

Unit: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution

Author: Ken Matteucci, Andover, MA

Lesson Topic: Slavery and the Cotton Economy

Lesson Title: Slavery Opinion Spectrum

Grade Level: High School

Class Time:

Objectives:

- Generate discussion about the variety of opinions and beliefs surrounding the issue of slavery by contemporaries of the institution.
- Gain a better sense of the other issues important to the country during the middle of the 19th century as the country moved toward the Civil War and how slavery had intertwined with these issues.
- Gain exposure to developing and evaluating arguments in debates.

Description

Students will be placed in pairs and given a packet of 12 handouts, each providing a brief biographical description of an individual living in the United States during the time leading up to the Civil War, the person's picture and a quote from that person discussing slavery obtained from a primary source document. Each pair is to read the handouts and provide information for each person. Students will then place larger pictures along the front of the room in a spectrum from most the most passionate argument in favor of slavery to the most passionate argument against. This spectrum can then be used to generate discussion and form generalizations about the regions of the country, men vs. women, occupation, and other considerations.

Step-by-step

1. Place students in pairs. Desks should be placed side by side and spaced evenly throughout the room.
2. Each student is given a blank matrix, provided, which provides students with space to provide the following information for each person: Name, Gender, Race, Region of the Country, Occupation, Position on Slavery, Ranking.
3. Each pair is given one set of twelve "Bio Sheets" provided.
4. Each pair will be asked to read and discuss the information on the handouts together and then fill out their own matrix with the information requested. First, the person's name, then gender (male or female), race (only black and white, unfortunately) area of the country where they live (North, South, or West, west here would mean west of the Appalachians), occupation (editor, slave, politician, mill worker, etc.) Then they are asked to write out in no more than two or three clear sentences the persons position on the issue of slavery

and why they might hold it. Lastly, they are asked to rank the person from one to ten. A “1” given to someone who has an extreme pro-slavery view, a “10” for people who have an extreme anti-slavery position.

5. While the students are working on the matrix, the teacher should give out one picture to each pair of students so that one picture is provided for each person in the packet. If there are less than 12 pairs one or two groups can get 2 pictures, if there are more than 12 the teacher can provide two pictures for some of the historical figures or decide not to give a group a picture.
6. As students finish the matrix, each group will be asked to present to the class the information on each person and then place the picture along the board to form a spectrum so that the most passionate pro-slavery person is on the far left and the most passionate anti-slavery person is on the far right, while the figures with moderate opinions should be in the middle.
7. The placement of the pictures along a single spectrum can generate much discussion, the teacher can decide to allow this discussion as the pictures are placed or hold it back until all the pictures are up and ask the class for suggestions of people who are out of place, then try to come to a consensus among the class. (note: At this stage, a good question to ask is What voices are missing? Is this a good representation of the country? And then ask why they are not there.)
8. After the spectrum is set, the teacher then can place small sheets of paper or sticky notes with S for South, N for North and W for West below each person depending on the area of the country he or she is in, and then ask if any generalizations can be made regarding area of the country. The same process can be used for gender and race.

Kirk Boott



Kirk Boott was an industrialist who had a huge influence on the development of Lowell, Massachusetts, the first big textile manufacturing center in America. He ran the day to day operations of the first large mill in Lowell and the company that controlled the dams and canals along the river that powered all the mills in the town.

Southern farmers not only provided the mills with raw cotton needed to make the cloth, but were also the biggest purchaser of the mill's most profitable product—cheap, course, cloth used mostly to make clothing worn by slaves.

Mr. Boott and his business partners were very nervous when anti-slavery groups began to grow in the northern states. They were concerned about the reaction of southern planters and how this regional conflict would affect their business. They organized anti-abolitionist rallies in Boston and Lowell. Below is the text from a poster promoting a rally in Lowell in 1835 which Mr. Boott helped organize. It was signed by Boott and about 40 other prominent Lowell citizens.

The undersigned inhabitants of Lowell are impressed with a belief that the rash doings of those who advocate the immediate abolition of slavery result in much mischief to our common country. We believe that sectional jealousies are thereby engendered, which threaten to disturb the harmony of our political system, which will effectually prevent the attainment of the object proposed, except through evils far worse than slavery itself. We believe, also, that the great mass of this people are disposed to maintain the Constitution unimpaired and to leave, where our Federal compact left it, the difficult question of slavery to be adjusted by the states for themselves, without interference or control.

