

Lesson Two: Slavery and the Struggle for Abolition from the Colonial Period to the Civil War

Background Reading

1. Petitions against slavery were discussed among religious groups and sent to state legislatures. Massachusetts immediately emancipated slaves, other northern states passed gradual emancipation laws, and individuals privately manumitted enslaved people.
2. The Framers, chief among them James Madison, thought that by leaving out these terms the Constitution implicitly denied the legitimacy of a claim of property in another human being and slavery would be abolished in time.
3. **a.** The cotton gin made cotton more a profitable crop and slavery expanded as cotton plantations spread throughout the lower South.
b. The Mexican-American war brought large new western territories under U.S. control and renewed the contention in Congress over the status of slavery in federal territories.
c. The decision in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case was a blow to abolitionists and further escalated sectional tensions over slavery prior to the Civil War.
d. Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery and his election as president caused 7 slaveholding states to secede from the Union.
4. African Americans joined the abolitionist movement in a variety of ways. Some wrote about their experiences under slavery, some helped others escape to freedom, and others worked to oppose laws that would limit their civil and political rights.

Handout B: Full Primary Source Set

Document 1—Enactment of Hereditary Slavery Law, Virginia, 1662

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2. The Framers, chief among them James Madison, thought that by leaving out these terms the Constitution implicitly denied the legitimacy of a claim of property in another human being and slavery would be abolished in time.
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b. The Mexican-American war brought large new western territories under U.S. control and renewed the contention in Congress over the status of slavery in federal territories.
c. The decision in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case was a blow to abolitionists and further escalated sectional tensions over slavery prior to the Civil War.
d. Lincoln opposed the spread of slavery and his election as president caused 7 slaveholding states to secede from the Union.
4. African Americans joined the abolitionist movement in a variety of ways. Some wrote about their experiences under slavery, some helped others escape to freedom, and others worked to oppose laws that would limit their civil and political rights.

Handout C: Full Primary Source Set

Document 1—Enactment of Hereditary Slavery Law, Virginia, 1662

1. A child was categorized as free or enslaved based on the status of his or her mother. This decision would dramatically increase the number of enslaved people in the colonies because the status of slave was now hereditary.
2. The existence of fewer indentured servants would create a labor shortage. Increasing the number of enslaved individuals would compensate for this shortage.

Document 2: Germantown Friends Protest Against Slavery, 1688

1. Slavery was at odds with the Quakers' belief that all men and women are equal.
2. The author states that "we shall do to all men like as will be done ourselves" (the "Golden Rule"), and also that owning slaves or participating in the slave trade is the same as robbery and stealing, two things that are also morally wrong.
3. Students should justify their opinions in answering this question.

Document 3: An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing Negroes and Other Slaves, South Carolina, 1740

1. The South Carolina law specifies that mixed-race children were not exempted from following "the condition of the mother." It also states that enslaved people were considered the property (chattel) of their owners.

Document 4: John Woolman, "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes," 1754

1. Woolman is asking his reader a rhetorical question to imagine the roles reversed, and that the reader is enslaved.
2. Woolman asks his reader to consider reversing roles with an enslaved person. He also refers to the natural rights of freedom and liberty, which the 1688 petition does not do, focusing on a more moral and religious argument. Woolman argues that a slave never forfeits their liberty; therefore, their natural right to freedom is being violated.

Document 5: Thomas Paine, "African Slavery in America," 1775

1. Paine is referring to the British government violating the colonists' natural rights.
2. Paine states that the colonists' participation in slavery and the slave trade is "a vice" that has "brought so much guilt on the land" and questions why it is not addressed while the colonists are criticizing other tyrannical actions.
3. Paine appeals to both justice and humanity in pointing out the evils of slavery.

Document 6 : Belinda Sutton, Petition to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1783

1. Sutton was 12 when she was captured. She uses detailed imagery to illustrate the tragedy and terror of this experience.
2. By law, Sutton was the property of her owner; however, she wrote that she was a "free moral agent" and therefore accountable for her own actions. Despite this innate freedom, her time was not her own because she was the property of another in the eyes of the law.
3. Sutton appealed to the legislators' sense of virtue and of justice—of rewarding her honest work with pay rather than letting someone else enjoy the fruits of her labor.
4. Even though Sutton was awarded a pension, repeated action was required to ensure that she actually got what was promised.

