

# **Classroom Kit:**

**Background Information** 

**Suggested Pre-Activities Student Activities & Lesson Plans** 



# **Background on The Emancipation Proclamation**

The Emancipation Proclamation represents a key moment in America's struggle to fulfill the promise of freedom and equality. Issued in the midst of the Civil War, it helped end a system that had enslaved people for more than 200 years.

Abraham Lincoln first alerted the nation to his intentions when he signed a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. During the next hundred days, Americans criticized, praised, and tried to influence Lincoln's decision. On January 1, 1863, he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation declaring that all slaves in the Confederate areas still in rebellion were free. The Proclamation immediately freed tens of thousands of enslaved people and ensured that as more areas came under Union control, freedom would spread.

The Proclamation transformed the Civil War by making freedom one of its goals, and committed the nation to making its ideals into reality. Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist leader and formerly enslaved man who ran to freedom, grasped the document's significance. He compared it to the Declaration of Independence, also an ink and paper proclamation made indelible over time. "The fourth of July was great," declared Douglass, "but the first of January . . . is incomparably greater."

Exhibit Text, *Promise of Freedom: The Emancipation Proclamation* Fairfield Museum and History Center

These activities are designed to complement a <u>field trip or outreach</u> program in conjunction with the Fairfield Museum's exhibition *Promise of Freedom*.

These activities can also stand alone to complement curriculum in grades 5 – 8 that cover:

- ❖ The Founding Documents
- Emancipation Proclamation & Presidential Powers
  - States Rights vs. Federal Government
    - Slavery in America
      - ❖ America Today
        - Civil Rights

# **Content Includes:**

- Teacher Background Information
- <u>Mini-Activities</u> are designed to introduce the events and themes that thread throughout the exhibition.
- Suggested Online Lesson Plans & Resources
- Extension Activities

Each of these activities may be done as a class, in small groups, or individually.



# 1. Slavery in a Free Nation (founding)

- The United States was based on the promise of freedom and equality.
- From its beginnings as a nation, our nation's founders struggled with the issue of slavery.

### **FOUNDING FACTS**

- Slavery had existed in all of the 13 original states
- The Constitution accepted and protected slavery
- The country's leaders were generally sympathetic to slavery
- Ten of our first fifteen presidents had been slave owners
- Slavery was deeply intertwined with the national economy: the products generated by enslaved labor accounted for 80% of all American exports.

### **BACKGROUND**

### The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, May, 1787

The contentious issue of slavery was too controversial to be resolved during the Convention. The issue of slavery, although always an undercurrent during deliberations and side-discussions, was at center stage in the Convention three times:

- June 7 regarding who would vote for Congress
- June 11 in debate over how to proportion relative seating in the 'house'
- August 22 relating to commerce and the future wealth of the nation

Apportionment in the House of Representatives would not be by any wealth as initially allowed:

It would be representing people, the count to be made of the free citizens and other persons. To the whole number of men and women, free and indentured, would be added "three-fifths" the number of "other persons", meaning property-less slaves and taxed Indian farming families.

Suggested Activity: Documents of Freedom: Are We the People?

### **Chicago History Museum**

Grade level: Middle school through high school

Estimated time: Three class periods

Specific topic:

Examining public opinion at the time of the issuing of the Declaration of Independence,

the Constitution, and the Emancipation Proclamation

Subtopic: Document analysis of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence.

### **Access Full Lesson Plan Here:**

http://www.chicagohistory.org/static\_media/pdf/historylab/chm-historylabdof1.pdf



# 2. America's Growing Pains

The Early 1800s in America: Setting the Stage for Civil War

# Mini-Activity: Early 1800s Timeline

### Objective

Introduce students to some of the major events in the early 1800s in America that occurred before and led up to the Civil War.

#### Directions

Introduce the activity by asking students what they know about America after the American Revolution. What happened in the early 1800s?

The teacher can introduce events that had an impact on the Civil War in the early and mid-1800s by separating students into groups to conduct short research projects on the following:

Eli Whitney and the cotton gin

Missouri Compromise

**Fugitive Slave Law** 

**Dred Scott** decision

John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry

#### Discussion

Ask students to conduct research on the above events and identify <u>the five most important points</u> that happened.

## Guiding Question

How did this event impact the issue of slavery and the Civil War?

#### Closure

Have one student from the group present their findings. Ask how these events may have impacted the Civil War.

#### Extension

Create a writing activity based on their research. Out of the five topics that were presented, which one had the most impact? Why?