Under these Impressions, we invite the inhabitants of Lowell to assemble in the Town Hall, on Saturday Evening, August 22d, at 8 o'clock, to consult together and to declare their convictions upon this important subject, to the end, that our fellow citizens at the South may be solemnly assured, that the body of our people will not countenance [accept] any infraction on their rights, or domestic relations; nor any violation of the peace of the community, or of the Constitution and laws of the land.

-Source: "Cotton, Cloth and Conflict," Tsongus Industrial Arts Center Owner,
Lowell Museum.

Clementine Averill



In 1828, Clementine Averill left her family farm in Mt. Vernon, New Hampshire at the age of 13 and went to find work at the Mills in Lowell, Massachusetts. Young girls from all over New England were drawn to Lowell and other mill towns for the opportunity to earn cash wages, gain independence and participate in a new and exciting way of life. They worked long hours in harsh conditions, but also had the chance to participate in activities and grow in ways that were impossible while living in the country. Girls attended lectures and plays, they created a variety of clubs and societies, participated in church activities and even published a newspaper.

Very little is known about Clementine's life. We do know that she spent some time working in the Boott Cotton Mills, and lived in a boardinghouse that was owned by the mill. She also expressed her opinion about slavery in a letter to the editor that was published in the New York Tribune in 1850. A Southern Senator had stated during a debate that slaves in the South were better off than Mill Girls in the North. Clementine was very angry by this statement and having been

working at the mills for over 20 years she decided to respond. The last half of this letter is quoted below. When the Civil War came many mills had to shut down and many mill workers lost their job. Clementine (now in her 40's) and two other women founded a co-operative home for girls who had nowhere to live after losing their jobs.

(Note: The picture above is not of Clementine but of two mill girls who worked in Lowell at the time.)

... Let us see whether the "Southern slaves are better off than the Northern operatives." As I have said, we have all that is necessary for health and comfort. Do the slaves have more? It is in the power of every young girl who comes here to work, if she has good health and no one but herself to provide for, to acquire every accomplishment, and get as good an education as any lady in the country. Have the slaves that privilege? By giving two weeks' notice we can leave when we please, visit our friends, attend any school, or travel for pleasure or information. . . . Can the slaves leave when they please, and go where they please? Are they allowed to attend school, or travel for pleasure, and sit at the same table with any gentleman or lady? Some of the operatives of this city have been teachers in institutions of learning in your own State. Why do your people send here for teachers if your slaves are better off than they? Shame on the man who would stand up in the Senate of the United States, and say that the slaves at the South are better off than the operatives of New England; such a man is not fit for any office in a free country. Are we torn from our friends and kindred, sold and driven about like cattle, chained and whipped, and not allowed to speak one word in self-defence? We can appeal to the laws for redress while the slaves cannot. . . . In closing, I must say that I pity not only the slave, but the slaveowner. I pity him for his want of principle, for his hardness of heart and wrong education. May God, in his infinite mercy, convince all pro-slavery men of the great sin of holding their fellow-men in bondage!

Source: Harriet Hanson Robinson, Loom and Spindle: Or Life Among the Early Mill Girls. Kailua, HI: Press Pacifica, 1976.

Ella Gertrude Thomas



Ella Gertrude Thomas was born outside of Augusta, Georgia in 1834. She was the daughter of one of the wealthiest plantation owners in the state. She married Jefferson Thomas at the age of seventeen and began the job of overseeing the household. She and her husband owned several slaves. These slaves worked on the Thomas' plantation (known as "Burke") and as house servants. She was in many ways typical of wealthy southern women at the time. Slaves took care of every detail around the house so she had a very comfortable life. The Civil War would change that, however. Most of the family wealth went into buying slaves, and when the slaves were set free it put the family into financial ruin. She got a job as a teacher to pay the bills and did her best to survive. Later in life she became an out spoken activist in the women's suffrage movement. She started a diary when she was fourteen years old and continued to keep one for the next fourteen years. In it she discussed the events in her life and her feelings about topics important to her, including slavery. Below are

some of the entries she made in her diary about slavery that she wrote before the start of the Civil War.

