedom throughout the United States, in the firm belief that this call will not go unheeded. I ask all honest lovers of Liberty and Human Rights, both male and female, to hold up my hands by contributions of pecuniary aid, either as counties, cities, towns, villages, societies, churches or individuals.”

2. Letter, Rochester, NY, January 30, 1858 (Ruchames, 117-118). “My dear wife and children, every one, I am (praised be God!) once more in York State. Whether I shall be permitted to visit you or not this winter or spring, I cannot now say. . . The anxiety I feel to see my wife and children once more I am unable to describe. . . Do not noise it about that I am in these parts, and direct to N. Hawkins, care of Frederick Douglass, Rochester, N.Y. I want to hear how you are all supplied with winter clothing, boots, etc. God bless you all! Your affectionate husband and father, John Brown.”

3. John Brown’s Correspondence with *The N.Y. Tribune*, January, 1859 (Ruchames, 122-123).

On Sunday, the 19th of December, a negro man named Jim, came over to the Osage settlement, from Missouri, and stated that he, together with his wife, two children and one other negro man, were to be sold within a day or two, and begged for help to get away. On Monday, the following night, two small companies were made up to go to Missouri, and forcibly liberate the five slaves, together with other slaves. One of these companies I assumed to direct. We proceeded to the place, surrounded the buildings, liberated by the slaves, and also took certain property supposed to belong to the estate. We, however, learned before leaving, that a portion of the articles we had taken belonged to a man living on the plantation as a tenant, and who was supposed to have no interest in the estate. We promptly returned to him all we had taken. We then went to another plantation, where we freed five more slaves, took some property, and two white men. We moved slowly away into the Territory, for some distance, and then sent the white men back, telling them to follow us as soon as they chose to do so. The other company freed one female slave, took some property, and, as I am informed, killed one white man (the master), who fought against the liberation. . . . Eleven persons are forcibly restored to their “natural and inalienable rights,” with but one man killed, and all “Hell is stirred from beneath.” It is currently reported that the Governor of Missouri has made a requisition upon the Governor of Kansas for the delivery of all such as were concerned in the lastnamed “dreadful outrage.” The Marshal of Kansas is said to be collecting a posse of Missouri (not Kansas) men at West Point, in Missouri, a little town about ten miles distant, to “enforce the laws.”

4. Headlines, *New York Herald*, October 18, 1859, (Collection of the New-York Historical Society)

Fearful and Exciting Intelligence.

Negro Insurrection at Harpers Ferry.

Extensive Negro Conspiracy in Virginia and Maryland.

Seizure of the United States Arsenal by the Insurrectionists.

Arms Taken and Sent into the Interior.

The Bridge Fortified and Defended by Cannon.

Trains Fired into and Stopped --- Several Persons Killed --- Telegraph Wires Cut ---

Contributions Levied on the Citizens.

Troops Dispatched Against the Insurgents from Washington and Baltimore

5. The Trouble at Harper’s Ferry, Albany Evening Journal, October 18, 1859. “The telegraph during the past twenty-four hours has brought startling accounts of an “insurrection” at Harper’s Ferry. But the details are confused, and the origin of the riot is entirely unexplained. Whether it is a revolt of the slaves, or a strike of the workmen, or a lawless outbreak from some other cause, seems purposely concealed. Harper’s Ferry is a town about the size of Cohoes, situated at the junction of the Shenandoah river with the Potomac, and where the united stream passes through an opening in the Blue Ridge. It is 178 miles north of Richmond, and of course on the line which separates Virginia from Maryland. A United States Armory is situated here, employing 250 hands, and turning out

eight or nine thousand small arms annually. There are usually kept on hand some 80 or 90,000 stand of arms, enough to make a mob that has seized them a formidable foe. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road both pass through this place. The latter crosses the Potomac on a bridge 750 long, connecting the town with the Maryland side."

6. The Trouble at Harper's Ferry, Albany Evening Journal, October 19, 1859. "At last we have more definite information as to the origin of the outbreak at Harper's Ferry. It seems that some fifteen or twenty misguided and desperate men engaged in a plot to bring about a revolt of the Slaves. Nor did they stop at the crime of seeking to plunge a peaceful community into the horrors of a servile insurrection. Seizing Government arms and turning them against Government officers, they intended, if they did not accomplish Treason, of the gravest sort. But as might be expected, the attempt failed to gain supporters; the entire community was thrown into a panic, and an overwhelming force of Troops, of the State and the United States, a hundred to one, crushed the riot, and either shot down the rioters or took them prisoners. . . . None but a madman could seriously expect that twenty men could make head against the whole Union, and none but those whose sense of justice was blunted by deep passion could fail to see that they were committing a crime against Innocent men, women and children, which would inevitably meet, and justly deserve, universal condemnation."

7. The Harper's Ferry Outbreak Albany Evening Journal, October 27, 1859. "The Democratic press are doing their best to make it appear that "Old Brown's" insane invasion was countenanced by leading Republicans. But they are hard put to it for material for evidence. Yesterday they spread abroad on the wings of the telegraph, that "correspondence with HORACE GREELEY" had been discovered in "Old Brown's" carpet-bag. The foundation for this was merely a business memorandum that he had once subscribed to the New York Tribune!"

8. Manifesto of the New York Democratic Vigilant Association to their fellow citizens of the State and Country, New York Times, October 27, 1859, p. 1. "At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the New York Democratic Vigilant Association, held on the 18th inst., a Committee was unanimously appointed, on the motion of Mr. Royal Phelps, "to collect the details of the history of the affair at Harper's Ferry, and if it prove that there be any connection between the conspirators and any political body at the North, that _____ sum of money be appropriated to disseminate the facts, and to make known to our Southern brethern our utter condemnation of the instigators of the movement."

9. Address of John Brown to the Virginia Court at Charles Town, Virginia on November 2, 1859. "In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted, -- the design on my part to free slaves. . . . Had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends -- either father, mother, sister, wife, or children, or any of that class -- and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right; and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment. The court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. . . . I believe that to have interfered as I have done -- as I have always freely admitted I have done -- in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments. -- I submit; so let it be done!"

10. Albany Evening Journal, November 30, 1859. "John Brown will meet his fate, whether as a bad man or as a madman, with comparative little sympathy. Our own belief is that he should not be executed; but if the seeds of future excitement are planted on his tomb, we do not doubt it will be found that they were placed there as well by his Southern enemies as by his Northern sympathizers. Whatever of sympathy the fate of John Brown awakens, will be occasioned by his bearing through an ordeal so trying, rather than any complicity of feeling in his lawless enterprise. Upon the question whether he had any right to go there with such intentions, or whether, when taken, he ought to be punished, there is no general difference of opinion or sentiment. Though we 'would that all men' were Free, we should as readily go to Virginia to run off their Horses and Cattle, as their Slaves. By the Constitution and

Laws, Slavery is recognized and tolerated. It was a compact made by our Fathers, and one that binds their heirs. We will oppose both its extension and its encroachments. Thus far, and no farther, goes our sense of duty to Freedom.”

11. The Execution of John Brown, Albany Evening Journal, December 1, 1859. “Already, the muttered thunder of a pent-up sympathy is heard. The pulpit, the platform and the press, have already spoken with most intense emphasis. . . . But should John Brown be hung, the feeling will be augmented an hundred fold; and hatred of Slavery will become the predominant emotion in the breasts of millions who have thus far had neither fellowship nor sympathy with those who seek to goad the South into just such exhibitions of weakness and folly as these executions will afford.”

12. Last Words of John Brown, December 2, 1859 (Ruchames, 167). “I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood. I had as I now think vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.”

13. John Brown’s Execution, The New York Times, December 2, 1859, p. 4. “It is idle to blink the fact that John Brown, who dies today as a criminal in Virginia, will be honored and lamented today as a martyr by thousands of men and women in Northern States. . . . All that is left to be done in the matter now by Northern men who love their country and would see the rights of all sections justly maintained, is to protest against the extravagant and inflammatory use which fanatical and reckless men at the North will now be swift to make of this decision and this deed in Virginia. . . . [I]f we mean this Union to endure as a great national system, founded upon the equality and fraternity of the States, we must carefully repudiate and to the best of our abilities repress the sympathy which thousands of easy enthusiasts will now be hastening to offer to the memory of a man in whom Virginia can only see the invader of her established order, and the implacable enemy of the social institutions by which she will choose to abide.”

14. Public Expressions of Sympathy, The New York Times, December 3, 1859, p. 3. “The small lecture room of Dr. Cheever’s Church was filled yesterday morning, it being announced that a prayer meeting for John brown would be held. . . . Mr. Tappan made a prayer, speaking of brown as a Christian martyr in the hands of an infuriated mob, and praying that posterity would rise up and call him blessed. . . . A large assemblage, nearly all colored persons, filled the Shiloh (colored) Presbyterian Church, yesterday, forenoon. After singing, Rev Charles B. Rae offered a prayer asking that God would rouse the consciences of men to see the wrongs done by the banditti of slaveholders as they never had been seen before, and that God would be with the wife and children of Mr. Brown, and with all his friends and acquaintances in this day of trial.”

15. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher’s Response to the attack on Harpers Ferry . “We have no right to treat the citizens of the South with acrimony and bitterness because they are involved in a system of wrong doing The preaching of discontent among the bondsmen of our land is not the way to help them No relief will be carried to the slaves or to the South as a body by any individual or organized plans to carry them off or to incite them to abscond If we would benefit the African in the South we must begin at home. No one can fail to see the inconsistency between our treatment of those amongst us who are in the lower walks of life and our professing of sympathy for the Southern slave We must quicken all the springs of feeling in the free states on behalf of human liberty We must maintain sympathy and kindness toward the South You should care for both the master and the slave You ought to set your face against and discountenance anything like an insurrectionary spirit.”

16. William Cullen Bryant, editor of the New York Evening Post, Responds to John Brown’s attack on Harpers Ferry. “The great body of the northern people have no desire nor intention to interfere with slavery within its present limits, except by persuasion and argument. They are unalterably opposed to the spread of it, as the south ought to be, but they are willing to leave the extinction of it in the states to the certain influences of commerce, of good sense, of the sentiment of justice and truth, and the march of civilization.”

17. Northern Sentiment, The New York Times, December 5, 1859, p. 4 “The following paper is in circulation for signatures in this City: “Justice from the North. – The undersigned, citizens of new York, desirous of vindicating the North, and expressing their sympathy with the men of the South in the present crisis, and their abhorrence of the motives and acts of John Brown and his followers, in their assault upon the peace, safety, lives and property of their fellow citizens of Virginia, and in favor of giving a public expression of rebuke to the dangerous and revolutionary doctrines now currently taught, . . . are in favor of calling a public meeting in this City at an early day, to give expression to the above sentiments.”

18. Reverend Theodore Parker, Letter to Francis Jackson, November 24, 1859 (Ruchames, 254-265).

Theodore Parker was a strong supporter of John brown. In this letter, written in defense of the attack on Harpers Ferry, Parker defends to right of slaves and their supporters to armed rebellion.

1. A man held against his will as a slave has a natural right to kill every one who seeks to prevent his enjoyment of liberty.
2. It may be a natural duty of the slave to develope (sic) this natural right in a practical manner, and actually kill all those who seek to prevent his enjoyment of liberty.
3. The freeman has a natural right to help the slaves recover their liberty, and in that enterprise to do for them all which they have a right to do for themselves.
4. It may be a natural duty for the freeman to help the slaves to the enjoyment of their liberty, and as means to that end, to aid them in killing all such as oppose their natural freedom.
5. The performance of this duty is to be controlled by the freeman’s power and opportunity to help the slaves.