Document 7: Correspondence between Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson, August, 1791**Document 7b: Thomas Jefferson's response to Benjamin Banneker, 30 August, 1791**

1. Banneker compares the status of being enslaved with the treatment of colonists by the tyrannical British before the American Revolution. He is pointing out hypocrisy.
2. Banneker uses Jefferson's own words to build his argument that it is hypocritical to fight being enslaved at the hands of the British but to allow slavery to continue in the United States. He points out that slavery is at odds with the language of the Declaration.
3. Jefferson's response is polite but brief. It is unclear whether the letter and almanac have changed his opinions.
4. Banneker is clearly educated and eloquent in his letter. His writing is itself a challenge to the prevailing notion that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.
5. This conversation shows that during the Founding era, individuals were arguing against the existence of slavery because it was at odds with Founding principles put forth in the Declaration of Independence. This further shows that racial prejudices, entwined with the existence of slavery, were prevalent in the Founding era. Individuals like Banneker and his Quaker allies spoke out against these prejudices as well.

Document 8: Ohio State Constitution, 1803 and Black Code, 1804

1. The first document bans slavery, whereas the second places various restrictions on the lives of free African Americans.
2. Free African Americans were meant to carry a certificate from the courts to verify their freedom. Acquiring this certificate required money, time, and probably some form of education to interact with the court. If the certificate could not be produced, per Section 3, free African Americans could not be hired or their employers would be fined.

Document 9: U.S. Congress: An Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves, 1807

1. The U.S. Constitution never used the term "slave" or "slavery," yet this act explicitly does. The Framers of the U.S. Constitution did not want to legitimize slavery by explicitly referencing the term in the Constitution. However, Congress did so in ordinary laws.
2. Possible answer: Yes, it was a victory for Congress to stop slave imports as a way to stop adding to the slave population in the United States. It became a moot point, however, when slave populations naturally increased and reached more than 4 million by the time of the Civil War.

Document 10: James Forten, from Letter I: Letters from a Man of Color, on a Late Bill before the Senate of Pennsylvania, 1813

1. Forten paraphrases the Declaration of Independence and refers to the Constitution as "that glorious fabric of collected wisdom" in that it established that all men are equal.
2. The Pennsylvania legislature was debating a bill to limit the rights of African Americans, and individuals like Forten spoke publicly against it. In this example, individuals like Forten were successful in influencing the legislators.

Document 11: U.S. Congress: An Act to Authorize the People of the Missouri Territory to Form a Constitution and State Government (Missouri Compromise), 1820

1. The Missouri Compromise prohibited slavery's expansion north of the 36°30' parallel except for Missouri in the Louisiana Territory.
2. Possible answers could include: decreased tension over the spread of slavery in the Louisiana Territory, intensified debate between supporters of slavery and its opponents, and the need for additional legislation when new territory outside the Louisiana Territory was acquired (as it was from Mexico).
3. The Northwest and Southwest Ordinances established a geographic boundary (the Ohio River) for the expansion of slavery in future states. The Missouri Compromise sets a new boundary, so it is a continuity of the policy of trying to contain slavery's expansion.

Document 12: David Walker, Appeal, in Four Articles, 1829

1. From his title, Walker is expressly addressing all black people in the United States.
2. Walker asks his white readers to free themselves of fear and prejudice, to enlighten or educate themselves, and to treat black men as equals.
3. Walker worked with a community of activists in Boston, Massachusetts, who strove to end slavery. He was surrounded by other free blacks and contributed to a newspaper for the community. From this, historians can estimate that he was a member of a network of free African Americans that supported each other and worked for abolition.

Document 13: Maria Stewart Advocates Education for African American Women, 1832

1. Both Walker and Stewart address African Americans directly and call for them to act for their own betterment (secure their own freedom, seek their own education).
2. African Americans must educate their own, and Stewart is specifically addressing education for girls. She is critical of those who “hang their heads” and do not act.
3. Stewart, an African American, addressed an audience of men in a public lecture more than 10 years before the Seneca Falls Convention. She also advocated for female education.

