

Slave Rebellion and Consequences

Teacher:

Mike Meyer

Lesson Title:

Slavery Rebellion and Consequences

Grade Level:

Eighth Grade

Lesson Time Length:

As a part of a multi-lesson unit on slavery, 3-4 class periods.

Big Idea:

Students will explore the consequences of rebellion amongst slaves in the United States.

Lesson Abstract:

This lesson is designed to give students a personal connection to the causes of rebellion, methods of control used by white owners and the punishments employed by owners for rebellious slaves. Students will use a variety of primary source documents and internet to examine key elements of the topic.

Lesson Background and Context:

The enslavement of Africans in North America marked a new twist in the peculiar institution of slavery. For the first time people became marked as non-human likening slaves with animal livestock. This type of thinking led to slave owners to develop a systematic approach to the “breaking” and “making” of slaves. The more humanity that could be stripped away from the slave, the easier it was to control their behavior, reproduction, and work habits. This was indeed the first goal of American slavery.

Although the authenticity is in question, documents such as the “Willie Lynch Letters” of 1712, encapsulates the thinking of the time. The amount of detail put into the work (breaking the women, marriage, language, etc.) shows just how serious whites were at making the most profit out of slavery. Further documents of the time, such as “The Pro-Slavery Religion of the South” of 1860 that used biblical scripture to justify slavery, helped to gain a wider acceptance of slavery in America.

Standards Alignment:

(G4.2-3)

- analyzes *push-pull factors* including economic, political, and social factors that contribute to human migration and settlement in United States (e.g., economic: availability of

natural resources, job opportunities created by *technology*; political: Jim Crow laws, freestaters; social factors: religious, ethnic discrimination).

- compares cultural elements that created the distinctive *cultural landscapes* during the Civil War (e.g., technology, crops, housing types, agricultural methods, settlement patterns).

(H2.4-6)

- explains the issues that led to the Civil War (e.g., slavery, economics, and state's *rights*).
- describes the turning points of the Civil War (e.g., Antietam, Gettysburg, Emancipation Proclamation, and Sherman's March to the Sea).
- compares and contrasts various points of views during the Civil War era (e.g., abolitionists vs. slaveholders, Robert E. Lee vs. Ulysses S. Grant, Abraham Lincoln vs. Jefferson Davis, and Harriett Beecher Stowe vs. Mary Chestnut).

Objectives:

Know:

- The that slaves were equated with livestock and “non-human”
- The reasons for rebellion/running away amongst slaves.
- The methods used by white slave-owners to control slaves.

Do:

- Analyze primary source documents
- Respond to questions (verbally and written)

Teaching Materials:

“Roots” DVD

“Willie Lynch” Wordle

Slave Shackles

Bull Whip

Computer with internet

Projector

Vocabulary:

Chattel

Slave Codes

Revolt

Lesson Implementation and Procedures:

Opening Activity:

Activity 1—Wordle “Willie Lynch” letter

http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/4787607/Willie_Lynch_letter_part_1

- Examine and evaluate the themes and messages found in the Wordle.
- Discuss with table partners and then report to the class. Write reports on whiteboard.

Activity 2—“Roots” scene—Kunta Kinte is being whipped for running away and is being told to say his name is “Toby”.

- If you have someone who knows how to use a bullwhip, as I did, ask them to come and crack the whip during the scene. Be sure to ask permission first.

Written Response—discuss after

- a. Why bring the other slaves outside to watch?
- b. Why did Kunta/Toby want to keep his name?
- c. What was the final outcome of the beating?
- d. How did the actual whip sound affect your thinking?

Activity 3—Journal Activity

- a. Reasons to Rebel/Run—bullet points for each section
- b. Consequences/Punishment—bullet points for each section

Activity 4—Document Analysis—“Willie Lynch Letters”

Using the document summarizer, I took different sections of the letter and assigned each to a student (or partners would work). They identified key words and then re-wrote in their own words from a first-person perspective which was then shared with the rest of the class.

Technology Integration:

- Various websites
http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/Perspectives_1/Willie_Lynch_letter_The_Making_of_a_Slave.shtml

Evaluation and Assessment:

- Written journal responses
- Document analysis

Extension and Enrichment:

Activity 1—Compare and contrast sections from the “Pro-Slavery Bible”

- What viewpoints is the author trying to convey?

Resources:

- “Roots” DVD
- Document Summarizer (Tim Bailey)—I created my own version based on Tim’s.
- I have attached pictures that I took of actual documents from Johns Hopkins University. I have not since been able to locate any online copies.

Box 19 No. 75

Recd. H. Wilson
1865

Hall, Newman

THE PRO-SLAVERY RELIGION OF THE SOUTH.