19. Wendell Phillips, eulogy at the funeral of John Brown, North Elba, New York, December 8, 1859

(Ruchames, 266-269). “I feel honored to stand under such a roof. Hereafter you will tell children standing at your knees, “I saw John Brown buried, - I sat under his roof. . . . God make us all worthier of him whose dust we lay among these hills he loved. Here he girded himself and went force to battle. Fuller success than his heart ever dreamed God granted him. He sleeps in the blessings of the crushed and the poor, and men believe more firmly in virtue, now that such a man has lived. Standing here, let us thank God for a firmer faith and fuller hope.”

20. Henry David Thoreau, The Last Days of John Brown, delivered, July 4, 1860, North Elba, New York

(Ruchames, 272-277). “John Brown’s career for the last six weeks of his life was meteorlike, flashing through the darkness in which we live. I know of nothing so miraculous in our history. . . . Years were not required for a revolution of public opinion; days, nay hours, produced marked changes in this case. Fifty who were ready to say, on going into our meeting in honor of him in Concord, that he ought to be hung, would not say it when they came out. They heard his words read; they saw the earnest faces of the congregation; and perhaps they joined at last in singing the hymn in his praise.”

21. Frederick Douglass, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, May 30, 1881 (Ruchames, 278-299).

“Did John Brown draw his sword against slavery and thereby lose his life in vain? . . . To this I answer ten thousand times, No!. . . . John brown began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic. Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared. The time for compromises was gone – the armed hosts of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union – and the clash of arms was at hand. The South staked all upon getting possession of the Federal Government, and failing to do that, drew the sword of rebellion and thus made her own, and not brown’s, the lost cause of the century.”

AIM: What was New York City's role in the illegal 19th century trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

BACKGROUND: New York City merchants and bankers profited directly by financing and participating in the illegal Atlantic Slave trade. They were generally able to avoid arrest and prosecution under laws defining slave trading as piracy (punishable by death) through a legal technicality that limited the jurisdiction of American courts to United States citizens. *New York Times* editorials from November, 1854 explained in detail the workings of the illegal slave trade and the extent of involvement by the City's merchants and bankers.

Slave trading was a capital offense in the United States after 1820. Between 1837 and 1860, 74 cases were tried but there were few convictions and punishment tended to be minimal. In 1856, a New York City deputy Marshall declared that the business of out-fitting slavers had never been pursued "with greater energy than at the present. . . It is seldom that one or more vessels cannot be designated at the wharves, respecting which there is evidence that she is either in or has been concerned in the traffic [to Cuba]." The men who smuggled enslaved Africans referred to themselves as "blackbirders" and their illegal human cargo as "black ivory." Their favorite New York City meeting place was Sweet's Restaurant at the corner of Fulton and South streets.

The British counsel claimed that out of 170 known slave trading expeditions for the Cuba slave market between 1859 and 1862, 74 were believed to have sailed from New York City. In the summer of 1859, the bark Emily set off from New York stocked as a slaver with a cargo of lumber, fresh water, barrels of rice, codfish, pork and bread, boxes of herring, dozens of pails, and two cases of medicines. It was returned to port under naval guard, but the case against its captain and owners was dismissed. Federal officials in New York were so ineffective in prosecuting slave trading cases that in 1861, a *New York Times* editorial urged President Lincoln to replace the marshal and district attorney assigned to these cases.

In 1854, Captain James Smith was arrested and tried for transporting enslaved Africans from Africa to the Americas. A captain could outfit a ship for thousands of dollars, but make a profit of close to a quarter million. The risk of getting caught or even prosecuted was worth the risk if one looked at how much one can profit off of it. The slave bark the Wildfire was also outfitted to transport slaves from Africa to Cuba. The owner of the ship was from New York.

In this lesson, students will get a brief history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The students will then examine two examples of illegal transportation of enslaved Africans. Students will look at a picture of the bark Wildfire and be able to interpret the picture. Then the students will read excerpts from Captain James Smith of why transporting Africans was so profitable.

DO NOW: Examine drawing of the Wildfire.

MOTIVATION: In 1808 outlaw slave trade. In 1820, participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade was made a capital offense punishable by death. Do you agree with this penalty? Why?

ACTIVITIES:

Activity 1: Students will read articles posted in the New York Times about Captain James Smith and how he was the first person tried and convicted of illegal slave trading. The class will then discuss the importance of this to the slave trade and how it affects the business.

Activity 2: Students will look an interview of Captain James Smith and how it relates to New York City's role in the Atlantic slave trade.

Activity 3: Students will interpret the conditions on the slave bark the Wildfire and read excerpts from Harper's Weekly that dealt with the conditions of the ship and the enslaved Africans.

HOMEWORK:

Students will write an essay using the three activity sheets answering the following question: What was New York City's role in the Atlantic Slave Trade? What can be done to prevent more ships from carrying African Americans?

Lesson developed by Hanae Okita



A. “The Slave Bark Wildfire”

Source:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h300.html

Left. The deck of the Wildfire, a New York City vessel seized off of the coast of the Congo. Activity:

Examine the drawing. List five points about the image. Use your list to write a paragraph describing the deck of the Wildfire.

B. Trial and Conviction of the Master of an African Slaver

Source: Editorial, *The New York Times*, November 10, 1854, p. 4

1. In the United States Circuit Court sitting in the City, one Captain James Smith has been convicted of having been engaged in the Slave-Trade between the Coast of Africa and the Island of Cuba. The sentence of the law, which is death, was suspended in order that his counsel might take the necessary steps to move for a new trial. The facts which were proved in

this case were substantially these: In January last Capt. Smith went to Boston, where he purchased the brig *Julia Moulton*, cleared her in ballast for Newport, and on the 2nd of February brought her to this port. Here he engaged one James Willis as mate, telling him that he was going on a Slave-trading voyage, agreeing to pay him \$40 a month on the outward voyage, and from \$1,200 to \$2,000 for the passage back. A crew was shipped of about fifteen persons, mostly young men, and a large quantity of provisions, water, &c., with lumber, was taken on board.

2. On the 11th of February the brig cleared this port. And on leaving the dock, Capt. Smith pointed out to the mate a Portuguese named Lemos as the real owner of the vessel, and told him that the Secretary of the Portuguese Consel at this port had accompanied him to Boston and aided him in the purchase of the vessel. The ship was cleared by Capt. Smith and had regular papers for the Cape of Good Hope. After she had been out about forty days, the timber on board was used to make a temporary deck or floor in the hold of the vessel, and all the other preparations necessary to receive cargo of slaves were made.

3. At the end of sixty days, they made land on the coast of Africa at a place called Cobra, where they were boarded by a boat which brought instructions, in accordance with which they cruised the sea for ten days longer, and then put in a port further south called *Ambrozzetta*, well known as a depot for the Slave trade. Here in the course of two or three hours six hundred and sixty-four Negroes, including forty women, were brought on board and stowed away as cargo in the hold of the brig. They were placed on their sides, one lying in the lap of another—were taken out occasionally to be fed and aired, and after a voyage of sixty-five days were land on the South coast of Cuba.

4. They were sent on shore in lighters, under the orders of a person who said he was a consignee, and the American consul at the port. The furniture of the ship was then taken on shore and the ship herself burned. Willis the mate came to this city in the brig *Mercellus*, where he again met Captain Smith, who refused to pay Willis the balance due him on the contract, amounting to about \$440, whereupon Willis imparted the nature of the voyage to a Mr. Donahue, by whom it was laid before the authorities. The result was the arrest, trial, and conviction of Captain Smith.

5. We believe this is the first time in which a conviction of being engaged in the African Slave Trade has ever been had in this City- and this is due entirely to a disagreement between the captain and his mate about the payment of a trifling sum of money. Yet, as we have repeated stated in the Times, scarcely a month passes in which there are not one or more vessels cleared at this port, which embark at once in the slave trade and land their cargoes on the coast of Cuba. The facts given in evidence on this trial show how easily this is done, and with what impunity, so long as all the parties engaged in it are satisfactorily paid for keeping silent. In order to a conviction, the vessel concerned must be, at the time, owned either in whole or part by an American citizen, or else the party accused must himself be a citizen. The first provision is usually evaded by a sham-sale-the last by procuring a foreigner, usually a Portuguese, as a commander. The only defence attempted in this case turned upon this point. It was claimed that Mr. Smith was an unnaturalized German, and it was also asserted and partly proved that the ship was paid for by the Secretary of the Portuguese Consul at this port.

Questions

1. How did Captain James Smith acquire the brig *Julia Moulton*?
2. What was the punishment for engaging in the slave-trade?
3. Why was timber brought on board the ship?
4. How many enslaved African were loaded on the brig?
5. What happened to the ship after its arrival in Cuba?
6. How did the authorities find out that Captain Smith was slave trading?
7. How effective was the conviction of Captain Smith to stop slave trading?

C. Captain James Smith Describes the Atlantic Slave Trade

Source: Katz, W. (1995). *Eyewitness*. 30-31.

In 1859, eighty-five slave ships, capable of carrying between thirty and sixty thousand slaves, were outfitted in New York to serve the slave market of Cuba. Captain James Smith was one of the few slave traders convicted of violating U.S. and international laws. Even though participation in the slave trade was considered piracy and a capital offense, he was sentenced to only two years in prison and a \$1000 fine.

“New York is the chief port in the world for the Slave Trade. It is the greatest place in the universe for it. Neither in Cuba not in the Brazils is it carried on so extensively. Ships that convey Slaves to the West Indies and South America are fitted out in New York. Now and then one sails from Boston and Philadelphia; but in New York is our headquarters. My vessel was the brig ‘Julia Moulton.’ I got her in Boston, and brought her here, and sailed from this port direct for the coast of Africa.”

“But do you mean to say that this business is going on now?” “Yes. Not so many vessels have been sent out this year, perhaps not over twenty-five. But last year there were thirty-five. I can down to South Street, and go into a number of houses that help fit out ships for the business. I don’t know how far they own the vessels, or receive the profits of the cargoes. But these houses know all about it.”

“But when you reach the African coast, are you not in great danger from British Ships-of-War?” “Oh, no, we don’t care a button for an English squadron. We run up the American flag, and if they come aboard, all we have to do is show our American papers, and they have no right to search us.”

“How many Slaves could you carry on your vessel?” “We took on board 644. She would have carry 750 with ease. The boys and women we kept on the upper deck. But all the strong men-those giant Africans that might make us trouble-we put below on the Slave deck.”

“Did you chain them or put on handcuffs?” “No, never; they would die. We let them move about.”

“Are you very severe with them?” “We have to be very strict at first-for a week or so-to make them feel that we are the masters. Then we lighten up for the rest of the voyage.”

“How do you pack them at night?” “They lie down upon the deck, on their sides, body to body. There would not be room enough for all to lie on their backs.”

“Did many die on the passage?” “Yes, I lost a good many on the last cruise-more than ever before. Sometimes we find them dead when we go below in the morning. Then we throw them overboard.”

“Are the profits of the trade very large?” “Yes, sir, very large. My brig cost \$13,000 to fit her out completely. My last cargo to Cuba was worth \$220,000.”

Questions

1. How many enslaved Africans did Smith transport on this voyage?
2. Smith says “New York is the chief port in the world for the Slave Trade.” According to Smith, what role does New York play in this trade?
3. When Smith was convicted of illegal slave trading, he was sentenced to two years in prison and a \$1,000 fine. In your opinion, was this a fair punishment? Explain.

1. An article about the “Slave Bark Wildfire” appeared on June 2, 1860 in Harper’s Weekly magazine.

1. On the morning of the 30th of April last, the United States steamer Mohawk, Lieutenant Craven commanding, came to anchor in the harbor of this place, having in tow a bark of the burden of about three hundred and thirty tons, supposed to be the bark Wildfire, lately owned in the city of New York. The bark had on board five hundred and ten natives Africans, taken on board the River Congo, on the west side of the continent of Africa. She had been captured a few days previously by Lieutenant Craven within sight of the northern coast of Cuba, as an American vessel employed in violating our laws against the slave trade. She had left the Congo River thirty-six days before her capture.