Document 14: William Lloyd Garrison, American Anti-Slavery Society Declaration of Sentiments, 1833

1. Garrison quotes the Declaration of Independence and refers to it as the “corner-stone” of the “Temple of Freedom.” He compares the wrongs of slavery to the wrongs experienced by the colonists, though he states that slavery is much worse.
2. Garrison's language is passionate and dramatic. Examples include his description of the Founding: “At the sound of their trumpet-call, three millions of people rose up as from the *sleep of death*, and *rushed to the strife of blood*; *deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than desirable to live one hour as slaves...*” He is also very descriptive in describing slavery: “*never bought and sold like cattle – never shut out from the light of knowledge and religion – never subjected to the lash of brutal taskmasters.*”

Document 15: John C. Calhoun, Speech on Abolition Petitions, 1837

1. Calhoun states that Southerners will not give up their “institutions” and that to do so would result in a war. He further states that only the destruction of one of the races would make abolition feasible.
2. Calhoun says that slavery is “a positive good” rather than an evil. Further, he states that it is good for both whites and blacks.

Document 16: The Underground Railroad and Networks to Freedom

1. Answers may include: information about fugitive slave laws, data on who successfully ran away, more information about “conductors” and “station” operators.
2. Fugitive Slave Laws made it more difficult for enslaved people to run away to the North. Only outside the borders of the United States could they escape these laws’ jurisdictions. Enslaved individuals also escaped to Mexico and the Caribbean, also outside the United States’ borders.

Document 17: Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”, 1851

1. Truth referenced her harsh treatment as a slave as evidence that a woman is equal to a man.
2. Truth used her own body and her own experience to show the pain and suffering she endured while enslaved. Her reference to losing her children under the system of slavery is deeply affecting.

Document 18: George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or, The Failure of Free Society*, 1854

1. Fitzhugh says dependence is the basis for affection, such as a child’s dependence on his or her parents. Slaves, he argues, are dependent on their masters; therefore, there is mutual affection between them. The implication is that slaves are like children.
2. Fitzhugh implies that “northern brethren” are more concerned with profits than human affection (“we are not in a hurry to send our children into the world, to push their way and make their fortunes”), and that their relationships are the worse for it (“We are better husbands, better fathers, better friends, and better neighbors than our Northern brethren”). Slavery is preferable in his worldview because it creates a society based on affection of the childlike slaves for their benevolent owner.
3. Calhoun and Fitzhugh either state or allude to their racist belief that blacks are inferior to whites. This alleged inferiority justifies their acceptance of slavery.

Document 19: U.S. Supreme Court, *U.S. v. Amistad* 40 US 518, 1841

1. The Declaration states that all men are created free and equal, and Adams likely used this in his argument to justify that the Africans were not Spanish property but free men.
2. The Africans on board the ship made the decision to fight for their freedom and were successful. Individuals against slavery in the United States used their money and influence to take up their cause in the court system. By using due process and legal arguments, they made the *Amistad* case a victory in the larger fight to end slavery in the United States.

Document 20: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 1845**Document 21: Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*, 1853**

1. Calhoun’s perspective of slavery comes from a man defending a system from which he benefits. Not only does he defend it, but he says it is a positive thing for both the enslaved and the slaveholder. Northrup’s narrative counters this by offering a heartbreaking example of the brutality of slavery as experienced by those who are actually enslaved. His account is especially moving as it involves young children being taken from their mothers and the heartbreak it caused.
2. This passage is emotionally moving and would garner attention and the sympathy of individuals to the abolitionist cause.

Document 22: U.S. Congress, An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas (Kansas-Nebraska Act), 1854

1. The Kansas-Nebraska Act declared the Missouri Compromise of 1820 void.
2. These two acts show a changing and conflicted national policy toward slavery's expansion, which divided the sections of the country and the political parties. This conflict was apparent in the Founding era as well (Lesson 1), as shown by the differing stances on slavery in the Northwest Ordinance (which banned it) and the Southwest Ordinance (which stated that slavery could not be banned).

Document 23: Abraham Lincoln, Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, 1854

1. Lincoln states that the Kansas-Nebraska Act is a way to allow the spread of slavery, and that slavery is a “monstrous injustice.” He says its existence makes the United States a mockery of justice and is hypocritical for a free government and free society.
2. Lincoln states that the “fundamental principles of civil liberty” espoused in the Declaration are being threatened by slavery's expansion because it is a contradiction of those principles.

Document 24: U.S. Supreme Court, Dred Scott v. Sandford 60 US 393, 1856

1. Taney's language clearly indicates that he considered African Americans inferior, particularly in the final sentence: *“They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect, and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.”* The final phrase (underlined) sounds very much like Calhoun's argument that slavery is a “positive good” and Fitzhugh's argument that enslaved men and women were happy. With this ruling, the Chief Justice embraced the view that the Constitution was a pro slavery document.
2. The ruling explicitly states that African Americans are not equal to whites and, therefore, not entitled to the universal principles of the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, Taney asserted that free blacks were not citizens during the time of the Founding, but his history was incorrect because they had civil rights in 5 states during the Founding.