TO THE EDITORS OF "GOOD WORDS," "THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE,"
AND OTHER RELIGIOUS PERIODICALS WHICH HAVE ADMITTED THE
APPEAL FROM THE CLERGY OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

GENTLEMEN,—As the subject to which I would respectfully direct your attention has been made as public as the wide circulation of your periodicals renders possible, allow me, through a public medium, to express a hope that it was without your knowledge that your publishers allowed the appeal of the slave-sanctioning clergy of America to be stitched up within the cover of magazines devoted to truth, philanthropy, and religion. I do not complain of, though I differ from, the arguments of that address in relation to the justice or policy of the war; for this is a subject on which Christians may excusably take opposite views. Nor shall I refer to the proclamation of emancipation, for which I thank God, but which the authors of that address "calmly denounce as worthy of universal reprobation." But that to which I would draw your attention is the deliberate sanction to slavery as it exists in the Southern States contained in that advertisement.

Whatever may be our opinions on the war, the Churches of Great Britain have long ago emphatically pronounced their condemnation of slavery, as opposed to humanity, and utterly condemned by the Gospel. If this is the case as regards slavery in the abstract, how much more is it true in reference to the system which actually prevails in the Confederate States? Let it be remembered that throughout those States the word of a coloured person is never taken in evidence as against a white, so that any wrong done to a negro in the presence of negroes alone cannot be proved, though a thousand coloured witnesses were prepared to give evidence on oath. Let it be remembered that there are stringent laws against teaching slaves to read. Let it be remembered that whatever the kindness of treatment which slaves may occasionally receive, those slaves are part of the estate, and on the insolvency or death of the owner are liable to be sold, together or separately, as the horses and cattle. Let it be remembered that by law, throughout those States, a husband has no exclusive right to his wife—parents have no parental rights in their children, and a woman has no legal right to her chastity. Also, that any slave refusing obedience to any command may be flogged till he submits or dies.

Not by occasional abuses alone, but by the universal law of the Southern Confederacy, the existing system of slavery violates all the moral laws of Christianity. Yet these clergy, in the advertisement to which you give publicity, not merely apologise for, but solemnly advocate the system. These are their words:—"With all the facts of the system of slavery in its practical operations before us, . . . we testify in the sight of God that the relation of master and slave among us, however we may deplore abuses in this as in other relations of mankind, is not incompatible with our holy Christianity, and that the presence of the Africans in our land is an occasion of gratitude in their behalf before God. . . . The condition of slaves here is not wretched, as Northern fiction would have men believe, but prosperous and happy, and would have been yet more so but for the mistaken zeal of the Abolitionists. . . . We regard Abolitionism as an interference with the plans of Divine Providence. It has not the signs of the Lord's blessing. It is a fanaticism which puts forth no good fruit," &c. In conclusion, they ask "the devout prayer of all God's people" and the voice of an enlightened Christian sentiment against "persecution for conscience sake."

Amongst the signatures is that of B. M. Palmer, D.D., New Orleans. It is to be expected that a document prepared for freedom-loving England would be couched in more moderate terms in reference to slavery than the opinions of the authors when uttered before their own countrymen. Allow me, then, to quote from a sermon delivered by this Dr. Palmer on the 29th November, 1860, in the Presbyterian Church, New Orleans. In that discourse he thus distinctly declares the duty and object of the Confederacy to be the perpetuation and extension of slavery:—"The particular trust assigned to such a people becomes the pledge of the Divine protection; and their fidelity to it determines the fate by which it is finally overtaken. . . . If then the South is such a people, what at this juncture is their providential trust? I answer, that it is to conserve and to perpetuate the institu-

tion of domestic slavery as now existing. . . . For us, as now situated, the duty is plain of conserving and transmitting the system of slavery, with the fresh scope for its natural development and extension. Let us, my brethren, look our duty in the face. With this institution committed to our keeping, what reply shall we make to those who say that its days are numbered? My own conviction is, that we should at once lift ourselves, intelligently, to the highest moral ground, and proclaim to all the world that we hold this trust from God; and in its occupancy we are prepared to stand or fall as God may appoint. If the critical moment has arrived at which the great issue is joined, let us say that, in the sight of all perils, we will stand by our trust; and God be with the right! These slaves form part of our households, even as our children; and that, too, through a relationship recognised and sanctioned in the Scriptures of God even as the other. . . . In this great struggle we defend the cause of God and religion. The abolition spirit is undeniably atheistic. . . . Our present trust is to preserve and transmit our existing system of domestic servitude, with the right, unchallenged by man, to go and root itself wherever Providence and nature may carry it. Not till the last man has fallen behind the last rampart shall it drop from our hands, and then only in surrender to the God who gave it. . . . It cannot be disguised that, almost to a man, the people at the North are anti-slavery where they are not abolition. A whole generation has been educated to look upon the system with abhorrence as a national blot. They hope, and look, and pray for its extinction within a reasonable time, and cannot be satisfied unless things are seen drawing to that conclusion. We, on the contrary, as its constituted guardians, can demand nothing less than that it should be left open to expansion, subject to no limitations save those imposed by God and nature. The position of the South is at this moment sublime!"