2. We confess that we have been struck, as many have been, with the expression of intelligence displayed in their faces, the beauty of their physical conformation, and the beauty of their teeth. We have been accustomed to think that the civilized Negroes of our own country were superior, in point of intelligence and physical development, to the native Africans; but judging only by the eye, we think it would be difficult to find, any where in our country, four hundred finer and handsomer-looking boys and girls than these are. . . .

3. I would suggest that Congress might authorize the President to enter into a general agreement with the Colonization Society, binding them to receive, on the coast of Africa from our agent there, all the captured Africans which may be delivered to him, and to maintain them for a limited period, upon such terms and conditions as may combine humanity toward these unfortunates with a just economy. This would avoid expense in the disposition of the captured. The law might then provide that, in all cases where this may be practicable, the captor should carry the Negroes directly to Africa, and deliver them to the American agent there, afterward bringing the captured vessel to the United States for adjudication.

Questions

1. Who owned the bark Wildfire? How many Africans were on board?
2. What suggestions were made to help the Africans after capture? Do you think this is a good idea? Explain.

E. The Execution Of Gordon, The Slave-Trader

Source: Harper’s Weekly, March 8, 1862

Not the least important among the changes which are taking place in the current of national policy and public opinion is evidenced by the fact that on Friday, 21st February, in this city, Nathaniel Gordon was hung for being engaged in the slave-trade. For forty years the slave-trade has been pronounced piracy by law, and to engage in it has been a capital offense. But the sympathy of the Government and its officials has been so often on the side of the criminal, and it seemed so absurd to hang a man for doing at sea that which, in half the Union, is done daily without censure on land, that no one has ever been punished under the Act. The Administration of Mr. Lincoln has turned over a new leaf in this respect. Henceforth the slave-trade will be abandoned to the British and their friends. The hanging of Gordon is an event in the history of our country.

Question: The conviction and execution of Nathaniel Gordon was described as “an event in the history of our country.” Do you agree with this statement? Explain.

AIM: History Mystery: How did New York City merchants and bankers profit from slavery in Cuba?

BACKGROUND: Many Northern businessmen and merchants profited off slavery in Cuba and the American South. The first document in section A is an examination of the ties between Northern companies and slavery. Americans owned many of the sugar plantations in Cuba and profited from sugar refining. From the 1840s through the 1860s, there was a movement in the United States to annex Cuba as a potential slave state. In the first document, of section B, *The New York Times* explains how the slave system operated. Reports by William Cullen Bryant, a New York newspaper editor, and Joseph J. Dimock, whose wife's family owned a Cuban sugar plantation, discuss conditions for enslaved Africans in Cuba. Dimock was born in Virginia and at different times in his adult life lived in Boston, Massachusetts, New York City, and New Haven, Connecticut. He was married to Isadora DeWolf, whose family owned a Cuban sugar plantation. In February and March 1859, Dimock traveled to Cuba. While there, he mailed, via steamship, a series of news dispatches for publication in *The New York Times*. Diary entries he kept during this trip give insight into the attitude of a northern merchant based in New York toward Cuba, the sugar industry, slavery and people of African ancestry. In March, 1859, a meeting was held at Tammany Hall in New York City in support of the annexation of Cuba as a slave state. Among the supporters of this proposal were several prominent business leaders and future governor and presidential candidate, Samuel Tilden. The keynote speaker was Senator Brown of Mississippi.

DO NOW: Read the article *Northern Companies with Ties to the Slave System*.

MOTIVATION: Slavery officially ended in New York State in 1827. In your opinion, are merchants and bankers who maintained commercial ties with slavery in other parts of the country and in the Caribbean responsible for the continuation of the slave system? Explain. Does the state government share responsibility for allowing these business practices? Explain. Do consumers in the North share responsibility for purchasing products that used slave produced materials or for doing business with these companies? Explain.

ACTIVITY: In this history-mystery, student teams will examine the document package and prepare an “exposé” for a muckracking print magazine or a television news show. The title of the exposé is “Historians Trace New York Corporate Ties to Slavery and the Slave Trade.”

SUMMARY: Who shares responsibility to the continuation of slavery and the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

APPLICATION: Students can discuss whether corporations with ties to slavery and the slave trade have a financial obligation to the descendants of enslaved Africans.

Lesson developed by Hanae Okita

A. New York Companies with Ties to the Slave System

Sources: <http://www.usatoday.com/money/general/2002/02/21/slave-insurance-policies.htm>
<http://www.usatoday.com/money/general/2002/02/21/slave-newspaper.htm>

New York City-based companies profited from slavery in a number of ways long after slavery was abolished in New York State. They loaned money to Southern and Caribbean planters, traded goods produced by slave labors such as cotton and sugar, and participated in the illegal trans-Atlantic slave trade.

During the nineteenth century, New York-based insurance companies helped Southern slave owners protect their investment in slaves who were doing dangerous work. In 1847, James Moody of Chesterfield County, Virginia, hired a slave named Robert out to work as a miner at the Clover Hill Pits near Richmond. He insured Robert's life with the Nautilus Insurance Company, which later changed its name to New York Life. The insurance company charged the Virginia slave owner a \$5.81 premium plus a \$1 policy fee for one year. The company also sold insurance against the possible death of slaves in Richmond, Virginia, Little Rock Arkansas, Mobile, Alabama, Augusta and Savannah, Georgia, Charleston, South Carolina, Wilmington, North Carolina, Frankfort and Louisville, Kentucky, and Natchez, Mississippi. A history of the New York Life Company written in 1906 reports that 339 of the company's first 1000 policies were written on the lives of enslaved Africans.

Other companies involved in this business include banks that are now part of J.P Morgan Chase and the American International Group, which is a descendent of the U.S. Life Insurance Co., which insured the lives of slaves in the pre Civil War era. Of the 173 policies from AIG issued a total of 173 insurance policies, the majority of them in Kentucky. These policies were primarily related to the operation of riverboats. An unpublished study by Cheryl Rhan-Hsin Chen of the University of California-San Francisco and Gary Simon, Stern School of Business, New York University, suggests that these insurance policies probably lost money for the companies.

Because of mergers, many major media companies in the New York area are part of companies whose newspapers ran ads promoting slavery or the recapture of runaways in the pre-Civil War era. They include the Tribune Company, owner of the *Baltimore Sun*, which also owns Long Island's *Newsday* and WPIX in New York City. Gannett, the publisher of *USA Today*, also owns newspaper that carried slave ads. Among them is the Montgomery (Ala.) *Advisor* and *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville). In the New York area, Gannett owns the *Journal News* (Westchester), the *Ithaca Journal*, *Observer-Dispatch* (Utica), *Poughkeepsie Journal*, *Press & Sun-Bulletin* (Binghamton), *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, *Star-Gazette* (Elmira), and WGRZ-TV (Buffalo).

Questions

1. How did slaveholders protect their investments?
2. How many enslaved Africans did New York Life insure?
3. What companies were connected to slavery?
4. What companies ran ads that promoted slavery?
5. Do you think the companies today have a responsibility for what happened in the past?

B. Documenting 19th century New York's Involvement in the Cuban Sugar Trade and Slavery

1. "Cuban Affairs"

Source: *The New York Times*, November 15, 1852, p. 1.

"The policy of the Government has been extremely liberal to the producers of sugar, with the purpose of building up and fostering that interest as the most productive of revenue to the crown. Great privileges have been secured to the sugar planter, such as exemption from all direct taxes except tithes, and immunity from the sale of their estates by any process to satisfy the claims of creditors. Very many of the planters are large borrowers of money, and I have been informed by capitalists that, owing to the last provision, the current rate of interest on their loans is not less than fifteen per cent, at the same time that the notes of merchants and retailers are readily discounted at six per cent. There is no limit to the rate of interest established by law. A very large capital is required to "make a sugar estate." But when the requisite money is at hand, the prices of land are so low that to begin from the foundation is the preferable way for a planter to establish himself. This accounts for the exorbitant usury they are willing to pay. But the more usual way of getting possession of estates is to purchase them in full operation by paying five or ten per cent down, and paying a certain sum, frequently as low as two and a half per cent per annum till the whole be paid. An estate, such as is sold in this way, consists of land, negroes, horses, mules cattle, hogs, machinery and everything appertaining to a complete establishment. I have heard of sales where the first crop would reimburse the first payment, and each successive crop provide for the current payment, and leave the purchaser from two to four times as much more for regular income. Thus an estate was sold for \$450,000-\$50,000 being paid down, and in ninety days the maturing crop produced \$50,000, and the remaining \$400,000 of the purchase money was payable in annual installments of \$10,000, without interest, and the annual product continues not less than \$50,000. Cane is seldom planted oftener than once in five years, and on a majority of estates not oftener than once in ten years. When estates are sold, they are sold entire, as above described. The negroes and other stock are not valued separately unless they are separately sold. The rule as to treatment of negroes is said to be 'plenty of feed and plenty of work.'

The slaves are driven to the field at dawn, after breakfasting before it is light enough to work; have rest and dinner at noon, work till dark, and then supper and locked up to sleep. Marriage is unknown among them – most of the planters pay no regard to breeding slaves, it is cheaper to buy 'green' ones from Africa than to raise them, and intercourse between the sexes, when permitted at all, is promiscuous. The African trade is now flourishing, after a nearly total interruption under Concha, who refused the usual bribes, and exerted himself to prevent the importation of slaves with so much success that their value increased about fifty per cent."

Questions

1. How did the the government of Cuba respond to slavery and the slave trade? In your opinion, why did the government take this stand?
2. What is the impact of the fact that it is cheaper to import new Africans from Africa than to promote population growth in Cuba?

2. William Cullen Bryant - Letters of a Traveller (1849)

Source: Letter XLIX, Negroes in Cuba, www.gutenberg.net/1/1/0/1/11013/11013-h/11013-h.htm

"A gang of black women were standing in the secadero or drying place, among the lumps of clayed sugar, beating them small with mallets; before them, walked to and fro the major domo, with a cutlass by his side and a whip in his hand, I asked him how a planter could increase his stock of slaves. "There is no difficulty," he replied, "slaves are still brought to the island from Africa. The other day five hundred were landed on the sea-shore to the south of this; for you must know, Senor, that we are but three or four leagues from the coast." "Was it done openly?" I inquired. "Publicamente, Senor, publicamente; they were landed on the sugar estate of El Pastor, and one hundred and seven more died on the passage from Africa." "Did the government know of it?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Of course the government knows it," said he; "every body else knows it." The truth is, that the slave-trade is now fully revived; the government conniving at it, making a profit on the slaves imported from Africa, and screening from the pursuit of the English the pirates who bring them. There could scarcely believe any arrangement of coast more favorable for smuggling slaves into a country, than the islands and long peninsulas, and many channels of the southern shore of Cuba. Here the mangrove thickets, sending down roots into the brine from their

long branches that stretch over the water, form dense screens on each side of the passages from the main ocean to the island, and render it easy for the slaver and his boats to lurk undiscovered by the English men-of-war.

Questions

1. What were the women doing?
2. How does a Cuban sugar planter get more workers for his plantation?
3. In your opinion, why is this tolerated even though it is illegal?

3. The Cuban Travel Diary of Joseph J. Dimock (February 16-18, 1859)

Source: Perez, L. (1998). *Impression of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources).

