

First Exam, his of black American spring 2019

1. Fugitive Slave Act of 1850

-legalized the capture of escaped slaves, deputized civilians to do so—within the context of rapid expansion of the US, as territories sought statehood.

Significance: it was a part of the Compromise of 1850, which temporarily settled the question of whether territories would be slave/free since the 1820 compromise, and the fugitive act, more importantly, reinforced the legitimacy of slavery, as white southerners feared the expansion of non-slave states across the nation.

2. Slave Society

-society where the economy is dependent on slavery, including the internal trade, slave labor, slaves as property and, of course, cash crops, especially cotton.

Significance: fundamental to nation's economy, in British colonial America and the U.S. until the end of the civil war and abolition of slavery; notions of freedom/unfreedom tied to race/social, political (3/5th Clause), and economic status were tied to race.

3. Internal Slave Trade

-also known as the Second Middle Passage; it was the kidnapping of free black people from the North, the selling of slaves across the South, and physical (often violent) demands and pressure on black women to reproduce a labor force; it became essential after the American Revolution and when King Cotton became the major cash crop of the South.

Significance: after the banning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808, this trade was major way the new cotton economy was replenished with slaves as property and as laborers and it was also depended upon the reproduction of slave labor from enslaved women.

4. Contraband

-blacks escaped from Confederates lines to Union controlled areas during the civil war before 1863; viewed as “stolen property” or confiscated property.

Significance: demonstrates the enslaved efforts to liberate themselves before the Emancipation Proclamation; shaped the legislation, such as the confiscations Acts of 1861 and 1862, highlighting Lincoln's efforts to reinforce the legality of slavery as a means to satisfy border-states and to some degree the Confederacy of the legitimacy of slavery.

5. Society with Slaves

Generally in the north from the colonial era and just after the American Revolution; gradual emancipation meant that some blacks in the North were still slaves in the 19th c.; states where slave labor existed alongside of an array of different kinds of labor and industries; these societies were not dependent upon slavery.

Significance: these societies were instrumental to the economic and political life of slavery in general as well as northerners; as we saw in *Trances of the Trade*, the north remained deeply implicated in the trans-Atlantic Slave trade, despite the U.S.'s ban in 1808.

Short Essays:

1. Why was Abraham Lincoln reluctant to free the slaves before 1863? What were some of the steps he took before issuing the Emancipation Proclamation? Why did Lincoln eventually issue the Emancipation Proclamation?

Ans:

In 1861, Lincoln aimed to “save the union not the slaves.” Over the course of 1862, he tried an array of strategies. The quick answer is, he needed blacks to win the war and his other strategies failed. We know that Lincoln spoke to the border-states and offered them reparations for gradually freeing the slaves; he also spoke with free blacks, urging them to emigrate since they would never be treated as equals in the U.S.; we know about the Confiscation Acts, too; finally, we know that he issued the preliminary EP in September and then the final EP in January 1, 1863, not only “freeing” blacks in confederate states but also for enrollment into military service; while he became more invested in ending slavery, he also needed military reserves and to consider the potential of England joining the side of the Confederacy in the war for economic purposes.

2. Explain the economic elements of slavery in 19th c. America. Explain the physical and psychological aspects of the relationship between the master and the slave? What were some of the gender aspects of this relationship?

Ans:

Slavery included the trans-Atlantic and domestic trade, as well as blacks as property and producers of crops, etc.; in the south, slaves lived in a slave society; in the north, they lived in a society with slaves. The prompt asks about the “aspects of the relationship between the master and the slave.” Therefore, the best answer included equal analysis of whites and blacks, as well as men and women. We know about the violence directed against women (Jacobs & her mistress), but we also know that gender is about men, as well; the example we discussed was the fight between Covey and Douglass, which was as much about masculinity for Covey as it was for Douglass.

3. What caused the Civil War? What were some of the early signs of disunity?

Ans:

The broad answer is slavery, secession, and black Republicanism. The best approach would be to connect the relationships among these around the various compromises (1820, 1850, Kansas-Nebraska), as well as important events like the Dred Scott, 1857 and John Brown and Harpers Ferry, and the election of Abe Lincoln. But more than mentioning these events, an excellent essay would demonstrate how white southerners were fundamentally concerned about and fearful of the lost of property and the ways in which these property—black people—created a political and economic society based in racism and white supremacy. In other words, to view this as purely economic, is to miss how economics was tied to white southern identity, for freedom meant white and superior. Thus, black Republicanism, or the ideas of blacks as political subjects or specifically as part of Republican Party—represented a certain kind of political equal that white southerners could not fathom. All of these points are within Apostles of Disunion.