

BELLWORK: 3/11/2020

These were the in-class activities we completed on Wednesday, March 11

DocBLOCK

“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

Frederick Douglass

1852

Compete HAPP analysis

CONTENT BLOCK

New Perspectives on Slavery

Data [HERE](#)

Used to answer Questions [HERE](#)

CHALLENGING THE “PECULIAR INSTITUTION”

Slave Narratives from the
Antebellum South

SLAVE NARRATIVES

- Autobiographical slave narratives played a crucial role in the abolition movement.
- The narratives focused on the horrors of slavery in the antebellum south
- Some were brief stories in newspapers or magazines, others were longer pamphlets.
- Some authors wrote fictional narratives based on details from actual events combined with their imaginations

WHAT THE NARRATIVES TELL US

- They are a window into the propaganda used by abolitionists
- They provide insight into slavery from the perspective of those who had been enslaved that is not available in typical forms of evidence (diaries, journals, letters, etc.)
- Offers the personal side of data such as census records and evidence from archaeology.

Building that housed raw cotton for processing

Note how Northup generalizes his experience as that of all slaves

The quota of picked cotton given to each slave

The end of the work day brings dread rather than comfort to the slave

The day's work over in the field, the baskets are "toted," or in other words, carried to the gin-house, where the cotton is weighed. No matter how fatigued and weary he may be—no matter how much he longs for sleep and rest—a slave never approaches the gin-house with his basket of cotton but with fear. If it falls short in weight—if he has not performed the full task appointed him, he knows that he must suffer. And if he has exceeded it by ten or twenty pounds, in all probability his master will measure the next day's task accordingly. So, whether he has too little or too much, his approach to the gin-house is always with fear and trembling. Most frequently they have too little, and therefore they are not anxious to leave the field.

Source: Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River, in Louisiana* (Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853), 126.

An overseer or master might have recorded in a daily account book how much cotton slaves picked, and a historian could use that information in conjunction with other data to figure out how much an average slave picked on an

DISADVANTAGES OF THE NARRATIVES

- Not necessarily an account of a typical experience
- Mostly the accounts of men, women's voices underrepresented
- Nearly all were written with an "amanuensis" (ghost writer)
- The purpose for their creation must be considered in interpretation.
 - Some focused on sensational details to drive higher sales
 - Others were written to foster emotional responses against slavery

FOR EACH NARRATIVE, RECORD THE FOLLOWING:

Narratives found [HERE](#)

Source	Description of slave work, family and culture	Description of Masters and White Society	Evidence of slave resistance

ANALYZING THE DEBATE

- What insights are offered into the lives of slaves in the antebellum South?
- How do the accounts of confrontations between slaves and their masters compare?
- What do these narratives tell you about the differences between the experiences of male and female slaves?