Wednesday, February 16, 1859: “This estate I am informed is a small one being about one mile in extent each way, but every available piece of land well stocked with cane. It is like nearly all others, laid out in a circle one mile in diameter, the intervening land being waste, or belonging to the government. It is situated near the great savannah, De La Palma, which is scarcely cultivated. The number of slaves here is about one hundred in all, men, women, and children, and about a dozen hired Creoles, and the number of boxes of sugar produced about 2,000. Some of the larger estates have a much greater number of slaves and make much more sugar. One, the estate of San Martin about three leagues from here, has about 1,500 hands and make annually about 25,000 boxes of sugar, the average price of which is about \$18 a box, so the gross receipts of the estate will amount to at least \$450,000, and the profits on this are at least twenty percent. You see that sugar making is a lucrative business. When the crop is a good one, as it is this year being usually large and the prices well up.”

Friday, February 18, 1859: “The cane is ready for cutting about the middle of December, and it is continued until all is cut, generally finishing about the first of May.... A few days after being cut the new cane commences springing up, so the first cutting this year is the first ready for cutting season next season. The cutting of the cane is done by the Negroes of both sexes, with a long heavy knife called a *machete*, and the stalks only put upon the cart to be carried to the mill; the leaves and tops are left upon the field and answer the purpose of manure, except the portion saved for food of the horses and cattle on the place, of which they are very fond, preferring it to corn leaves. . . . The cane is brought to the mill in huge carts, and the grinding is performed by means of a steam engine, which after pressing the juice from the stalk throws off the refuse, which is called *bagasse*, and this after being dried in the sun, constitutes the fuel for fires to boil the juice.... While boiling, the Negroes beat it with long wooden paddles, and sing a kind of medley and chant, which is peculiar to the sugarhouse. I could hardly make out the words but it sounded like, ‘a-a cha candala e bla-eb la fuerte-echa candala,’ etc., etc., which is a cry to the firemen to put on more heat, more heat, etc. This monotonous chant is heard without intermission day and night the Negro cannot work without talking or singing and each new gang take up the same song. . . . During the grinding season the Negroes are divided into two gangs, in order to work all night, and to avoid the want of fresh hands, changing at midnight. Every ten days or so the grinding is stopped for two or three days, to give an opportunity to clean the pans, boiler and engine and to give the hands a rest. While at work the Negroes are continually singing their African melodies and keeping time by beating the boiling sugar of which I believe I have just spoken. . . . They are well treated, and well fed, but as to clothing it is difficult to keep much of anything like clothing on them during the day, they seem contented and if they get enough to eat and occasionally a cigar to smoke they rarely complain. They are constitutionally indolent, and have no more judgment than an animal, consequently there are always some in the hospital. With a good owner whipping is rare, but the most common punishment is placing in the stocks for a few hours, or solitary confinement in the calaboose, and fed on bread and water.”

Questions

1. How is the sugar cane prepared and turned into sugar?
2. Why do the enslaved Africans chant while they work?
3. Describe the estate that Dimock visited?
4. How were the enslaved Africans treated on the plantation?
5. In your opinion, why is the sugar business so lucrative?

4. Output of Brooklyn Sugar Refiners (1857-1876)

Source: Wilder, C. (2000). *A Covenant with Color* (NY: Columbia University), p. 57

Refinery	Founded	Daily Capacity in lbs.
Havemeyer & Townsend	1857	300,000
Havemeyer & Elder (formerly H&T)	1863	1,000,000
Havemeyer & Elder (rebuilt after the fire)	1883	3,000,000
Dick & Meyer	1863	900,000
Wintjen, Dick, and Schumacher	1865	200,000
Cuba Sugar Refining	Pre-1867	75,000
Long Island Sugar Refining Company	Pre-1867	200,000
Burgher, Hurlbut, & Livingston	Pre-1867	100,000
Gandy, Sheppard & Co.	Pre-1867	100,000
Moller, Sierck & Company	Ca. 1868	450,000
John Mollenhauer & Sons	1869	Not known
Decastro & Donner 1 & 2	1870/1873	1,200,000
Greenpoint Sugar Refining Company	1871	1,500,000
Fulton Sugar Refining Company	Pre-1867	Not known
Brooklyn Sugar Refining (formerly LISR)	1876	600,000

Sugar Leaving the Port of New York (1863)

Month	Sugar (lbs.)	Molasses (lbs.)	% of all Commerce
May	2,683,300	1,500,800	27.5
June	2,853,900	1,093,300	37.4
July	2,557,000	807,500	39.6
August	1,703,800	999,700	26.4
September	1,375,200	551,800	13.3
November	2,116,400	886,600	14.2
December	851,800	371,100	14.1

Questions

1. Which sugar refinery in Brooklyn, New York had the largest capacity?
2. What is the total capacity of Brooklyn sugar refiners?
3. What event is taking place in the United States in 1863?
4. How many pounds of sugar and molasses left the port of New York in November, 1863?
5. On the average, what percentage of the port of new York's commerce was in sugar and molasses?
6. In your opinion, why didn't the United States government intervene to satop the Cuban sugar trade?

5. Tammany Hall on the Cuban Question (1859), *The New York Times*, March 15, 1859, 1, 4.

"The New-York Democracy assembled, last night, in Tammany Hall, for the purpose of expressing their views as to the policy of extending "the Area of Freedom," *àpropos* of the movement regarding the acquisition of Cuba. The meeting was a large one, and would have been larger, but for the rain which sent away numbers who, waiting the opening of the door, had gathered round a bonfire that sputtered for a while in front of the Hall. . . . The resolutions, which were equally numerous, may be summed up in this one, which was last: Resolved, That the bond of mutual advantages and interests between the United States and Cuba makes it imperative upon the former to use all just exertions and make all reasonable sacrifices for the liberation of the latter. . . . Democracy, like the ocean tide, will not back at the bidding of any King. . . . The resolutions. . . were adopted unanimously.

Senator Brown, of Mississippi, was the first speaker. His appearance drew forth loud and repeated plaudits. He commenced by declaring that Cuba must and shall be ours. . . . In wanting Cuba, we wanted territorial expansion. . . . But we wanted Cuba, not only for the purpose of territorial expansion, but of national defence (*sic*), and in order to extend our agricultural resources, for we wanted more sugar and cheaper sugar. Ten again, we wanted Cuba for an

extension of our commerce. But better, he wanted Cuba for the extension Slavery. That was his individual wish. In that he spoke for himself, and not for his party.”

Question: Why did the meeting and speakers want to annex Cuba?

6. An Old Merchant's Death (1882)

Source: Singer, A. “NYC’s Complicity with Slavery Supports Call for Reparations,” *Amsterdam News*, 2/12/03

On May 25, 1882, *The New York Times* reported the death of Moses Taylor, “a well-known banker,” at age 76. Taylor died of natural causes, leaving behind an estate valued at between 40 and 50 million dollars, an incredible sum for that era. According to the obituary, “Taylor’s death occasioned earnest expressions of regret in down-town business circles” and in “Wall-street and vicinity many flags were flown at half-mast.” During his long career, Moses Taylor was a sugar merchant with offices on South Street at the East River seaport, a finance capitalist and an industrialist, as well as a banker. He was a member of the New York City Chamber of Commerce and a major stockholder, board member or officer in firms that later merged with or developed into Citibank, Con Edison, Bethlehem Steel and ATT. During the Civil War, Taylor worked with Secretary of the Treasury Chase and New York City’s leading bankers to finance the Northern war effort.

Taylor became a member of the board of the City Bank in 1837, and served as its president from 1855 until his death. In the nineteenth century City Bank, a predecessor of today’s Citibank, primarily issued short term credits to locally based merchants to facilitate the import-export trade. Taylor’s personal resources and role as business agent for the leading exporter of Cuban sugar to the United States proved invaluable to the bank, helping it survive financial panics in 1837 and 1857 that bankrupted many of its competitors.

Taylor generally earned a commission for brokering the sale of Cuban sugar in the port of New York, as well as additional fees for exchanging currency and negotiating the New York City Custom’s House. He supervised the investment of profits by the sugar planters in United States banks, gas companies, railroads, and real estate, purchased and shipped supplies and machinery to Cuba, operated six of his own boats and numerous chartered vessels in the Cuban trade, repaired and equipped other boats with goods and provisions, provided sugar planters with financing to arrange for land purchases and the acquisition of a labor force, and even supervised the planters’ children when they came to New York City as students or to serve as apprentices for mercantile firms.

Questions

1. Who was Moses Taylor?
2. How did slavery and the Cuban sugar trade support the development of major American corporations?

7. Mayor William F. Havemeyer (Obituary). *New York Daily Tribune*, December 1, 1874, p. 53

William F. Havemeyer was born . . . on Feb. 12, 1804. His parents were German, and came to this country in the latter parts of the last century. His father, Wm. Havemeyer, was a refiner of sugars. . . . In 1823 he was graduated at Columbia College. His learnings were toward business pursuits, and he learned that trade in the refinery of his father. . . . Mr. Havemeyer only remained in the sugar business fourteen years after he became the head of his firm, and retired in 1842. . . . Mr. Havemeyer’s early retirement from active business pursuits did not prevent his connection with prominent interests with which his investments of his property had to do. In 1851 he was chosen President of the Bank of North America. . . . For many years before his death he had large interests in the Pennsylvania Coal Company. . . . He held a large amount of stock in the Long Island Railroad, of which he was Vice-President, and he was connected with an insurance company and other corporations. For several years after his retirement from the sugar firm, public affairs took up much of his time. In 1844 he was a Presidential elector on the Polk and Dallas ticket. In the following year he was nominated by the Democratic party for the Mayoralty. The nomination was generally acceptable to the party, and Mr. Havemeyer was readily elected. . . . Four years later Mr. Havemeyer was again nominated as the Democratic candidate for Mayor, and was elected. . . . At the outbreak of the war and during its progress, Mr. Havemeyer was outspoken in his advocacy of the Union cause, and always expressed confidence that the rebellion would be put down, although he did not come so conspicuously before the public in connection with these things as he had in former years. He always favored a decisive and uncompromising policy, and was an early advocate of the abolition of Slavery as a war measure.

Questions

1. Who was William Havemeyer?
2. How did slavery and the Cuban sugar trade support the development of major American corporations?

AIM: History-Mystery: How did New York City's economic and political elite respond to the threat of Southern Secession?

BACKGROUND: As tension increased between the North and South during the 1850s, the New York City merchant elite felt pressured to reassure Southern allies that they could depend on them for political support. In October 1859, a mass meeting was held at Cooper Union to organize a Democratic Vigilant Association to counter growing Republican and anti-slavery sentiment. Among the prominent founders of the committee were August Belmont, William Astor, Moses Taylor, William Havemeyer and Samuel Tilden. Belmont headed a major Wall Street brokerage and was the American Agent for the European Rothchild banking interests. William Astor managed his family's Manhattan-based real estate empire. Moses Taylor was a leading industrialist and financier involved in the Cuban sugar trade. William Havemeyer was elected mayor of New York City three times and owned sugar refineries. Samuel Tilden was a corporate lawyer, Governor of New York, and the Democratic Party candidate for president in 1876.

DO NOW: Examine "Causes of the Civil War" time line

1850. Congress passes a new Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850.

1852. Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin.

1854. Passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act leads to open fighting between pro and anti-slavery forces in Kansas.

1857, March. By a 7-2 vote, the Supreme Court declares in the Dred Scott decision that slavery can not be barred from the territories.

1857. Defeat of the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution in Kansas.

1858. Stephen Douglas defeats Abraham Lincoln in campaign for Senate from Illinois after a series of debates that attract national attention to the issue of slavery in the territories.

1859. John Brown and his supporters seize the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry in Virginia hoping to start a slave rebellion.

1860, November. Abraham Lincoln is elected President of the United States with 60% of the electoral vote but under 40% of the popular vote.

1860, December. South Carolina votes to secede from the union.

1861, February. Seven southern states meet in Alabama to establish the Confederacy. Four other states later join.

1861, March. Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as President of the United States.

1861, April. South Carolina opens fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor.