"Wednesday, November--, 1857... Isabella, [a house servant] was sent to Burke, [their plantation]. It is a long story—Finding it impossible to break her of stealing we sent her down there—where she only remained a week or two before she ran away. She was caught a couple of weeks later and lodged in jail where she got sick. Dr. Eve was brought in and treated her for typhoid fever. She is a girl of many excellent traits and it is [too bad] that this habit of stealing should prevent me from placing any confidence in her... I have had so many trials with her that I don't think I shall ever have her for a house servant. I would like her sold and a good steady woman bought in her place."

"Saturday, September 17, 1864... I have sometimes doubted on the subject of slavery. I have seen so many of its evils. Chief among them is the terribly demoralizing influence upon our men and boys. But lately, I have become convinced that the Negro, as a race, is better off the way he is than if he were made free. [However,] I am by no means so sure that we would not gain by having his freedom given to him. I grant that I am not so [charitable] as to be willing to give up all we own for the sake of the principle, but I do think that if we had the same [amount of money] invested in something else [and not slaves] as a means of support I would willingly have the responsibility of them taken off my shoulders."

Source: The Secret Eye, the Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889, edited by Virginia Ingraham Burr

Harriet Beecher Stowe



Harriet Beecher Stowe was perhaps the least known member of her family in 1850. Her sister, Catharine Beecher, worked for education reform, and her father and brothers were outspoken ministers and abolitionists. Harriet moved to Maine with her husband, who was a teacher at Bowdoin College, and began to raise a family. Although she sympathized with her father's and siblings' many crusades, she had never, to this point, become actively involved. She occasionally wrote a story for magazines to promote the cause.

In 1851, however, one of these stories was expanded into the most widely read novel in the nineteenth century and one of the most controversial books ever written. It was called *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and it told the story of a kind hearted and loyal slave who was sold to a cruel master, Simon Legree. It sold 7 million copies throughout the world and was adapted to the stage hundreds of times. This melodramatic portrayal of slavery in the South galvanized Northern public opinion

against slavery. People who had no opinion about the issue were now vocally against it. Southerners complained about the book's inaccuracies. Former slaves complained about the simplistic and childlike way that slaves were described. It churned up so much emotion that President Lincoln would later introduce her as "the little lady that wrote the book that started the Civil War."

The following is a quote from the book which probably closely describes Mrs. Stowe's feelings about slavery. It is part of a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bird. Mr. Bird is a senator from Ohio who voted for the Fugitive Slave Act, a law that made it illegal for Northerners to help slaves who ran away.

"Now, John, I want to know if you think such a law as that is right and Christian?"

"You won't shoot me, now, Mary, if I say I do!"

"I never could have thought it of you, John; you didn't vote for it?"

"Even so, my fair politician."

"You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor homeless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I shall break it, for one, the first time I get the chance; and I hope I shall have a chance, I do! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can't give a worm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives. Poor things."

"But, Mary, just listen to me. Your feelings are all quit right, dear, and interesting, and I love you for them; but, then, dear, we mustn't suffer our feelings to run away with our judgement;-there are great public interests involved..."

"Now, John, I don't know anything about politics, but I can read my Bible; and there I see that I must feed the hungry and clothe the naked; and the Bible I plan to follow!"

Josiah Henson



Josiah Henson spent most of his young life as a slave in Maryland. Here he had the good fortune to be able to grow up with his mother, unlike his brothers and sisters, who were sold to separate plantations, never to see them again. His mother introduced him to religion and throughout his life his strong religious beliefs were a source of strength and guidance. Although he hated slavery, he was a highly motivated worker and believed in doing a good job. As a result he was given a great deal of responsibility and eventually ran the whole farm for his master. Throughout his life he showed a great deal of pride in the work he was able to do, and in the many ways he was able to help his owner. Over time he began to see how his owner was continuously taking advantage of him and breaking promises, so he decided he wanted his freedom, and actually found a way to raise enough money to buy himself. His owner took his money,

but still tried to sell him. After this he decided to simply run away. With the help of the Underground Railroad he managed to make it safely to Canada. He spent the rest of his life trying to better the lives of his family and other fugitive slaves living in Canada. He established a school and a lumber mill and even made two trips back to Kentucky to lead more slaves to freedom. Many people believe that Harriet Beecher Stowe modeled the character of Uncle Tom after Josiah Henson.

