

THE CIVIL WAR EXPERIENCE

Primary Sources

1. Benjamin Drew, *Narratives of Escaped Slaves* (1855)

http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/martin_awl/medialib/timeline/docs/sources/theme_primarysources_Slavery_14.html

These two stories of fugitive slaves who escaped from Maryland to freedom in Canada were recorded by Benjamin Drew, an abolitionist. Most runaway slaves were young men, who, like these young women, had suffered physical abuse. Relatively few women were able to make the dangerous journey to freedom because of the difficulty of fleeing with children. These women's stories document some of the sadistic physical abuse many slaves—men and women alike—suffered at the hands of their masters: whippings, brandings, and confinement, for instance. They also provide evidence of the attempt by women to maintain family ties, relationships, and commitments.

2. George Fitzhugh, "The Blessings of Slavery" (1857)

http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/martin_awl/medialib/timeline/docs/sources/theme_primarysources_Slavery_16.html

This selection, from Fitzhugh's *Cannibals All! or Slaves Without Masters*, is a justification and defense of slavery. In other portions of his radical book, Fitzhugh argued that (as his title implies) work relations made cannibals of everyone and that, ideally, liberty was meant only for the few—that "some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them—and the riding does them good." In justifying slavery in principle rather than as only a natural state for nonwhites, Fitzhugh ran counter to the general ideology of the antebellum period, a time of increasing democratization, expansion, and participation. In doing so, he became fodder for those northerners who were terrified of a "slave power" conspiracy emanating from the South.

3. Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)

http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/martin_awl/medialib/timeline/docs/sources/theme_primarysources_Reform_6.html

This selection from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* describes a violent exchange between the slave master Simon Legree (a transplanted Connecticut native) and the patient slave Uncle Tom. Southerners criticized Stowe, who had very little (if any) experience of plantation life, for an atypical, distorted perception of slavery. Most northern readers were taken in by Stowe's tale and its somewhat sensationalized and sentimental portrayal of slavery.

4. Albion W. Tourgee, *Letter on Ku Klux Klan Activities* (1870)

http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/martin_awl/medialib/timeline/docs/sources/theme_primarysources_Civil_Rights_5.html

Violence proved an effective weapon for whites seeking to curb black participation in politics and to unseat Republican rule in the South. The Ku Klux Klan, a secret organization with a diverse white membership, perpetrated brutal attacks throughout the South, intimidating blacks and whites alike from publicly voicing their opinions and asserting their rights. Albion Tourgee, a so-called carpetbagger who settled in North Carolina and served as a judge during Reconstruction, vividly describes the Klan's tactics in a letter to the *New York Tribune* in May 1870.

5. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Declaration of Sentiments* (1848)

http://occawlonline.pearsoned.com/bookbind/pubbooks/martin_awl/medialib/timeline/docs/sources/theme_primarysources_Women_12.html

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) along with Lucretia Mott, played a major role in drafting the declaration that was presented at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848. The document paralleled the Declaration of Independence and listed the grievances of women, ending with the controversial request for women's rights.