MOTIVATION: Was compromise between the North and South over slavery possible?

If you had to choose one point in time in this chronology, when do you think Civil War became inevitable? Why?

ACTIVITIES: Students will be split into groups to work on the primary documents. Each group will read each document and answer the questions that correspond. Students will then write an essay as a group. Each group should answer the following questions in their essay: How was northern merchants connected to the slave system, What did northern merchants do in response to the possibility of secession, How was northern business affected by the possibility of secession, What was life like for enslaved Africans in Cuba and how did northern people view them, and are your views about slavery being a southern institution changed after reading the documents? Explain.

SUMMARY QUESTION: Was the effort to compromise with the South sound political leadership or a betrayal of principles and the north?

Lesson developed by Hane Okita

A. Horace Greeley Criticizes New York City's Merchant Elite

Source: *New York Tribune*, March 1, 1858. In Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery, The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict*. New York/Russell & Russell, 154-155.

Horace Greeley was the founder of the *New York Tribune* and edited the newspaper for over thirty years. In this editorial, Greeley sharply criticizes New York City's leading merchants for supporting the Lecompton Constitution that would permit the Kansas to enter the union as a slave state. He accuses them of endorsing "cheating and swindling."

"They fully adopt and approve the results of years of frauds, violence, outrage, and crime. They sustain the fruits of a political conspiracy conducted and perfected by loaferish, drunken, armed vagabonds, whose presence in their counting rooms or their offices, their halls, or their ante-chambers, they would not for an instance tolerate. They put themselves before the world, the confederates and accomplices after the fact, of the most scandalous frauds ever perpetrated in our history. . . . We wish to ask gentlemen of probity, of character, . . . who are opposed to forgery in private, why they desire to sustain it in public affairs? Is cheating and swindling any better in Kansas than it is on South Street, that they should countenance and approve it there while they would denounce it here? . . . We say, then, that for what you are doing you have not a shadow of an excuse, and that your volunteered approval of the plan of admitting Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution makes you sharers and participators in the guilt of crimes which should make the nation blush. . . . By your public acts you are undermining public and private virtue - you are shaking the pillars of national integrity. How do you appear before the country? Why, as substantial citizens, honorable citizens, high-minded citizens claiming consideration for those moral qualities that adorn private life; yet, under no pressure of party or personal exigency, deliberately coming out, and under your own signature, voluntarily endorsing and approving the crimes of lying, fraud and forgery."



A statue of Horace Greeley outside New York City Hall.

Questions

1. What was the Lecompton Constitution?
2. Why does Greeley accuse New York's merchant elite of supporting "cheating and swindling"?
3. Greeley believes that their actions endanger the nation. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

B. Correspondence between a New York Merchant and a Southern Customer (1860)

Source: *New York Evening Post*, October 31, 1860. In Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery, The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict*. New York/Russell & Russell, p. 198.

"We notice your order and especially your remarks in relation to the Presidential election. We regret extremely the tone of our southern correspondence, and the threatened consequences in case Mr. Lincoln should be the choice of the majority of the people in the United States, which now seems hardly doubtful. The state of feeling in your section is unfortunate, not only from patriotic and fraternal considerations, but from commercial ones as well. We must, of course, decline to fill your order, and indeed to sell to your section, except for cash, even to customers to whom we have long done business with the greatest confidence and pleasure as well as profit. . . . We are, therefore, compelled to give more attention to extending our trade westward and northward, where the avenues of trade will be safer and its rewards surer than where the cause of an election is considered the cause of war."

Questions

1. The Northern merchant is responding to a letter from a Southern customer. Based on this response, what do you think the Southern customer wrote?
2. What is the Northern merchant's response?
3. In your opinion, why has he made this decision?

C. Volunteer Democratic Association of New York (1860)

Source: *North American and U.S. Gazette*, November 6, 1860. In Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery, The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict*. New York/Russell & Russell, p. 173.

“The ‘Volunteer Democratic Association of New York’ made the following appeal to the Breckenridge and Lane, Bell and Everett, and Douglas and Johnson State Central Committees of the State of New York (*Journal of Commerce*, August 21, 1860). Gentlemen - When the interests of the common country are at stake, all good citizens should concur in promoting the unity of action without which the best intentions are as nothing, and the most energetic movements serve only to disorganize. We, an association of the Union-loving, practical men, brought together by a sense of common danger, are anxious to impress upon our fellow citizens thorough you, their representatives, the fact that “in union there is strength,” a great truth, on a conviction of which our national prosperity is based, and of which the wisest of our statesmen seem, for the past year, to have entirely lost sight.”

Questions

1. According to this brief article, who are the members of the Volunteer Democratic Association of New York and what are their goals?
2. Breckenridge, Bell and Douglas are members of the Democratic Party who are all running for President against Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 election. What appeal is the Volunteer Democratic Association of New York making to them?

D. Hiram Ketchum on the Secession Crisis (1860)

Source: *Journal of Commerce*, December 17, 1860. In Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery, The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict*. New York/Russell & Russell, p. 228.

“We should not talk as though all was gone because a president has been chosen contrary to our wishes. We have still a legislature and a judiciary that are opposed to him. Why should we despair? . . . Give us time to organize and combine [he went on], and we will put down any party that should attempt to do what the South fears the Republican Party will do. To our fellow citizens, then, at the South, we say, we do not want you to place us in a false position. We have given 300,000 votes for the Union and the Constitution, and we want you to stand by us in the Union. We can right the wrong in the Union-only we require time. Give us time and we will show you that it is not true that the majority of the people of the North hate your institutions. . . . We have stood by you in the political contest through which we have just passed. We have asserted your rights as earnestly as though they had been our own. You cannot refuse, therefore, to listen to us, and to weigh with becoming deliberation the reasons we have for believing that the wrongs which have led to the existing alienation between the two great sections of the country, may, with your cooperation, especially redressed. . . . It is a mistake [the address declared] to imagine that the whole Republican party, or even the great bulk of it, is really at heart animated by any spirit hostile to the rights or menacing to the interests of the South. Anti-slaveryism has constituted but one of various political elements combined in that “Republicanism” which has elected Mr. Lincoln. We pledge ourselves to you, that whenever a fair opportunity shall be presented a district and simple vote of the north upon full recognition of all your constitutional rights, a very large majority will be found true to the Constitution, and true to the fraternal relations established by it between you and us.”

Questions

1. What historic event is Ketchum writing in response to?
2. Why does Ketchum believe it is a mistake to “despair”?
3. What does Ketchum say to the South?

E. Message of New York City Mayor Fernando Wood

As a Congressman in the 1840s, Fernando Wood was a strong supporter of slavery and the South. He continued his support of the South when he became Mayor of New York City in the 1850s. On January 8, 1861, *The New York Times* published Mayor Wood's annual report to the city's Common Council. In this message, Wood spoke about the city's options as the United States federal union appeared to be dissolving.

It would seem that a dissolution of the Federal Union is inevitable. . . . With our aggrieved brethren of the Slave States we have friendly relations and a common sympathy. We have not participated in the warfare upon their constitutional rights or their domestic institutions. While other portions of our State have unfortunately been imbued with the fanatical spirit, the City of New York has unfalteringly preserved the integrity of its principles in adherence to the compromises of the Constitution. Our ships have penetrated to every clime, and so have New York capital, energy and enterprise found their way to every State. New York should endeavor to preserve a continuance of uninterrupted intercourse with every section. . . . When disunion has become a fixed and certain fact, why may not New York disrupt the bands which bind her to a corrupt and venal master. New York, as a *Free City*, may shed the only light and hope for a future reconstruction of our once blessed Confederacy.



Mayor Fernando Wood

Questions

1. What crisis is facing New York City and the United States in January, 1861?
2. What path does Mayor Wood recommend for New York City? Why does he make this recommendation?
3. In your opinion, what would have happened to New York City and the United States if the city had tried to follow this course of action? Explain.

F. New York City Merchants Demand Compromise with the South (1861)

Source: L.C. Chittenden, *Proceeding of the Peace Convention*. In Philip S. Foner, *Business & Slavery, The New York Merchants & the Irrepressible Conflict*. New York/Russell & Russell, p. 43.

William Dodge claimed to represent the merchants of New York City whom he described as a “body of men. . . who have a deep and abiding interest in the happiness and prosperity of the country and in the preservation of the Union.” According to the *Journal of Commerce*, February 21, 1861, Dodge's appeal was acclaimed by businessmen throughout the North.

“I speak to you now as a business man, as a merchant of New York, the commercial metropolis of the nation. I am no politician. I have no interest except such as is common to the people. But let me assure you that even I can scarcely realize, much less describe the stagnation which has now settled upon the business and commerce of that great city, caused solely by the unsettled and uncertain conditions of the questions which we are endeavoring to arrange and settle here All alike, employers and employed, with all dependent upon them, are looking anxiously and I wish I could say hopefully, to the Congress of the United State, or to this conference, as the only sources from which help may come I am not here to argue or discuss constitutional questions. That duty belongs to gentlemen of the legal profession. I have lived under the Constitution. I venerate it and its authors as highly as any man here. But I do not venerate it so highly as to induce me to witness the destruction of the Government rather than see the Constitution amended or improved. I regret that the gentlemen composing the committee did not approach these questions more in the manner of merchants or commercial men. . . . We would have left open as few questions as possible. Those we would have arranged by mutual concessions. Mr. President, I speak as a merchant. I have a deep and abiding interest in my country and sorrow as I witness the dangers by which it is surrounded. But I am here for peace.”

Questions

1. When is this statement reported in the newspapers?
2. What is happening in the United States at this time?
3. Dodge wishes the conflicts in the nation had been addressed “in the manner of merchants or commercial men.” He supports “mutual concessions” and says “I am here for peace.” In your opinion, what concessions are Dodge and his supporters proposing? Why do you think this is the case?

AIM: Why did New York's African Americans demand the right to fight in the Civil War?

BACKGROUND: Students will ponder if it is a privilege to fight for one's country and discover the reasons that some African Americans wanted the opportunity to fight in the Civil War. They will read an excerpt from William Brown's speech to the American Anti-Slavery Society where he declares that African Americans should be allowed to fight. Despite the Declaration of Independence's promise of human equality, there were ideological inconsistencies in the early nation. Many leading New Yorkers, including some White opponents of slavery, believed in the racial inferiority of African Americans, opposed full political rights for African Americans.

MATERIALS: Students will view the movie "Glory." Students will pick one major character from the movie. Students will then write a journal from that character's perspective during the course of the movie, allowing for at least five different entries at different points in the movie. Students should describe what is going on around them and how they feel during the war, based on the movie.

DO NOW: "Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States." - Frederick Douglass

What did Douglass mean by the "brass letters, U.S."?

Why did Douglass believe it was so important for African Americans to get them?

MOTIVATION: Students will view a brief segment from the movie *Glory*. What did African Americans hope to prove by participation in the Civil War?

ACTIVITIES: Read and discuss excerpt from Brown's speech and Carney's letter to *The Liberator*.

SUMMARY: Why would African Americans demand the right to fight in the Civil War?

HOMEWORK: Imagine you were a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society present at the New York meeting. Make a flyer promoting the right of African Americans to fight for the Union in the Civil War. Use your own ideas as well as those in Brown's speech and the letter by Carney.

APPLICATION: Students pick characters from the movie *Glory*. Each student writes a journal from his or her character's perspective. Create at least five different entries for different points in the movie. Entries should describe what is going on and how the character feels about events.