At one point his master was in financial trouble and asked Josiah to take all his slaves from his farm in Maryland to his brother's plantation in Kentucky. Here is how he described part of this journey.

"On passing along the Ohio shore, we were told by persons conversing with us that we were fools to think of surrendering ourselves when we could just get off the boat and escape to freedom. The people under me began to get excited. I too began to consider it. I always thought the only way I could gain freedom was to buy myself. I had never dreamed of running away. It seemed like outright stealing to me. Entrancing as the idea was that I might be able to liberate my companions, and carry off my wife and family, and someday own a house and land, and be no longer despised and abused. Still my notions of right and wrong were against it. I had promised my master to take his property to Kentucky. Pride, too, came in to conform me. I had undertaken a great thing, I thought it would be a feather in my cap to carry it through to the end... I ordered the boat to be pushed off into the stream. The Negroes under me, too ignorant of the advantages of liberty to know what they were forfeiting, offered no resistance to my command.

Often since that day my soul has been pierced with bitter anguish at the thought of having been responsible for the continued infernal bondage of so many of my fellow beings. I have wrestled in prayer with God for forgiveness. Having experienced myself the sweetness of liberty, and knowing too well the after misery of numbers of them, my infatuation has seemed to me the unpardonable sin." -- Henson, Josiah, The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada, as Narrated by Himself,

Thorton Stringfellow



Rev. Thornton Stringfellow

Thorton Stringfellow was a Baptist minister. He was born in Virginia. His father was a wealthy slave holder who owned nearly a thousand acres of land. He was active in several religious reform movements popular at the time, including missionary work, the temperance movement and the pro-slavery crusade. He also worked to convert slaves to Christianity. There was a very large religious movement in the 1800's throughout the United States. The issue of slavery split most of the major congregations between North and South. There was no area where slavery was more hotly debated than by religious followers. One side used quotes from the Bible to point out how Jesus was against slavery, while the pro-slavery side pointed to other parts of the Bible defended slavery. The most influential defense of slavery on religious grounds came from Rev. Stringfellow. In a widely read pamphlet entitled "A brief Examination of Scripture Testimony

on the Institution of Slavery" he clearly put forth the Biblical arguments in favor of slavery. Slavery is an institution with a long history and the Bible has several references to it. Stringfellow went over these reverences trying to show that slavery was supported by the Bible.

The following passages were taken from the conclusion of Stringfellow's pamphlet. In the majority of the pamphlet he had taken direct quotes from the Bible which referred to slavery and then discussed what he believed those quotes meant.

"I propose to show that the institution of slavery is full of mercy... History warrants this conclusion, that for a long period of time, it was this institution alone which [gave one a reason] for sparing the prisoner's life. When the earth was filled with small tribes of men who had a passion for war, conflicts happened almost daily and nothing but [slavery] existed as [a good reason] to save the vanquished... The same is true for the history of Africa for as far back as we can trace it. It is safe to say that the institution of slavery has saved from the sward more lives, including their increases, than all the souls who now inhabit this globe.

Under the Gospel, [slavery] has brought within the range of Gospel influence, millions of Ham's descendants among ourselves, who, but for this institution, would have sunk down to eternal ruin; knowing not God, and strangers to the Gospel. In their bondage here on earth, they have been made freemen of the Lord Jesus Christ, and left this world rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

-Scriptural and statistical views in favor of Slavery, By Thornton Stringfellow, 1856

Henry Clay



Henry Clay was one of the most powerful people in the United States in the early 1800's. He was the main leader of the Whig party. A political party that grew in opposition to the Democratic party under President Andrew Jackson. Like his counterpart, John C. Calhoun, he held many jobs in Washington including, Secretary of State, Speaker of the House, and Senator from Kentucky. One job he never held was president, even though he ran five times.