# America in the Early 1800s

<u>1793</u>: Connecticut's **Eli Whitney patents the mechanical cotton gin**, leading to the spread of cotton cultivation throughout the South. Whitney hoped to make processing cotton easier. Many contemporary observers believed that labor intensive crops like **cotton** were <u>economically unsustainable</u>, however the increased productivity made cotton more economically viable for planters.

<u>1820</u>: <u>Missouri Compromise</u> admitted Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, and barred slavery from the Louisiana Purchase territory north of the 36° 30′ latitude line.

<u>1850:</u> The **Fugitive Slave Law** strengthens rights of slave owners and provokes opposition in North

<u>1857:</u> In the *Dred Scott* decision, U.S. Supreme Court <u>denies Congress the right to prohibit slavery in the territories</u>; it denies citizenship to slaves, ex-slaves, and descendants of slaves

#### 1859, October:

Connecticut-born **John Brown** leads an unsuccessful armed slave revolt by seizing a United States Arsenal at Harpers Ferry in Virginia. He was found guilty of treason against the commonwealth of Virginia and was hanged on December 2.



# 3. Lincoln's Election and the Confederacy

## **Mini-Activity:**

### **Objective**

Introduce students to the two sides of the Civil War, the Union and the Confederacy, and trace the Confederacy state's secession on a timeline and map.

#### Directions

Introduce the activity by asking students what they know about the Civil War. List these things on the board.

How did people feel in the North?

How did people feel in the South?

Who was impacted by the Civil War?

Brainstorm the groups that were affected, making sure the following are covered:

**Enslaved people** 

**Abolitionist** 

**Plantation Owner** 

**Farmer** 

Freed African Americans

**Politicians** 

Merchants

What do they know about the above groups?

What are they curious about?

What do they predict will happen during the Civil War?

### Activity

Use this timeline and map to trace when the southern states seceded from the Union following Lincoln's presidency. Have students follow along by creating their own timelines or by filling in additional pre-knowledge on the map.

# **Lincoln's Election & the Confederacy**

1860: Abraham Lincoln elected to presidency

1860, December 20: South Carolina first state to secede

<u>1861: February 9:</u> A Constitutional convention at Montgomery, Alabama named Jefferson Davis provisional President of the **Confederate States of America**. He was inaugurated on February 18, 1861

Seven states declared their secession from the United States before Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861:

- 1. South Carolina (December 20, 1860)
- 2. Mississippi (January 9, 1861)
- 3. Florida (January 10, 1861)
- 4. Alabama (January 11, 1861)
- 5. Georgia (January 19, 1861)
- 6. Louisiana (January 26, 1861)
- 7. Texas (February 1, 1861)

March 4: Abraham Lincoln inaugurated president

March 11: The Confederate States of America adopts a **Constitution**.

<u>April 12:</u> South Carolina troops fire on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861 and **the Civil War begins**. After Lincoln's subsequent call for troops on April 15, four more states secede:

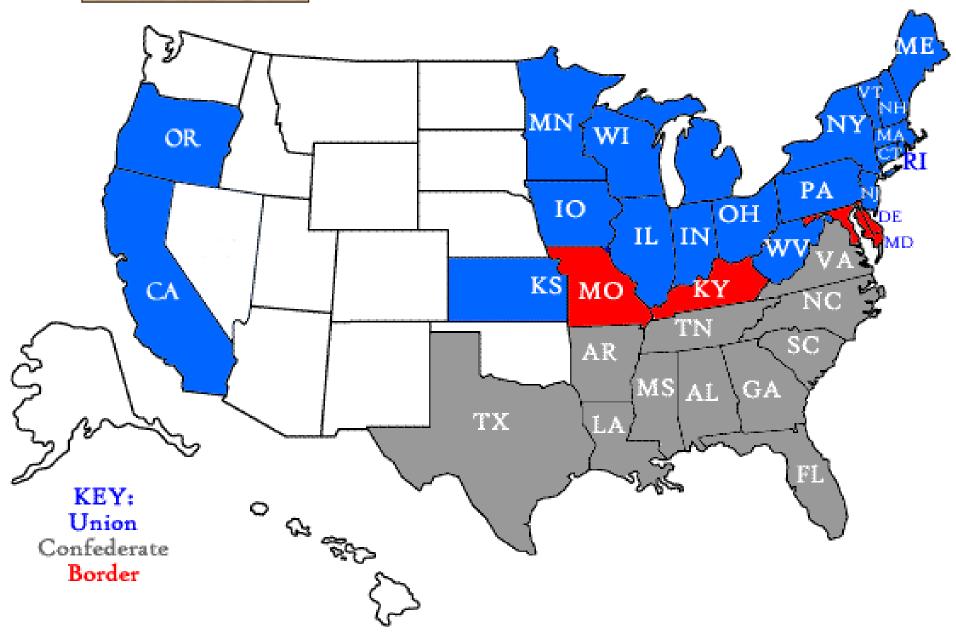
- 1. Virginia (April 17, 1861; ratified by voters May 23, 1861)
- 2. Arkansas (May 6, 1861)
- 3. Tennessee (May 7, 1861; ratified by voters June 8, 1861)
- 4. North Carolina (May 20, 1861)