Document 25: John Brown's Last Speech, 1859

1. Brown stated that not only was he not guilty, but what he did was right and in line with biblical teachings.
2. Quaker opposition to slavery was also rooted in biblical and moral arguments for the equality of all men and women. However, Quakers did not use violence to achieve their ends like Brown. Later objectors such as Thomas Paine and Belinda Sutton (Documents 5 and 6) also rooted their opposition to slavery in Founding principles, which Brown did not reference in his final speech.
3. Students should support their opinions with detailed explanations.

Document 26: Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, 1860

1. Jacobs is describing the common practice of white men fathering children with slave women.
2. According to Jacobs, these children were often sold so the mistress would not have to see them.

Document 26: Chart: Slave population in 1860

1. Slavery was most heavily concentrated in the South, but states along the border of the North (such as Delaware and Maryland) also allowed slavery.
2. These states allowed slavery but remained loyal to the Union.

Handout D—Abbreviated Primary Source Set

Document 1—Enactment of Hereditary Slavery Law Virginia, 1662

1. A child was categorized as free or enslaved based on the status of his or her mother. This decision would dramatically increase the number of enslaved people in the colonies because the status of slave was now hereditary.
2. The existence of fewer indentured servants would create a labor shortage. Increasing the number of enslaved individuals would compensate for this shortage.

Document 2—Thomas Paine, “African Slavery in America,” 1775

Comprehension Questions

1. Paine is referring to the British government’s violation of the colonists’ natural rights.
2. Paine states that the colonists’ participation in slavery and the slave trade is “a vice” that has “brought so much guilt on the land” and questions why it is not addressed while the colonists are criticizing other tyrannical actions.

Analysis Question

1. Paine appeals to both justice and humanity in pointing out the evils of slavery.

Document 3: Benjamin Banneker’s letter to Thomas Jefferson, 1791

Comprehension Questions

1. Banneker refers to the stereotype that African Americans such as himself are not as intelligent as white Americans.
2. Banneker uses Jefferson’s own words to build his argument that it is hypocritical to fight being enslaved at the hands of the British but to allow slavery to continue in the United States. He points out that slavery is at odds with the language of the Declaration and Banneker calls it out.
3. Banneker compares the status of being enslaved with the treatment of the tyrannical British before the American Revolution. He is pointing out hypocrisy.

Analysis Questions

1. Banneker is clearly educated and eloquent in his letter. His writing is itself a challenge to the prevailing notion that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.
2. This letter shows that during the Founding era, individuals were arguing against the existence of slavery because it was at odds with Founding principles put forth in the Declaration of Independence. This further shows that racial prejudices, entwined with the existence of slavery, were prevalent in the Founding era. Individuals like Banneker and his Quaker allies spoke out against these prejudices as well.

Document 4—U.S. Congress: An Act to Authorize the People of the Missouri Territory to Form a Constitution and State Government (Missouri Compromise), 1820

1. The Missouri Compromise prohibited slavery’s expansion north of the 36°30’ parallel except for Missouri in the Louisiana Territory.
2. Possible answers could include: decreased tension over the spread of slavery in the Louisiana Territory, intensified debate between supporters of slavery and its opponents, and the need for additional legislation when new territory outside the Louisiana Territory was acquired (as it was from Mexico).

3. The Northwest and Southwest Ordinances established a geographic boundary (the Ohio River) for the expansion of slavery in future states. The Missouri Compromise sets a new boundary, so it is a continuity of the policy of trying to contain slavery's expansion.

Document 5—The Underground Railroad and Networks to Freedom

a. Map: Networks to Freedom

b. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Springtown, New Jersey

1. Answers may include: information about fugitive slave laws, data on who successfully ran away, more information about “conductors” and “station” operators.
2. Fugitive slave laws made it more difficult for enslaved people to run away to the North. Only outside the borders of the United States could they escape these laws’ jurisdictions. Enslaved individuals also escaped to Mexico and the Caribbean, also outside the United States’ borders.

Document 6—Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 1845

Comprehension Questions

1. Mr. Covey was attempting to beat Douglass, but Douglass fought back and was the stronger of the two men.
2. Douglass realized that he was a free man, not in a legal sense, but in a moral and psychological sense. He was no longer afraid to fight because he realized some kinds of living were worse than death.