What made Henry Clay most famous was his ability to compromise. He was given the nickname "the Great Compromiser" after he played a major role in the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. Both of these compromises had to do with whether or not new states entering into the Union from the western territories should be allowed to have slaves. The Senate had the same number of members from slave states as it did from non-slave states. So each new state that entered the Union could

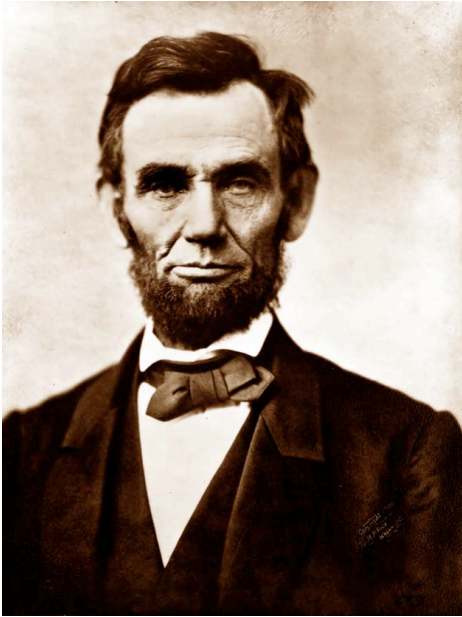
upset the balance of power in the government. Henry Clay made deals with small numbers of Senators to push through deals that gave the South some of what they wanted and the North some of what they wanted. For example, the Missouri Compromise accepted Missouri to become a state with slaves, and then accepted Maine, that had been a part of Massachusetts, as a free state. The result was that neither side was completely happy.

Clay also played an active role in the American Colonization Society. This was a group that believed that the best way to solve the slavery problem was to move all the former slaves to a colony in Africa. Most abolitionists, including Fredric Douglass, considered this to be an insult—a way to avoid racial problems rather than solve them. However, Clay and others thought that sending former slaves to Africa was a good idea. The present day country of Liberia in Western Africa was founded as a colony for former black slaves and has a capital city named after an American President.

"The [freed slaves] of our country are in a peculiar situation. They neither enjoy freedom nor suffer as slaves, but partake to some degree the qualities of both. [Because] of this condition and the unconquerable prejudices resulting from their color, they will never be able to [blend in] with the free whites of this country. It is desirable therefore... to draw them off."

"There is a moral fitness in the idea of returning to Africa her children, whose ancestors have been torn from her by the ruthless hand of fraud and violence. Transplanted to a foreign land, they will carry back to their native soil the rich fruits of religion, civilization, law and liberty. May it not be one of the great designs of the Ruler of the universe (whose ways are often inscrutable by short-sighted mortals), thus to transform an original crime, into a signal blessing to that most unfortunate portion of the globe."

Abraham Lincoln



Abraham Lincoln is considered by many people to be one of the greatest presidents in America's history. He is thought of so highly because of the leadership he provided during the most horrible war this country has fought, the Civil War. He was born in a one room log cabin in Kentucky in 1809. His parents were poor farmers struggling to make a living.

As a young man Lincoln became interested in politics and law. He studied law on his own for three years and became a lawyer. In 1847 he became a United States Congressman. After losing his bid for reelection he planned to go back to his law practice, but, in the 1850's he was drawn back into politics by issues surrounding slavery. He gained national recognition when he ran for the United States Senate in 1858 against Stephen Douglas. Douglas was one of the most well known Senators in the country and the front runner to win the Democratic Nomination for president. During the election the two men had a series of debates. People from all around the country read these debates, mostly to find out what Douglas was saying, but

became very impressed with Lincoln. Even though he lost the election, the popularity he gained from the debates won him the Republican nomination for president. The Republican Party was a new party which came out against the spread of slavery. The southern states hated this party, calling them the "Black Republicans." Lincoln won the election even though he didn't get a single vote in any southern state. By the time he took office most of the southern states had left the Union and the Civil war was about to begin.

"You think slavery is right and should be extended; while we think slavery is wrong and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us."

-Letter to Alexander H. Stephens" (December 22, 1860),

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not to either save or destroy slavery. If I could save the union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all slaves I would do it. If I could save the Union by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union."

-August 22, 1862 - Letter to Horace Greeley

"I think Slavery is wrong, morally, and politically. I desire that it should be no further spread in these United States, and I should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union.... I say that we must not interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists, because the constitution forbids it, and the general welfare does not require us to do so."