Lesson developed by Stephanie Sienkiewicz and Ron Widelec

A. William Wells Brown Demands the Right to Fight (1862)

Speech, Annual Meeting in New York of the American Anti-Slavery Society, May 6, 1862

Source: *The Liberator*, May 16, 1862. Aptheker, p. 470

William Wells Brown was born on a plantation near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1814. His mother was a slave and his father was a white plantation owner. Brown served several slave-masters before escaping to Ohio in 1834. He adopted the name of his friend, Wells Brown, a Quaker who had helped him obtain his freedom. He and his family moved to New York State in the 1840s, and he began lecturing for the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society and the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (1843-49). He worked closely with William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. Brown worked for nine years as a steamboatman on Lake Erie and as a conductor for the Underground Railroad in Buffalo, New York. Brown then settled in Boston and published his autobiography, *Narrative of William W. Brown, a Fugitive Slave*, in 1847. In 1853 Brown published what is believed to be the first novel published by an African-American. “*Clotel*” is a story about Thomas Jefferson's relationship with a slave mistress, Sally Hemings. He also authored the first play by an African American. William Wells Brown died on the 6th November, 1884, in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

“All I demand for the black man is, that the white people shall take their heels off his neck, and let him have a chance to rise by his own efforts. One of the first things that I heard when I arrived in the free States—and it was the strangest thing to me that I heard—was, that the slaves cannot take care of themselves. I came off without any education. Society did not take me up; I took myself up. I did not ask society to take me up. All I asked of the white people was, to get out of the way, and give me a chance to come from the South to the North. That was all I asked, and I went to work with my own hands. And that is all I demand for my brethren of the South to-day— that they shall have an opportunity to exercise their own physical and mental abilities. Give them that, and I will leave the slaves to take care of themselves, and be satisfied with the result.

Now, Mr. President, I think that the present contest has shown clearly that the fidelity of the black people of this country to the cause of freedom is enough to put to shame every white man in the land who would think of driving us out of the country, provided freedom shall be proclaimed. I remember well, when Mr. Lincoln's proclamation went forth, calling for the first 75,000 men, that among the first to respond to that call were the colored men. A meeting was held in Boston, crowded as I never saw a meeting before; meetings were held in Rhode Island and Connecticut, in New York and Philadelphia, and throughout the West, responding to the President's call. Although the colored men in many of the free States were disfranchised, abused, taxed without representation, their children turned out of the schools, nevertheless, they, went on, determined to try to discharge their duty to the country, and to save it from the tyrannical power of the slaveholders of the South. But the cry went forth—“We won't have the Negroes; we won't have anything to do with them; we won't fight with them; we won't have them in the army, nor about us.” Yet scarcely had you got into conflict with the South, when you were glad to receive the news that contrabands brought. ...The nation is glad to receive the news from the contraband. ...[F]or fifty years the black man has not had the privilege of touching the mails of the United States with his little finger; but we are glad enough now to have the Negro bring the mail in his pocket! ...They have tried to keep the Negro out of the war, but they could not keep him out, and now they drag him in, with his news, and are glad to do so. ...The black man welcomes your armies and your fleets, takes care of your sick, is ready to do anything, from cooking up to shouldering a musket; and yet these would-be patriots and professed lovers of the land talk about driving the Negro out!”

Questions

1. Did your opinions about fighting in war change after reading the excerpt?
2. What reasons did William Brown list for wanting to fight?
3. Who disagreed with allowing African Americans to fight?
4. Why does Brown think those who opposed allowing African Americans to fight in the Civil War are hypocritical?
5. What were some notable accomplishments in the life of William Wells Brown?

B. William H. Carney, Sergeant Company C, 54th Massachusetts, Volunteers (1863)

Source: *The Liberator*, November 6, 1863, in Aptheker, H. (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. V. 1. 484-485

Dear Sir,

Complying with your request, I send you the following history, pertaining to my birth, parentage, social and religious experience and standing; in short, a concise epitome of my life. I undertake to perform it in my poor way:

I was born in Norfolk, Va., in 1840; my father's name was William Carney; my mother's name before her marriage was Ann Dean; she was the property of one Major Carney, but, at his death, she, with all his people, was by his will made free. In my fourteenth year, when I had no work to do, I attended a private and secret school kept in Norfolk by a minister. In my fifteenth year I embraced the gospel; at that time I was also engaged in the coasting trade with my father.

In 1850, I left the sea for a time, and my father set out to look for a place to live in peace and freedom. He first stopped in Pennsylvania-but he rested not there; the black man was not secure on the soil where the Declaration of Independence was written. He went far. Then he visited the empire State-great New York-whose chief ambition seemed to be for commerce and gold, and with her unceasing struggle for supremacy she heard not the slave; she only had time to spurn the man with a sable skin, and make him feel that he was an alien in his native land.

At last he set his weary feet upon the sterile rocks of "Old Massachusetts." The very air he breathed put enthusiasm into his spirit. O, yes, he found a refuge from oppression in the old Bay State. He selected as his dwelling place the city of New Bedford, where "Liberty Hall" is a sacred edifice. Like the Temple of Diana, which covered the virgins from harm in olden time, so old Liberty Hall in New Bedford protects the oppressed slave of the 19th Century. After stopping a short time, he sent for his family, and there they still dwell. I remained in the city with the family, pursuing the avocation of a jobber of work for stores, and at such places as I could find employment. I soon formed connection with a church under charge of the Rev. Mr. Jackson, now chaplain of the 55th Mass. Volunteers.

Previous to the formation of colored troops, I had a strong inclination to prepare myself for the ministry; but when the country called for all persons, I could best serve my God by serving my country and my oppressed brothers. The sequel is short-I enlisted for the war.

I am your humble and obedient servant, WILLIAM H. CARNEY, Sergeant Co. C, 54th Mass. Vols.,

Questions

Who was William Carney's grandfather?

Why did Carney decide not to live in New York?

Why did Carney enlist in the Union Army?



Thomas Waterman. *The Volunteer*, 1865.
Metropolitan Museum of Art

AIM: Why did Civil War draft resisters turn against New York City’s African American population?

BACKGROUND: One of the most disturbing events in the history of the United States and New York State was the Civil War Draft Riot in New York City in 1863. The Draft Riot was the largest urban upheaval of the nineteenth century in the United States. For four days, White mobs, primarily Irish, roamed through Manhattan in defiance of the police and a small garrison of federal troops. More than one hundred people, mostly African Americans, were killed during the riot and an estimated twelve hundred people were injured. The Draft Riot was in response to an unpopular military conscription law passed by Congress and signed by President Abraham Lincoln in May, 1863. The new law allowed the affluent to avoid military service by providing substitutes or by paying \$300. Many of the first draftees in New York were slated to be Irish immigrants who were too poor to pay this tax.

New York City was ripe for an explosion when the draft lottery began on Saturday, July 11. Although they had lived side-by-side peacefully in some neighborhoods of the city, Blacks and White immigrant workers were often pitted against each other in competition for low paying jobs. In August 1862, 2,000-3,000 Irish workers threaten to burn the Watson and Lorillard tobacco factories because they had hired black women and children to replace white workers. In March, 1863, 1,000 strikers attacked Blacks hired by the Erie Railroad to move cotton bales housed at Pier 36 on Duane Street. After the outbreak of the Civil War, African Americans who had been freed were used to break strikes at the Staten Island ferry, the Customs House and dock strikes. “Copperhead” newspapers and politicians, including former Mayor Fernando Wood and Governor Horatio Seymour, contributed to the tension in the city by stirring up anti-war sentiment. The last straw was the release of the casualty lists from the Battle of Gettysburg that same weekend.

On Monday, July 13, a mass protest against the draft in New York City was transformed into a riot that attacked government building and the pro-war press, and eventually turned on the city’s African American population. From newspaper accounts, it appears that the rioters, most of whom were probably Irish immigrants, turned on the City’s Black population after police had opened fire on protesters killing and wounding many people. They destroyed the city’s orphanage for Black children, attacked and lynched African Americans caught on the streets, and threatened employers who hired Black workers. Hundreds of African American refugees from the rioting escaped to Weeksville and other largely Black settlements in Brooklyn. On the fourth day of the riot, federal troops from the Union army at Gettysburg arrived in the city and finally restored peace.

Commentators make a mistake when they talk about the Draft Riots as a single 4-day action that was either directed from above or has a unified goal. At most, it represents a shifting coalition of different forces with different goals. Certainly there was an effort to provide direction from above by segments of the city’s political and economic elite, but this was more an effort to manipulate popular unrest for political purposes than it is any actual control. An anti-draft demonstration began at 6 AM on Monday, but the riot did not begin until 4 PM in the afternoon. A series of crucial turning points transformed a political protest that enlisted the city’s organized workers and artisans into mob violence by unleashing the pent up anger and anguish of New York City’s largely Irish pre-industrial poor.

DO NOW: Examine Activity A: *The New York Times*, Headlines, 1863. Based on these headlines, what is happening in New York City?

MOTIVATION: Is protest legitimate during a time of war? Is rioting or violence justified if you feel your rights are being violated or you are under attack?

ACTIVITIES: Discuss the headlines from *The New York Times*. Based on what you have seen so far, were people justified in protesting against the draft in a time of war? In your opinion, how does a protest become a riot?

Discuss, how do historians decide if newspaper reports from the past are reliable as evidence?

Working in teams, student complete ACTIVITY SHEET B: *The New York Times* Covers Civil War Draft Riots.

SUMMARY QUESTION: Why did protests turn into riots and why did rioters turn against New York’s African American population?

HOMEWORK: Write an essay discussing the question, “If you were sitting on a jury trying rioters for murder and other crimes, would you find them guilty based on the evidence provided here? Why? Be sure to refer directly to the article from *The New York Times*.

APPLICATION: Read and discuss “The House Top” by Herman Melville

Lesson adapted from the New York State Great Irish Famine Curriculum

A. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, HEADLINES, 1863

THE CONSCRIPTION LAW. IMPORTANT PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT. May 9, 1863, p. 1

THE DRAFT BEGINS. July 11, 1863, p. 3

THE MOB IN NEW YORK. RESISTANCE TO THE DRAFT -- RIOTING AND BLOODSHED.
CONSCRIPTION OFFICES SACKED AND BURNED. PRIVATE DWELLINGS PILLAGED AND FIRED.
AN ARMORY AND A HOTEL DESTROYED. COLORED PEOPLE ASSAULTED -- AN UNOFFENDING
BLACK MAN HUNG. THE TRIBUNE OFFICE ATTACKED ---THE COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM
RANSACKED AND BURNED --- OTHER OUTRAGES AND INCIDENTS.
A DAY OF INFAMY AND DISGRACE. July 14, 1863, p. 1

THE REIGN OF THE RABBLE. LARGE NUMBERS KILLED.
STREETS BARRICADED, BUILDINGS BURNED. July 15, 1863, p. 1

ANOTHER DAY OF RIOTING. MOBS ARMED WITH RIFLES.
NEGROES HUNG. July 16, 1863, p. 1

THE RIOTS SUBSIDING. TRIUMPH OF THE MILITARY. July 17, 1863, p. 1

QUIET RESTORED. CONTINUED PRECAUTIONS OF AUTHORITIES. July 18, 1863, p. 1

THE DRAFT HERE AND ELSEWHERE. THE LAWS AND THE MOB.
AID FOR THE INJURED. JUSTICE TO THE VICTIMS. July 18, 1863, p. 1

THE LAW OF THE DRAFT. THE QUESTION OF EXEMPTIONS. July 19, 1863

B. *The New York Times* Covers Civil War Draft Riots

Historians often use newspaper accounts from the past to understand events. However, newspaper accounts have to be read with a critical eye.

Historians continually ask themselves questions like:

Are these article based on eyewitness accounts?

Are the witnesses reliable? Are they telling the full story?

Do the editorials and news article reflect the biases of the newspaper?

Because these articles are over one hundred years old, language and spelling are sometimes different from today.

