

Unit: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution

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Lesson Topic: Politics of Slavery

Lesson Title: Northern Views of Slavery

Grade Level: Middle School

State Standards:

Class Time: 45-60 minutes

Objectives:

- The learner will analyze primary source documents to better understand the various perspectives regarding slavery during the antebellum period.
- The learner will analyze primary source documents to better understand how the north and south were economically interdependent, particularly in the production of cloth.

Prerequisite knowledge/Background Information:

Materials:

- Copy of soapstone worksheet (attached)
- Primary Documents: all from Cotton, Cloth and Conflict series:
 - o Document 3: "Lowell Cloth" 1858-1859
 - This document illustrates how northern textile owners and southern cotton planters are economically interdependent, and thus were likely to resist change.
 - o Document 10: Correspondence between Nathan Appleton and Charles Sumner, July 9-September 4, 1848.
 - This series of letters will help students see the perspective of one textile industrialist, a —Cotton Whig in contrast to U.S. Senator Charles Sumner, a —Conscience Whig. This document requires an explanation of the Whig Party and its factions listed above.
 - o Document 11: Excerpt from a Letter by Amos Bardwell Heyward, Westford, MA, to Annie Sawyer, Lowell, MA, August 5, 1848
 - This document is written by an antislavery Northerner not directly connected to the textile industry
 - o Document 23: Excerpt from the Lowell Tri-Weekly American, October 2, 1850—
—Manstealers in Lowell

- This is brief article illustrates the anger felt by anti-slavery Lowell residents at the Fugitive Slave Act.
- Document 24: Excerpts from the Lowell Daily Journal and Courier, October 4, 1850—Another version of the —Manstealers Story
 - This brief article is a response to Document 23, showing a different perspective of the Fugitive Slave Act.
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Procedure:

1. Students will work in pairs or groups of three
2. Each group will receive a —Soapstone handout (attached) to complete as they work through each primary source document.
3. Each group can be assigned a document to “soapstone” or a series of documents, depending on the makeup of the group and teacher discretion.
4. Each group will go through their primary document(s) and fill out the their “soapstone” sheet.
5. After students complete their primary source work, the teacher can pose to each group (or to students individually) the following —So what? question: What does this series of documents tell us about (primarily northern) perspectives toward slavery in the mid 1800s? What effect should this have as we move forward in our study of the causes of the Civil War?

Assessment

This activity can be part of a larger unit for which there is a test. *Optional activity/assessment:* At various points, or at the end of the study of the 1850s, have students choose one of the events and write a —newspaper/letter to the editor response from one of the points of view discussed throughout the unit. Another option would be to allow students to pair up and write a series of letters, or a conversation script from various points of view, also on a chosen event.