-Speech at Cincinnati, Ohio, September 17, 1859

David Christy



David Christy was a journalist from Cincinnati Ohio in the 1830's and 40's. From here he had an interesting perspective on the issue of slavery. Ohio was a free state but also had laws that prevented free black people from immigrating into the state. I was also connected to the South by the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, along which much trade took place. While working as a journalist he covered stories surrounding trade issues and the abolitionist movement. He later would become involved in the American Colonization Society, which was an organization trying to send freed black people to a colony in Africa.

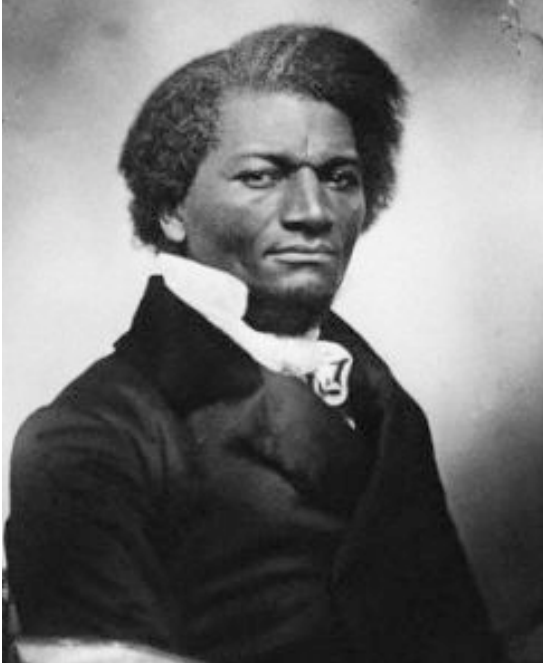
In 1855 he published a book which coined the phrase "King Cotton." In his he pointed out that cotton was the single most important commodity in the economy—farms in the south and factories in the north both depended on it. Then he argued, using figures and statistics, that the only efficient way to grow cotton was with slave labor. Then he concluded that cotton was so important to the country and slavery was so important to cotton, we could not get rid of slavery. And until

someone could find a way to grow cotton effectively with wage labor, slavery was a necessary evil. The argument was very popular in the South and the phrase "Cotton is King" was widely used to demonstrate how important cotton was to the country and the world.

"King Cotton cares not whether he employs slaves or freemen. It is the cotton, not the slaves, upon which his throne is based. Let freemen do his work as well, and he will not object to the change. The efforts of his most powerful ally, Great Britain, to promote that object, have already cost her people hundreds of millions of dollars, with total failure as a reward for her zeal... His majesty, King Cotton, therefore, is forced to continue the employment of his slaves; and, by their toil, riding on to conquer!"

"King Cotton has no evidence that colored men can grow cotton, except in the capacity of slaves. Thus far, all experiments made to increase production of cotton by emancipating the slaves employed in cultivation have been a total failure. It is his policy, therefore, to defeat all schemes of emancipation."

Frederick Douglass



Frederick Douglass was one of the greatest leaders in the fight against slavery. He was born a slave on a Maryland plantation in 1817 or 1818. He never found out for sure when he was born because, as a slave, he didn't have access to records, and his mother was sold away before he could know her. When he was about 12 years old he was given away in his owners will to a young couple who lived in the city. The wife of his new owner had never owned slaves before and decided to begin teaching Frederick how to read and write. When her husband found out he stopped her, arguing that it was not only against the law, but bad for slaves to become educated. Frederick reasoned that anything that white people thought was bad for him must be good, so he found his own way to teach himself how to read. When he was 21 years old he wrote out a pass to board a train and escaped to the north. With the help of the Underground Railroad he made it safely to New Bedford, Massachusetts. While there he became involved in the antislavery movement.

In 1845 he wrote all about his life as a slave in his book, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. The book became very popular. Two years later he started his own newspaper, *The Northern Star*, which was the first newspaper in America founded by a black person. Most white antislavery papers would not give free black men and women a chance to voice their views and his paper gave them that chance.

During the Civil War he worked hard trying to get states to allow black men to serve in the Union Army. He also spoke out against racism in the North and was an early supporter of the women's rights movement.

"The more I read the more I began to abhor my enslavers. I could see them in no other light than as a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, had gone to Africa and stolen us from our homes and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men..."