Document 7—Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 1845

Comprehension Questions

1. Douglass focuses on the physical violence experienced by slaves and its psychological effects. He also serves as an exceptional example of courage and strength, describing how he chose to fight back against Mr. Covey after realizing that some kinds of living were worse than death. Truth describes the heartbreak of a mother being separated from her children. She also describes the exhausting physical labor to which she was subjected.
2. These passages are emotionally moving and would garner attention and draw the sympathy of individuals to the abolitionist cause.

Document 8—U.S. Congress, *An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas (Kansas-Nebraska Act)*, 1854

1. The Kansas-Nebraska Act declared the Missouri Compromise of 1820 void.
2. These two acts show a changing and conflicted national policy toward slavery’s expansion, which divided the sections of the country and the political parties.

Document 9—U.S. Supreme Court, *Dred Scott v. Sandford* 60 US 393, 1856

Comprehension Questions

1. African Americans
2. Taney states that African Americans are of “an inferior order” and that because of this inferiority slavery was justified.

Analysis Questions

1. The ruling explicitly states that African Americans are not equal to whites and, therefore, are not entitled to the universal principles of the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, Taney asserted that free blacks were not citizens during the time of the Founding, but his history was incorrect because they had civil rights in 5 states during the Founding.
2. Walker worked with a community of activists in Boston, Massachusetts, who strove to end slavery. He was surrounded by other free blacks and contributed to a newspaper for the community. From this, historians can estimate that he was a member of a network of free African Americans that supported each other and worked for abolition.

Document 10—John Brown's Last Speech, 1859

Comprehension Questions

1. Brown quotes passages from the Bible to show that his actions were supported by biblical teachings.
2. He will be killed (“forfeit my life”).

Analysis Questions

1. Brown stated that not only was he not guilty, but what he did was right and in line with biblical teachings.
2. Students should support their opinions with detailed explanations.

HANDOUT F: Concluding Analysis and Discussion Guide

Document Title and Date	Laws and Policy	The Courts	"We the People"— Individuals and Groups
*Enactment of Hereditary Slavery Law, Virginia, 1662	Laws codifying slavery		
Germantown Friends Protest Against Slavery, 1688			Group protesting slavery on religious and moral grounds
An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes and Other Slaves, South Carolina, 1740	Laws codifying slavery		
John Woolman, "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes," 1754			Individual protesting slavery based on its violation of natural right of freedom
*Thomas Paine, "African Slavery in America," 1775			Individual protesting slavery by pointing out hypocrisy of colonists who claimed they were enslaved by Britain when they allowed slavery of African Americans
Belinda Sutton, Petition to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1783		Individual using courts to receive just compensation for her work while enslaved	Individual using courts to receive just compensation for her work while enslaved
*Correspondence between Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson, August, 1791			Individual protesting slavery on moral and religious grounds and also by pointing out hypocrisy of Declaration of Independence in violating natural rights of enslaved people
Ohio State Constitution, 1803 and Black Code, 1804	Constitution bans slavery but law sets up restrictions for blacks as second-class citizens		
U.S. Congress: An Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves, 1807	Banning of slave trade in the year first allowed by the Constitution		
James Forten, from Letter I: Letters from a Man of Color, on a Late Bill before the Senate of Pennsylvania, 1813			Individual protesting bill intended to limit rights of African Americans by pointing out hypocrisy of Declaration of Independence and the role of African Americans in helping the country achieve independence

Document Title and Date	Laws and Policy	The Courts	“We the People”— Individuals and Groups
*U.S. Congress: An Act to Authorize the People of the Missouri Territory to Form a Constitution and State Government (Missouri Compromise), 1820	Sets boundary for slavery’s expansion; attempt at compromise		
Government (Missouri Compromise), 1820			
David Walker, Appeal, in Four Articles, 1829			Individual demanding equal treatment (“treat us like men”) and for enslaved people to rebel
Maria Stewart Advocates Education for African American Women, 1832			Individual advocating for education for African American women and girls as path to empowerment
William Lloyd Garrison, American Anti-Slavery Society Declaration of Sentiments, 1833			Individual protesting slavery by referring to the Declaration of Independence as the “corner-stone” of the “Temple of Freedom”
John C. Calhoun, Speech on Abolition Petitions, 1837			Individual arguing that slavery is a “positive good” because African Americans are inherently inferior (justifying slavery)
The Underground Railroad and Networks to Freedom			Enslaved individuals securing their own freedom by running away with the assistance of the Underground Railroad; churches played a particularly prominent role in helping them escape
*Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”, 1851			Formerly enslaved woman arguing for both women’s rights and abolition
George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South, or, The Failure of Free Society, 1854			Individual arguing that slavery is preferable to factories and industrialization in the North because it’s based on benevolence (justifying slavery)

