Improving Historical Thinking Skills through Source-Based Instruction
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LOC TPS APWH Primary Source Work/ SAQs 1750-1900, Abolition in the Americas
9-12 Grades

Period 5

This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Students examine numerous aspects of the Atlantic Slave Trade through primary sources.

Activity Goals: Students will gain a more nuanced understanding of the abolition movement and the processes that led to the end of slavery in the US and Brazil.

Focus Question: How did attitudes regarding slavery differ and change over time? What finally brought the end of slavery in the US? How did this compare with Brazil?

Context: This investigation should follow study of the basics of the end of slavery in the Americas.

Objectives: APWH 5.3.IV

and Virginia SOLS

WHII.1 The student will improve skills in historical research and geographical analysis by
1. identifying, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources to make generalizations about events and life in world history since 1500 a.d.;
2. using maps, globes, artifacts, and pictures to analyze the physical and cultural landscapes of the world and to interpret the past since 1500 a.d.;
3. identifying geographic features important to the study of world history since 1500 a.d.;
4. identifying and comparing political boundaries with the location of civilizations, empires, and kingdoms from 1500 a.d. to the present;
5. analyzing trends in human migration and cultural interaction from 1500 a.d. to the present.

WHII.8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the effects of the Industrial Revolution during the nineteenth century by
1. citing scientific, technological, and industrial developments and explaining how they brought about urbanization and social and environmental changes;
2. explaining the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic pattern, and subsequent development of socialism and communism;
3. describing the evolution of the nature of work and the labor force, including its effects on families, the status of women and children, the slave trade, and the labor union movement;
4. explaining the rise of industrial economies and their link to imperialism and nationalism;
5. assessing the impact of European economic and military power on Asia and Africa, with emphasis on the competition for resources and the responses of colonized peoples.
Assessment: There are analysis questions to go along with each source as well as a formative assessment task at the end of the activity.

Activity Details: Students explore primary and secondary sources related to attitudes on slavery in the US and Brazil.

Primary Sources: see below

Procedure: Students access secondary sources as well as primary sources, answer analysis questions, and write an essay comparing abolition in the US with the process in Brazil.

What you will need before implementing: This lesson is dependent on computer and internet access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should be shared digitally with all students (in Google Docs or another format).
Am I not a man and a brother?

Summary
The large, bold woodcut image of a supplicant male slave in chains appears on the 1837 broadside publication of John Greenleaf Whittier's antislavery poem, "Our Countrymen in Chains." The design was originally adopted as the seal of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery in England in the 1780s, and appeared on several medallions for the society made by Josiah Wedgwood as early as 1787. Here, in addition to Whittier's poem, the appeal to conscience against slavery continues with two further quotes. The first is the scriptural warning, "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. "Exod[us] XXI, 16." Next the claim, "England has 800,000 Slaves, and she has made them free. America has 2,250,000! and she holds them fast!!!!" The broadside is advertised at "Price Two Cents Single; or $1.00 per hundred.

American Anti-Slavery Society.
Anti-Slavery Office (New York, N.Y.)
1837.
https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g05321/

Read the summary above.

Take the link and carefully examine the image. Read the poem.

Josiah Wedgwood, a British porcelain maker of the late 1700s, produced many versions of this medallion in ceramics. Why does it make sense that it was produced in England at this time?

What do you think is the message behind the phrase “Am I not a man and a brother?”

In what way could this be invoking Enlightenment thinking – namely the idea of natural rights?

In what way could this be illustrating the ideas of the Great Awakening?

What imagery did Whittier use in his poem?

What is the main message of the poem?
Document 2

*The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade and of the Slavery of Africans . . . A Sermon.*
Jonathan Edwards, D.D.
New Haven, Connecticut: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1791.
[https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=ody_rbcmisc&fileName=ody/ody0302/ody0302page.db&recNum=0&itemLink=/ammem/aaoh.html/exhibit/aopart3.html@0302&linkText=9](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=ody_rbcmisc&fileName=ody/ody0302/ody0302page.db&recNum=0&itemLink=/ammem/aaoh.html/exhibit/aopart3.html@0302&linkText=9)

What arguments did Jonathan Edwards make against slavery in pages 1-14?