At times I would feel that learning to read had become a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition without the way out of it. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out."

Harriet Jacobs



Harriet Jacobs spent most of her young life as a slave. She was a domestic servant for a doctor and his wife. On the surface it might have seemed that she was lucky as far as the life of slaves go. Her family was close by, she had a wonderful relationship with her grandmother, she did not have to work in the fields, and her parents had taught her to read when she was young. Things began to change as she got a little older. When she was fifteen years old she had to face the same fate as many women slaves. Her owner began to make unwanted sexual advances toward her. There was no place she could turn for help, she had no rights under the law, her family could do nothing, and the wife of her owner had “no other feelings towards her but jealousy and rage.”

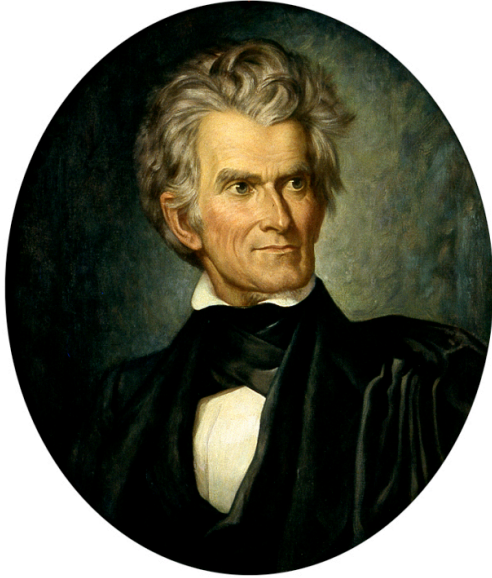
This harassment went on for years, even her developing a relationship with another man and having children did not prevent him from making her life miserable. One day she decided that she had to run away. Her children had already been sold and were given to her grandmother, who was free and living in a small cottage nearby. She ran and hid in the crawl space over her grandmother’s cottage. She hid there, with her children living below her, for seven years with only her grandmother and one other person knowing about it, until she finally

made it north to freedom.

“He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him—where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me he was my property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against such tyranny. But where could I turn to for protection? There was no shadow of law to protect me from insult, from violence or even death...

I would ten thousand times rather that my children be half-starved paupers of Ireland than to be the most pampered among the slaves of America. I would rather drudge out my life on a cotton plantation, till the grave opened to give me rest, than to live with an unprincipled master and a jealous mistress. The felon’s home in a penitentiary is preferable. He may repent, and turn from the error of his ways, and so find peace; but it is not so for a favorite slave. She is not allowed to have any pride of character. It is deemed a crime in her to wish to be virtuous...”

John C. Calhoun



John C. Calhoun was one of the most famous and influential Southern politicians in the early 1800's. From 1815 to 1850 he was one of the four most powerful men in the government. During this time he served as Secretary of War, Senator from South Carolina, Vice President, and Secretary of State. He is most famous today as one of the "War Hawks" who were in favor of going into war against Great Britain in 1812. Later in his political career he was a fierce supporter of states' rights. When Congress wished to pass tariffs, (taxes on imported goods) which hurt the southern economy he made speeches and wrote articles calling for the Southern States to nullify, or not follow, any law that was against the state's interest. Slavery was also a very important issue to his ideas on states' rights. He believed, as did most American's at the time, that the Federal Government had no right to interfere with Slavery, or any other institution that existed within the states. He was one of the first politicians to defend the plantation system against the

growing antislavery movement in the North.

"We in the South will not surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races is important to the peace and happiness of both...Never before has the black race of Central Africa [reached] a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically but morally and mentally. It [the 'black race'] came among us in a low and savage condition, and over time... under the fostering care of our institutions, has grown up to its present comparatively civilized condition. This is proof of the general happiness of the race, in spite of the exaggerated tales of the contrary... I hold that the present state [of slavery]... now existing between the two races is instead of an evil, a good—a positive good.. there has never existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not live on the labor of the other...

There is and always has been a conflict between labor and capital, [workers and owners]. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict. This explains why the political condition of the slave holding states has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North."

Name	Gender	Area of the Country	Occupation	Rank
Two or three sentences describing this person's position on slavery.				

For each person, fill in the following information in the box provided.