Team Instructions

1. Working in teams of historians, examine the excerpts from the articles and editorials from *The New York Times* and answer the questions that follow each passage. Your team can decide to have all members read each article or to divide the articles up among team members.
2. Use the newspaper articles to construct a time line of events.
3. Teams should discuss the accuracy and biases of the reports. Whose voice is included in these excerpts? Whose voice is missing? Is there anything that makes you question the accounts? Explain.
4. Teams should discuss why people would protest during a time of war. Why did protests turn into riots? What actions, if any, should be taken against people who participated in the riots?
5. If you were sitting on a jury trying rioters for murder and other crimes, would you find them guilty based on the evidence provided here? Be prepared to explain your views to the class.

Chronology of Events from The New York Times

1. *New York Times* Editorial, Friday, February 20, 1863. “The Conscription Act, which has just passed the Senate, is the greatest pledge yet given that our government means to prevail, and will prevail. It is really the first assertion of a purpose to command the means of its own preservation. . . We say (it) is the best of all guarantees of its final success.”

2. *New York Times* Editorial, Friday, July 10, 1863. “The Administration is acting wisely in ordering the immediate enforcement of the draft . . . The conscription is necessary. Even after the late great victories, a new army of 800,000 men must get ready to move upon the Confederacy. Let the rebel States see that not only are they beaten now by the forces at present in the field, but that in the Fall they meet the same veteran armies 800,000 stronger.”

3. The Draft -- Regulations, Saturday, July 11, 1863. “All able-bodied male citizens of the United States and persons of foreign birth who shall have declared on oath their intention to become citizens . . . between the ages of 20 and 45, with certain exceptions, to be subject to draft. . . . Any person drafted and notified to appear may, on or before the day fixed for his appearance, furnish an acceptable substitute to take his place in the draft, or he may pay to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue . . . the sum of \$300.”

4. The Attack on the Armory in Second Avenue, July 14, 1863 (part 1). “At about 4 o’clock the crowd proceeded from . . . Lexington Avenue and Forty-fourth street to the armory situated on the corner of Second Avenue and Twenty-first street. The building was a large four story one, and was occupied for the manufacture of rifles for the Government. In the early part of the day the police authorities had placed in the building a large number of Policemen. Their instructions were to protect the building and the property inside, and to resist with force any attempt of the invaders to enter the premises. . . . At the time the first attempt was made to force the doors of the building, the mob amounted to from three to four thousand, the greater part of whom were boys. . . . The doors were burst open by means of heavy sledges, and the crowd made a rush to enter the building. Those in charge of the building, acting under instructions, fired upon those who were entering and four or five were wounded. One man was shot through the heart and died immediately.”

5. The Attack on the Armory in Second Avenue, July 14, 1863 (part 2). “By this time the Fire Department of the District arrived on the ground, and were preparing to work on the fire, but were prevented from doing so by the mob, who threatened them with instant death if their orders were disobeyed. The cars were stopped from running and the horses in several instances were killed. . . . The rioters meanwhile danced with fiendish delight before the burning building, while small boys sent showers of stones against the office, smashing its doors and windows. . . . The military soon appeared, but was immediately routed, they fled to the side streets.”

6. Burning of the Orphanage for Colored Children, July 14, 1863

“The Orphan Asylum for Colored Children was visited by the mob after 4 o’clock. . . . Hundreds, and perhaps thousands of the rioters, the majority of whom were women and children, entered the premises and in the most excited and violent manner they ransacked and plundered the building from cellar to garret. . . . It was a purely charitable institution. In it there are on an average 600 or 800 homeless colored orphans. . . . After an hour and a half of labor on the part of the mob, it was in flames in all parts.”

7. Outrage Upon Colored Persons, July 14, 1863. “Among the most cowardly features of the riot was the causeless and inhuman treatment of the negroes of the City. It seemed to be an understood thing throughout the city that the negroes should be attacked wherever found. As soon as one of these unfortunate people was spied, he was immediately set upon by a crowd of men. . . . There were probably not less than a dozen negroes beaten to death in different parts of the city during the day.”

8. Character of the Mob, July 14, 1863. “In the early part of the day yesterday, there were a number of respectable workmen and persons engaged in different occupations in the City, who were momentarily seduced from their

labors and their work-shops, and went with the crowds in the street. But they at once saw the horrible character of the mob and the atrocious work they had on hand; they heard their threats and saw their shocking brutalities, and were only too glad to get out from among them. At last the mob or mobs were composed of only the vilest men in the City, and there was not a crime conceivable, from firing houses to hanging negroes, of which they were not capable. . . . Our reporter observed in one gang, several women armed with sticks . . . ; but it is only justice to say that the voluble tongues of these women gave vent to their thoughts with an accentuation which was never acquired on this side of the Atlantic ocean.”

9. Eighteen Persons Reported Killed, July 15, 1863. “Between 12 and 1 o’clock yesterday, the rioters commenced their attack upon the Union Steam Works. . . . The rioters turned out in large force numbering from 4,000 to 5,000 people -- including children. . . . At 3 pm three hundred Policemen arrived upon the ground. . . . When the police made their appearance, the rioters attempted to escape by the rear windows, but too late. Finding themselves caught in a tight place, they made an attack on the Police. This assault the officers met by a volley from their revolvers and five of the mob were shot. . . . About twenty rioters remained in the building and there was but one way for them to make their exit. The mob made a deadly assault upon the police. They in turn used their weapons effectively, and fourteen of the mob were instantly killed.”

10. Shall Ruffians Rule Us?, Editorial, July 15, 1863. “The mob yesterday was unquestionably started on the basis of resistance to the draft. But that was a very small part of the spirit which really prompted and kept it in motion. It was, probably, in point of character, the lowest and most ruffianly mob which ever disgraced our City. . . . There is but one way to deal with this course brutality. It is idle to reason with it, - worse than idle to tamper with it; it must be crushed. Nothing but force can deal with its open manifestation.”

11. The Nationality of the Rioters, July 16, 1863. “The Tribune of yesterday morning had the following: ‘It is a curious fact that of all the arrests made, every one is Irish.’ However, this may be, it is a fact patent to everyone who has seen anything of the mob that it is composed exclusively of Irishmen and boys.”

12. An Appeal to the Irish Catholics from Archbishop Hughes, July 16, 1863. “In the present disturbed condition of the City, I will appeal not only to them, but to all persons who love God and revere the holy Catholic religion . . . to return to their homes . . . and disconnect themselves from the seemingly deliberate intention to disturb the peace and social rights of the citizens of New York. “

13. The Spirit of the Mob and its Promoters, editorial, July 17, 1863. “What most amazes is not the existence of this mob, but its hideousness. . . . The rabble exhibit an abandonment of human feeling, that was hardly deemed possible in any portion of American society, even the foreign-born.”

14. Speech of Archbishop Hughes, July 18, 1863. “Men of New York. They call you rioters, and I cannot see a riotous face among you. . . . I am a minister of God, and a minister of peace, who in your troubles in years past, . . . never deserted you. . . . I will not enter into the question which has provoked all this excitement. No doubt there are some real grievances. . . . If you are Irishmen, and the papers say the rioters are all Irishmen, then I also am an Irishmen, but not a rioter, for I am a man of peace.”

C. The House Top by Herman Melville

In this poem, Herman Melville describes the 1863 New York City Draft Riot.

5. Underline phrases that Herman Melville uses to describe the rioters.
6. What is Melville's view of the rioters?
7. What is Melville's view of what happened at the end of the riots?
8. Do you agree with Melville? Explain.

No sleep. The sultriness pervades the air
And binds the brain -a dense oppression, such
As tawny tigers feel in matted shades,
Vexing their blood and making apt for ravage.
Beneath the stars the roofy desert spreads
Vacant as Libya. All is hushed near by.
Yet fitfully from far breaks a mixed surf
Of muffled sound, the atheist roar of riot.
Yonder, where parching Sirius set in drought
Balefully glares red Arson -there -and there.
The town is taken by its rats -ship-rats
And rats of the wharves. All civil charms
And priestly spells which late held hearts in awe -
Fear-bound, subjected to a better sway
Than sway of self; these like a dream dissolve,
And man rebounds whole aeons back in nature.
Hail to the low dull rumble, dull and dead,
And ponderous drag that shakes the wall.
Wise Draco comes, deep in the midnight roll
Of black artillery; he comes, though late;
In code corroborating Calvin's creed
And cynic tyrannies of honest kings;
He comes, nor parleys; and the town, redeemed,
Gives thanks devout; nor, being thankful, heeds
The grimy slur on the Republic's faith implied,
Which holds that Man is naturally good,
And -more -is Nature's Roman, never to be scourged.

AIM: Why did the end of slavery lead to divisions in the abolitionist movement?

BACKGROUND: In this lesson, students will read an excerpt from an 1860 speech Stanton gave to the American Anti-Slavery Society and an excerpt from her 1865 letter responding to Wendell Phillips' speech declaring that women's rights would have to wait. In small groups, students will discuss whether women should have received the vote alongside African American men. They will then draft a letter to Congress explaining their decision.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, N.Y., in 1815. Her father, who became a New York Supreme Court judge, guided her in the study of the law. Through her cousin Gerrit Smith, a leading New York State abolitionist, she met a number of escaped slaves. She and her husband became active members of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1840, the Stantons and Lucretia Mott attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The two women were furious to be denied seats as delegates and refused permission to speak at the meeting. They resolved to hold a convention as soon as they returned home to form a society to advocate for women's rights. In 1848, they organized the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, N.Y., that issued what has come to be known as the Seneca Falls Manifesto. Modeled on the Declaration of Independence, it declared that all men and women are created equal. Stanton broke with many leading male abolitionists, including Gerrit Smith, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Frederick Douglass, over the idea that the right to vote for black men after emancipation should take precedence over suffrage for women.

DO NOW: Read A. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Address to American Anti-Slavery Society, May, 1860. Answer 1-2.

MOTIVATION: In your opinion, is it better to struggle for small (incremental) changes in society or to demand everything that you believe in be achieved at once? Explain.

ACTIVITIES: Students can either read activity sheet B or the more extended passages on activity sheet C. In groups of 2-3 students, write a letter to Congress from the perspective of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Explain why women should have received the right to vote at the same time as African American men. Give all your reasons and support to back up your idea. Try using quotes from the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and use examples from the arguments for African American voting rights. Your letter should be at least 4 paragraphs.

SUMMARY: Why did Elizabeth Cady Stanton believe women should receive the right to vote alongside African American men?

HOMEWORK: Write a short speech responding to the following statement: Critics argue that some of Stanton's comments in her letter are racist. Her defenders respond that they reflect frustration that African American men will receive rights denied to women. In your speech, address why you think critics would say this and whether or not you believe they are correct.

APPLICATION: Sometimes compromise is very difficult. If you were a feminists activist at the time of the Civil War, would you have been willing to put aside demands for women's rights in order to concentrate on ending slavery and securing equal rights for African Americans? Explain.

Lesson developed by Stephanie Sienkiewicz

A. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Address to American Anti-Slavery Society, May, 1860

In this speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton praised abolitionists for their fight against the oppression of both Africans and women. Source: Gordon, A., ed. (1997). *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press), pp. 54-55.

“[T]his is the only organization on God’s footstool where the humanity of woman is recognized, and these are the only men who have ever echoed back her cries for justice and equality. I shall never forget our champions in the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention; how nobly [Wendell] Phillips did speak, and how still more nobly Garrison would not speak, because woman was there denied her rights. Think of a World’s Convention and one half of the world is left out! Shame on the women of this nation who help to swell the cry of ‘INFIDEL’ against men like these! All time would not be long enough to pay the debt of gratitude we owe these noble men, who spoke for us when we were dumb [silenced], who roused us to a sense of our own rights, to the dignity of our high calling. No the mission of this Radical Anti-Slavery Movement is not to the African Slave alone, but to the slaves of custom, creed and sex as well.”