<u>The Border states (and slaves states) that remain loyal to the Union include:</u> Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri

### July 22, 1861:

U.S. Congress passes resolution declaring that the war is being fought to "preserve the Union," not to destroy slavery

In 1861, a Unionist legislature in Wheeling, Virginia seceded from Virginia, eventually claiming 50 counties for a new state, <u>West Virginia</u>. It joined the United States in 1863 with a constitution that gradually abolished slavery





### 4. The Price of Freedom

### **Background Information**

It's important for students to understand the debates and perspectives that developed on the critical question of slavery:

### If the slaves were freed, where would they go? How would the freed slaves support themselves?

Many believed that African Americans were unable to support themselves. What would happen if they could not support themselves? Lincoln himself was unsure if they could adapt into society or serve as soldiers.

### Lincoln's Views & Colonization

In the beginning of his administration, Lincoln's policies promoted <u>gradual abolition</u> and <u>colonization</u>. The idea of colonization is often overlooked as a policy choice that Lincoln advocated. Weeks before issuing the <u>preliminary Emancipation Proclamation</u>, Lincoln hosted a "Deputation of Free Negroes," meeting with abolitionist leaders at the White House, purportedly to "sell" his colonization plan.

Lincoln also supported compensation for slaveowners (which was successful with the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act).

The administration established a \$600,000 budget to begin evacuation and relocation of former slaves.

### <u>Objective</u>

Students will understand that <u>colonization</u> was created as one potential solution to the problem of ending slavery in America.

#### <u>Activity</u>

Illustrate where the country Liberia is on a world map, projection, or use the map below. Explain that the Colonization Society in America was founded to promote the settlement of freed slaves in other countries, including Liberia.

### Discussion

In the early 1800s, about how long do you think slaves lived in America? [the first slave arrived in Jamestown in 1619]

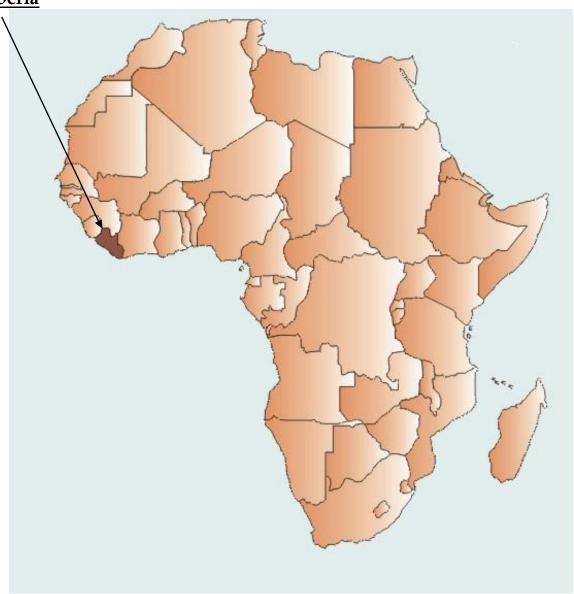
Slaves were forcibly removed from their countries, but established families and new generations in America. As a young person, how would you feel if you had to return to a country that you had never known nor seen?



# **Colonization**

In 1817, the **American Colonization Society** was founded to encourage sending freed slaves to settle in Africa and contributed to the establishment of the country Liberia in Africa.

# <u>Liberia</u>



# Bibliography / Further Reading

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"The Great Event of the Nineteenth Century: Lincoln Issues the Emancipation Proclamation" by Allen C. Guelzo <a href="http://173.203.96.155/node/2974">http://173.203.96.155/node/2974</a>

"Emancipating Lincoln" by Harold Holzer. (2012)

"The Emancipation Proclamation" by Louis P. Masur, Trinity College Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech, March 2011 <a href="http://www.essential.civilwar.vt.edu/assets/files/ECWC%20TOPIC%20Emancipation%20Proclamation%20Resources.pdf">http://www.essential.civilwar.vt.edu/assets/files/ECWC%20TOPIC%20Emancipation%20Proclamation%20Resources.pdf</a>

"African Colonization Movement in Connecticut" Donald Bishop (Trinity College senior thesis, 1967) [Watkinson Library]

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