These opinions of Dr. Palmer are universally prevalent in the South, and must be regarded as representing those of all his brethren who have signed the address to which you give currency. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he did not forbid them altogether to withdraw from the fornicators, or covetous, or extortioners of this world, for otherwise it would be impossible to live in the world; but that they were not to keep company with any man who, called a brother, was a fornicator, or covetous, or an extortioner: "with such an one not to eat." The authors of this address call themselves brethren, for they appeal "in the name of our holy Christianity, as the servants of the Most High God, solemnly convoking the blessing of Almighty God, as ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ and members of His holy church, with our hands upon the Bible." Knowing that the existing slavery of the Southern States involves, not as an accident, but as an inherent element, "fornication, covetousness, and extortion," with almost all other vices and crimes, I for one could not admit to the Lord's table, nor receive into my house, far less aid with my prayers or by giving currency to their arguments, such men as these, who maintaining such a system, still invoke the name of Jesus, and plead the authority of the Bible.

The Duke of Argyll recently said that, however he might disapprove of Bishop Colenso's writings, yet that were the bishop to live a thousand years, and publish a book every year, he would not do so much to undermine the authority of the Bible in the minds of men as claiming that authority on behalf of the existing slave system in America.

I know how much latitude is allowed to advertisers, and that editors plead to be irresponsible for opinions thus expressed; still, as you would refuse in the form of advertisement an appeal on behalf of infidelity or licentiousness, so I cannot but hope that this appeal, which involves a defence of slavery, escaped your notice. At least it deserves your consideration how far the Christian public will continue to receive into their homes publications the holy influence of whose editorial pages is likely to be counteracted by the demoralising tendency of the advertising sheets. I cannot, therefore, but express my hope, as a friend of your excellent periodicals, that you did not sanction the introduction of a manifesto which must injure, where it does not offend, the moral sentiment of all your readers.

Alas for our country! alas for our Christianity! if through the controversies arising out of this great American struggle we should be led to regard with less abhorrence a system which from our childhood we have been taught to regard as violating the common rights of humanity, and trampling on the plainest precepts of the Gospel.

I remain, gentlemen, with sincere respect,

NEWMAN HALL.

Surrey Chapel, London, August 6th, 1863.

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51, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER.

PRICE 6d. per 100.

PRO-SLAVERY BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

1. "He that stealeth a man," *except* he has African blood in him, "and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand," *except* the laws forbid emancipation, "he shall surely be put to death."

2. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," *except* when slaveholders enact, that a slave "owes to his master and to all his family a respect *without bounds*, and an *absolute obedience*." See *Law of Louisiana*.

3. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him," *unless* he is a slaveholder,

4. "Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the hand of the wicked," *except* some ecclesiastical body advise you "wholly to refrain."

5. "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgement for *all* that are oppressed," *except* slaves and colored people.

6. "He that despiseth his neighbor," *except* he has a colored skin, "sinneth."

7. "Rob not the poor," *except* they are black, "because he is poor—for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them," *except* they are slaveholders.

8. "Open thy mouth for the dumb," *except*

American Anti-Slavery Society, No. 143 Nassau street, New York.

they are slaves: "plead the cause of the poor and needy," only don't "desecrate the holy Sabbath" by doing so on that day.

9. "So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun," *except* in the slaveholding states.

10. "Relieve the oppressed," *except* they are slaves.

11. "For they shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour and he shall deliver them," *if* the slaveholders will let him.

12. "He that despiseth the gain of oppression" is a great fanatic.

13. "Cry aloud," [not against slaveholding,] "spare not" [the abolitionist;] "lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people" [except they are members of *our* church] "their transgressions and their sins," *except* they are slaveholders.

14. "Is not this the fast I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness," when the laws of the state will let you, "to undo the heavy burdens," if slaveholders don't oppose it; "and let the oppressed go free," *except* they are slaves, "and that ye break every yoke," *except* it is *inexpedient*.

15. "Thus saith the Lord, execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor," *except* he is a **slaveholder**.