

6.5

The Abolition Movement



As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- **Describe the hardships of the lives of enslaved African Americans and the ways in which they coped.**
- **Explain the struggles and successes of free African Americans in the mid-1800s.**
- **Identify the leaders and tactics of the abolition movement.**
- **Summarize the positions and tactics of those opposed to abolition.**

Life as an Enslaved African American

About 2 million African Americans were held as slaves in the U.S. with 1/3 of them since 10 years of age

Labor would go from dawn till dusk with backbreaking labor & bare basics of life.

The enslaved were not allowed to learn to read & family members were often separated from one another

Some would take their own lives, but many kept traditions alive & sought hope in their customs

Resistance

Resistance would take many forms such as sabotage, breaking tools, outwitting overseers, or escape

Many would hope to become a **freedman**, or former slave

1822 Denmark Vesey tries to support a slave uprising, his plan is leaked & he, as well as accomplices, are hanged.

1831 Nat Turner stages a successful revolt in Virginia before being stopped by a militia

Southerners were terrified of a slave revolt & created stringent laws

Free African Americans

**Many African Americans were free in the North,
which concerned southern slave owners**

**Slaveholders created the American Colonization
Society to encourage free African
Americans to return to Africa.**

**Many freedmen established schools & churches in the
North.**

David Walker published a pamphlet against slavery
that many in the North agreed with.

The Abolition Movement

The movement in the 1800s to try to abolish, or end, slavery.

William Lloyd Garrison printed the antislavery newspaper **The Liberator** to fight for emancipation

Theodore Weld worked through the churches to speak out against slavery.

Frederick Douglas, former slave who spoke in lecture halls on the horrors of slavery.

Backlash Against Abolition

The South believed that slavery was important for its foundation & superior to the wage labor force of the North.

Some would say the Bible supported slavery & slavery was inevitable

Some Northerners argued with abolitionists & would use violence to stop them.

Southern politicians forced a **gag rule, law that prohibits debate & discussion, over slavery.**

These arguments would begin to divide the nation & tensions began to boil over.