Questions

1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton said “the mission of this Radical Anti-Slavery Movement is not to the African Slave alone.” What does she mean?
2. Why did Stanton feel women owed gratitude to the men at the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention?

B. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, letter to the National Anti-Slavery Standard, December 26, 1865

Elizabeth Cady Stanton responded to a speech by Wendell Phillips. Phillips declared that “this is the Negro’s Hour” and that and women” rights would have to wait. Source: Gordon, A., ed. (1997). *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press), pp. 54-55.

“By an amendment of the Constitution, ratified by three-fourths of the loyal States, the black man is declared free. . . Although this may remain a question for politicians to wrangle over for five or ten years, the black man is still, in a political point of view, far above the educated women of the country. The representative women of the nation have done their uttermost for the last thirty years to secure freedom for the negro. . . now, as the celestial gate to civil rights is slowly moving on its hinges, it becomes a serious question whether we had better stand aside. . . . As self-preservation is the first law of nature, would it not be wiser to . . . when the Constitutional door is open, [to] avail ourselves. . . of the black soldier to walk in by his side? . . . ‘This is the negro’s hour.’ Are we sure that he, once entrenched in all his inalienable rights, may not be an added power to hold us at bay? Have not ‘black male citizens’ been heard to say they doubted the wisdom of extending the right of Suffrage to women? . . . If the two millions of Southern black women are not to be secured in their rights of person, property, wages, and children, their emancipation is but another form of slavery. In fact, it is better to be the slave of an educated white man, than of a degraded, ignorant black one. We . . . demand that in changing the status of the four millions of Africans, the women as well as the men should be secured in all the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizens. It is all very well [to say] . . . ‘this is the negro’s hour; do not clog his way; . . . the negro once safe, the woman comes next’ . . . [B]ut. . . the same logic and justice that secures Suffrage to one class gives it to all. The struggle of the last thirty years has not been merely on the black man as such, but on the broader ground of his humanity. . . . This is our opportunity to retrieve the errors of the past and mould anew the elements of Democracy. The nation is ready for a long step in the right direction; . . . If our rulers have the justice to give the black man Suffrage, woman should avail herself of that new-born virtue to secure her rights.”

Questions

1. Why is Stanton angry at Wendell Phillips?
2. What arguments does Stanton make to support her position?
3. In your opinion, what has changed in the time between 1860 and 1865 that has led to this disagreement?
4. If you were a feminist in 1865, would you have been willing to “stand aside”? Explain your views.

C. Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Abolitionist and Advocate for Women's Rights (1860-1865)

Sources: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAWstanton.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/wori/ecs.htm>; <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/malesupp/doc19.htm>

<http://www.nyhistory.com/jerryrescue/stanton.htm>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, New York in 1815. As a young woman, her father, who became a New York Supreme Court judge, guided her in the study of the law. Her cousin was Gerrit Smith, a leading New York State abolitionist and she met numbers of escaped slaves at his home in Peterboro. She later married a lawyer named Henry Brewster Stanton and they both became active members of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1840, Henry and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The women were furious when they were denied their seats as delegates and refused permission to speak at the meeting. They resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home and form a society to advocate for women's rights. In 1848, they organized the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York that issued what has come to be known as the Seneca Fall Manifesto. It was modeled on the Declaration of Independence and declared that all men and women are created equal. Stanton broke with many leading male abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass, over the idea that the right to vote for black men after emancipation should take precedence over suffrage for women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton died in New York City in 1902.

1. An excerpt from a speech by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in May, 1860 to the American Anti-Slavery Society. In this speech, she credits William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and other American abolitionists for their fight against the oppression of both Africans and women. **Source:** Gordon, A., ed. (1997). *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press), pp. 54-55.

[I]n spite of noble words, deeds of thirty years of protest, prayers and preaching, slavery still lives, the negro toils on in his weary bondage, his chains have not yet melted in the intense heat of the sun of righteousness. . . . Marys and Marthas have gathered around the prophets of our day. With noble words and deeds, and holy sympathy, they have cheered these exiles from the love and honor of their own false countrymen. At their family altars they have been remembered, and unseen spirits of the brave and the good have hovered over them, and rejoiced in these true sons of earth. Yes, this is the only organization on God's footstool where the humanity of woman is recognized, and these are the only men who have ever echoed back her cries for justice and equality. I shall never forget our champions in the World's Anti-Slavery Convention; how nobly [Wendell] Phillips did speak, and how still more nobly Garrison would not speak, because woman was there denied her rights. Think of a World's Convention and one half of the world is left out! Shame on the women of this nation who help to swell the cry of 'INFIDEL' against men like these! All time would not be long enough to pay the debt of gratitude we owe these noble men, who spoke for us when we were dumb, who roused us to a sense of our own rights, to the dignity of our high calling. No the mission of this Radical Anti-Slavery Movement is not to the African Slave alone, but to the slaves of custom, creed and sex as well; and most faithfully has it done its work. . . . As we rejoice this day in our deliverance from the sad train of fears and errors that have so long dwarfed the greatest minds of earth. . . , let us seek a new and holier baptism for the work that lies for each of us in the future.

Question: What is Stanton's attitude toward the abolitionists? Why?

2. An excerpt from "Reminiscences," *The History of Woman Suffrage* (Chapter XIII). Elizabeth Cady Stanton described efforts to disrupt abolitionist meetings in central New York after the election of Abraham Lincoln but just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. **Source:** womenshistory.about.com/library/etext.

In the winter of 1861, just after the election of Lincoln, the Abolitionists decided to hold a series of Conventions in the chief cities of the North. . . . I was invited to accompany Miss Anthony (Susan B. Anthony) and Beriah Green to a few points in Central New York. But we soon found, by the concerted action of Republicans all over the country, the Conventions were broken up at every point. This furnished one occasion on which

Republicans and Democrats could work harmoniously together, and they made common cause against the Abolitionists. The John Brown raid the year before had intimidated Northern politicians as much as Southern slaveholders, and the general feeling was that the discussion of the question at the North should be altogether suppressed . . . Thirty years of education had somewhat changed the character of Northern mobs. They no longer dragged men through the streets with ropes round their necks, nor broke up women's prayer-meetings; they no longer threw eggs and brickbats at the apostles of reform, nor dipped them in barrels of tar and feathers; they simply crowded the halls, and with laughing, groaning, clapping, and cheering, effectually interrupted the proceedings.

Thus we passed the two days we had advertised for a Convention in St. James' Hall, Buffalo. As we paid for the Hall, the mob enjoyed themselves at our expense in more ways than one. At the appointed time every session we took our places on the platform, making at various intervals of silence renewed efforts to speak. Not succeeding, we sat and conversed with each other and many friends who crowded the platform and ante-rooms. Thus among ourselves we had a pleasant reception and a discussion of many phases of the question that brought us together. The mob not only vouchsafed to us the privilege of talking to our friends without interruption, but delegations of their own came behind the scenes from time to time, to discuss with us the right of free speech and the constitutionality of slavery.

These Buffalo rowdies were headed by ex-Justice Hingon, aided by younger members of the Fillmore and Seymour families and the Chief of Police and fifty subordinates, who were admitted to the hall free for the express purpose of protecting our right of free speech, which in defiance of the Mayor's orders, they did not make the slightest effort to do. At Lockport there was a feeble attempt in the same direction. At Albion neither hall, church, nor school-house could be obtained, so we held small meetings in the dining-room of the hotel.

At Rochester, Corinthian Hall was packed long before the hour advertised. This was a delicately appreciative jocose mob. . . . Here, too, all attempts to speak were futile. At Port Byron a generous sprinkling of cayenne pepper on the stove, soon cut short all constitutional arguments and paeans to liberty. And so it was all the way to Albany. The whole State was aflame with the mob spirit, and from Boston and various points in other States, the same news reached us. As the Legislature was in session, and we were advertised in Albany, a radical member sarcastically moved "that as Mrs. Stanton and Miss Anthony were about to move on Albany, the militia be ordered out for the protection of the city."

Happily, Albany could then boast a democratic Mayor, a man of courage and conscience, who said the right of free speech should never be trodden underfoot where he had the power to prevent it. And grandly did that one determined man maintain order in his jurisdiction. Through all the sessions of the Convention Mayor Thatcher sat on the platform, his police stationed in different parts of the Hall and outside the building, to disperse the crowd as fast as collected. If a man or boy hissed or made the slightest interruption, he was immediately ejected.

Questions

1. What incident brought Democrats and Republicans together?
2. Was the meeting Stanton attended in Buffalo successful? Explain.
3. Why was the militia called out in Albany?

3. A letter to the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, December 26, 1865. Stanton responded to a speech by Wendell Phillips where he declared "this is the Negro's Hour" and that women's rights would have to wait. Critics argue that some of Stanton's comments in this letter are racist. Her defenders respond that they reflect frustration that African American men will receive rights denied to all women. **Source:** Gordon, A., ed. (1997). *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, pp. 54-55.

Sir, By an amendment of the Constitution, ratified by three-fourths of the loyal States, the black man is declared free. The largest and most influential political party is demanding Suffrage for him throughout the Union, which right in many of the States is already conceded. Although this may remain a question for politicians to wrangle over for five or ten years, the black man is still, in a political point of view, far above the educated women of the country.

The representative women of the nation have done their uttermost for the last thirty years to secure freedom for the negro, and so long as he was lowest in the scale of being we were willing to press his claims; but now, as the celestial gate to civil rights is slowly moving on its hinges, it becomes a serious question whether we had better stand aside and see “Sambo” walk into the kingdom first.

As self-preservation is the first law of nature, would it not be wiser to keep our lamps trimmed and burning, and when the Constitutional door is open, avail ourselves of the strong arm and blue uniform of the black soldier to walk in by his side, and thus make the gap so wide that no privileged class could ever again close it against the humblest citizen of the Republic?

“This is the negro’s hour.” Are we sure that he, once entrenched in all his inalienable rights, may not be an added power to hold us at bay? Have not “black male citizens” been heard to say they doubted the wisdom of extending the right of Suffrage to women? Why should the African prove more just and generous than his Saxon compeers?

If the two millions of Southern black women are not to be secured in their rights of person, property, wages, and children, their emancipation is but another form of slavery. In fact, it is better to be the slave of an educated white man, than of a degraded, ignorant black one. We who know what absolute power the statute laws of most of the States give man, in all his civil, political, and social relations, do demand that in changing the status of the four millions of Africans, the women as well as the men should be secured in all the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizens.

It is all very well for the privileged order to look down complacently and tell us, “this is the negro’s hour; do not clog his way; do not embarrass the Republican party with any new issue; be generous and magnanimous; the negro once safe, the woman comes next.” Now, if our prayer involved a new set of measures, or a new train of thought, it would be cruel to tax “white male citizens” with even two simple questions at a time; but the disfranchised all make the same demand, and the same logic and justice that secures Suffrage to one class gives it to all.

The struggle of the last thirty years has not been merely on the black man as such, but on the broader ground of his humanity. Our Fathers, at the end of the first revolution, in their desire for a speedy readjustment of all their difficulties, and in order to present to Great Britain, their common enemy, an united front, accepted the compromise urged on them by South Carolina, and a century of wrong, ending in another revolution, has been the result of their action.

This is our opportunity to retrieve the errors of the past and mould anew the elements of Democracy. The nation is ready for a long step in the right direction; party lines are obliterated, and all men are thinking for themselves. If our rulers have the justice to give the black man Suffrage, woman should avail herself of that new-born virtue to secure her rights; if not, she should begin with renewed earnestness to educate the people into the idea of universal suffrage.

Questions

1. Why is Stanton writing this letter?
2. What does Stanton demand in this letter?
2. “Sambo” is a term used to insult Blacks. In your opinion, why does Stanton use the term?