What motivated his call for reform?
Document 3

John Floyd, governor of Virginia, to James Hamilton, governor of South Carolina.
Letter
November 19, 1831
https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mssmisc&fileName=ody/ody0107/ody0107page.db&recNum=0&itemLink=/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart1.html@0107&linkText=9

Read the first few pages.

To what did the governor of Virginia attribute Nat Turner’s slave revolt?

How was Christianity involved here (a factor of controversy) in the US?

What reasons may have motivated Christian slaveholders in parts of the US to restrict the enslaved from becoming Christian?

Whom did Gov. Floyd ultimately blame for causing the uprising? How did this fit in with the events of the time?

What accounts for the different outlooks of Jonathan Edwards and John Floyd?
Document 4

The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Virginia
Richmond: Thomas R. Gray, 1832.
http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodyssey:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbcmisc+od+y0108))

Read pages 3 and 4

Who was Thomas Gray?

How did he characterize the insurrection led by Nat Turner?

What seems to have been his purpose in publishing this?
Document 5 - Secondary source reading

Read about the abolition of slavery in Brazil at

_The United States and Brazil: Expanding Frontiers, Comparing Cultures_

a collaboration between the Library of Congress and the National Library of Brazil

The Imperial Period

[http://international.loc.gov/intldl/brhtml/br-1/br-1-5.html#track1](http://international.loc.gov/intldl/brhtml/br-1/br-1-5.html#track1)

What motivated the leaders to abolish slavery in Brazil?

What economic concerns did the elites have about ending slavery there?

What political consequences were there for ending slavery?

Document 6

Read these excerpts from _The Evolution of Brazil compared with that of Spanish and Anglo-Saxon America_ by Manoel De Oliveira Lima

“Turning to the other section of Latin America it cannot be denied that as the result of the longer sustained efforts and the greater violence with which the separation was effected, the Spanish ex-colonies were able to surpass the kingdom of Brazil in the mighty work of political and social reconstruction after independence had been won. Without any agreement among themselves, each one legislating in its own special interest, they changed in the same way the constitutional structure from its foundation, establishing not only freedom of industry, of trade, of colonization and of religion—all of which Brazil had obtained from the transplanted royalty as spontaneous grants, although they naturally were still subject to certain restrictions, due to prejudices of the time and surroundings—but also decreeing the general extinction of slavery, the abolishment of the Indian tribute and the suppression of the nobility. J I have already spoken of the painful birth of the idea of emancipation of the negro in the United States and Spanish America. It was a freedom won by blood, Brazil being the only country in which it was effected peacefully, by evolution, amid the rejoicings of the people, who felt that the institution of slavery was incompatible with their state of civilization. And it cannot be said that with the exception of this social institution, which morally did not last any longer among us than it did in fact
among you—for the act of 1863 was the death-knell of slavery in the rest of America where this scourge existed—human progress was not equal in the two sections of Latin America.” p 48

“The "peculiar institution" received from your solid South tacit but effective moral support, and with us in Brazil, in the same way as among you, although not in the same degree, it derived encouragement from the autonomy of the states or provinces, as they were then called. In Brazil, this political spirit of particularism continued to exist even under a policy of centralization: it was favored moreover, by the great difference in the economic conditions of the provinces, which enabled some of them to free their small number of slaves, like Ceara and Amazonas, while others, like Sao Paulo and Pernambuco, clung to a state of things which they regarded as inseparable from their prosperity. It was this centralization of power brought about by the monarchy THE EVOLUTION OF BRAZIL which enabled the abolition of slavery in Brazil to be effected without bloodshed or civil strife, for it may be said that a sectional line was being established in the country between the provinces which had slaves and those which no longer had them—although it did not offer the geometrical precision of the line drawn between your North and South—and that, there as here, the abolitionists began their active crusade in the midst of the same prejudices and rancors. “ pp. 51-52

The evolution of Brazil compared with that of ... - American Memory
The Evolution of Brazil compared with that of Spanish and Anglo-Saxon America by Manoel De Oliveira Lima
Edited with introduction and notes by Percy Alvin Martin, Assistant Professor of History, Leland Stanford Junior University, published by Stanford University, 1924


What argument did the author make regarding the end of slavery in Brazil?

What may have shaped this author’s view?

Formative Assessment task:

Write a short essay. Using your knowledge of abolition in both the US and Brazil, compare the two processes. How did political, economic, and philosophiocal/humanitarian concerns play a role in each?