

Name: _____ Date: _____

Slavery in the North

Slavery was not unique to the Southern colonies. The Dutch imported slaves to New Amsterdam to work on farms in the Hudson River Valley. According to Dutch law, children of freed slaves were still legally slaves.

Other Europeans who settled in the Northern colonies of the New World kept slaves to work in their homes, on farms, and in businesses. Most shipowners and sea captains involved in the slave trade were Northerners. Several Northern coastal cities became centers for slave traffic.

Although never very widespread north of Delaware, slavery did exist in every American colony until the Revolutionary War. Slavery ended in Vermont in 1777. New York was the last Northern state to abolish slavery in 1817.

Even after slavery became illegal in the North, the lives of free blacks were very difficult. Whites, especially recent immigrants, feared blacks would take over jobs, leaving them unemployed. Mobs rampaged through areas where blacks lived and worked in Ohio and New York. Many blacks fled to Canada.

White rioters in Philadelphia in 1834 and 1842 destroyed black churches, attacked black men and women on the streets, and burned their homes. In some states, federal troops were needed to stop the violence.

Schools that allowed black students to attend were destroyed in several Northern states. In Canterbury, Connecticut, a woman named Prudence Crandall ran a private school that admitted black girls in 1833, making it the first integrated classroom in the United States. Shop owners refused to sell her supplies, and neighbors poisoned her well. The town council even passed a law against educating black students from other states in the town. When Crandall persisted, she was arrested. The school building was burned. Crandall was forced to close the school in 1834.

The attitude toward slavery in the North was very mixed. Not every Northerner believed slaves should be free or that blacks deserved equal rights.

Constructed Response

Even after slavery became illegal in the North, the lives of free blacks were very difficult. Why? Give specific details or examples to support your answer.

Slavery in the South

Although most people think of white Southerners in the 1700s and 1800s as slave owners, only one in four Southern families actually owned slaves. Three-quarters of Southern families did not own slaves.

Not all blacks in the South were slaves, either. By the time the Civil War began in 1861, about 25 percent of the blacks in the South were free. Most free blacks in the South weren't much better off than slaves, but in some areas they were allowed to marry, own property, attend schools, and even own slaves.

Most movies and books show hundreds of slaves working on huge **plantations**, but that isn't a complete picture. Only about 30,000 Southerners owned 50 or more slaves.

Most Southerners who owned slaves lived and worked on smaller farms and in cities. Slaves not only worked in agriculture, but they also worked in shipyards, businesses, and as house slaves.

Sometimes slaves were hired out by their **masters** and all wages were paid to their owners. Southerners needed cheap labor to work the fields of cotton and tobacco. This made slavery very important to the **economy**.

The invention of the **cotton gin** by Eli Whitney in 1793 cut the cost of producing cotton. This machine could clean cotton much faster than people could. Since this lowered the cost of producing cotton, the price went down, and the demand for cotton cloth increased. Growing more cotton meant the need for even more workers.

Those who owned large plantations and many slaves were from the wealthiest families. They sought to maintain their wealth by controlling the source of their wealth—cotton, slaves, and all laws regarding slavery. Unlike other societies, slavery in the South was not based on forcing prisoners of war to be slaves. Slavery was based on race.

The early European colonists believed that Africans were **inferior**, suited by their character and circumstances to be slaves forever. This attitude remained most strongly in the South, long after Europe abolished slavery and the slave trade.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Slavery in the South (cont.)

Directions: Complete the following exercises.

Matching

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|--------------------|--|
| 1. plantation ____ | a. a machine that separates cotton seeds from the cotton |
| 2. masters ____ | b. a large farm or estate |
| 3. economy ____ | c. owners of slaves |
| 4. cotton gin ____ | d. person of lower status |
| 5. inferior ____ | e. production and distribution of goods and services |

Fill in the Blanks

1. Three-quarters of _____ families did not own slaves.
2. By the time the Civil War began in 1861, about _____ percent of the blacks in the South were free.
3. Only about 30,000 Southerners owned _____ or more slaves.
4. Southerners needed cheap labor to work the fields of _____ and tobacco.
5. The invention of the cotton gin by _____ in 1793 cut the cost of producing cotton.

Critical Thinking:

How would you feel if you were forced to go to work six days a week for ten or more hours a day but received no pay for your work? Give specific details or examples from the reading on how slaves were treated to support your answer (3-5 sentences).