Document Title and Date	Laws and Policy	The Courts	"We the People"—Individuals and Groups
U.S. Supreme Court, <i>U.S. v. Amistad</i> 40 US 518, 1841		Captured Africans who mutiny and take over the slave ship are declared to be free; arguments quote the Declaration of Independence	
*Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave</i>, 1845			Individual pointing out the inhumanity/brutality of slavery—beatings
Solomon Northup, <i>Twelve Years a Slave</i>, 1853			Individual pointing out the inhumanity/brutality of slavery—selling children from mothers
*U.S. Congress, <i>An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas (Kansas-Nebraska Act)</i>, 1854	Repeals Missouri Compromise—creates policy of “popular sovereignty”—settlers in each territory would vote to decide if slavery would be allowed or not		
Abraham Lincoln, <i>Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise</i>, 1854			Criticism of Kansas-Nebraska Act’s allowing the continuation of slavery, which is a “monstrous injustice” in violation of the Declaration of Independence
*U.S. Supreme Court, <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> 60 US 393, 1856		7-2 ruling established two things: first, African Americans were not citizens and had no right to sue in court; and second, Congress did not have the constitutional authority to ban slavery from the territories *Contrast with Amistad ruling	
*John Brown’s Last Speech, 1859			Individual saying that violence in the name of abolition is justified; uses biblical argument against slavery
Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>, 1860			Individual pointing out the inhumanity/brutality of slavery—sexual predation
Chart: Slave population in 1860	Slavery was prevalent in the deep and lower South due to codification (children of enslaved mothers are also enslaved)		

- 1.** Protests against slavery predated the founding of the United States and centered on religious objections (Germantown Friends Protest Against Slavery, 1688) and appeals to natural rights (John Woolman, “Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes,” 1754, Thomas Paine, “African Slavery in America,” 1775). In the Founding era, African Americans used the language of the Declaration of Independence to challenge courts and political leaders to recognize slavery’s inherent violation of natural rights (Belinda Sutton, Petition to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1783, Correspondence between Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson, August, 1791, James Forten, from Letter I: Letters from a Man of Color, on a Late Bill before the Senate of Pennsylvania, 1813). Blacks and whites spoke out against slavery and racism in the antebellum period (David Walker, Appeal, in Four Articles, 1829, Maria Stewart Advocates Education for African American Women, 1832, Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”, 1851, William Lloyd Garrison, American Anti-Slavery Society Declaration of Sentiments, 1833, Slave narratives, Abraham Lincoln, Speech on the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, 1854). Religion inspired blacks and whites to challenge slavery, and religious leaders were a vital part of the Underground Railroad.
- 2.** The codification of slavery meant that slavery became written into law, with children inheriting their enslaved status from their mothers. Slaves were, legally speaking, property of their owners that could be bought, sold, and traded. This also meant that the population of enslaved people in the United States would grow, and slavery as an economic system would become further entrenched.
- 3.** After its codification into law, slavery became further entrenched in the United States. The longer the system remained, the more it became entangled with the economic fabric of the country. Racist views of African Americans proliferated during this time and persisted after slavery’s abolishment with the Thirteenth Amendment. Formerly enslaved men and women faced enormous challenges after emancipation. With little education and no money, they faced rebuilding their lives on top of white resistance in the form of violence, persistent racism and prejudice, and Jim Crow legislation. Undoing so many years of tragedy would prove to be a very difficult task.
- 4.** Conflicting laws, policies, and Supreme Court cases regarding slavery were very common in this period. Laws attempting compromise reversed course on the spread of slavery, sparking additional controversy. Supreme Court cases were also contradictory, arguing for the freedom of slaves in the *Amistad* case and asserting that enslaved people were not citizens in *Dred Scott*. Despite these contradictions, individuals and groups were consistent throughout this time period in calling slavery immoral and in violation of natural rights. This was done in a variety of ways and by a variety of actors, both black and white. Some wrote and spoke out for the cause of abolition and equality, while others advocated or committed violence in the name of abolition.
- 5.** Students should support their answers with evidence from and references to the documents provided.