Handout 1

Name: _____ Date: _____
Teacher: _____ Class Period: _____

Brutality during Enslavement Document Packet

Document A:

Source: Baptist, E. E. (2016). *The half has never been told: Slavery and the making of American capitalism*. Hachette UK.

Head Note: *Edward Baptist is an award-winning historian who is now a professor at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. He is the first historian to use terms like "enslaver" instead of "planter", "forced labor camps" instead of "plantation" in his descriptions of Enslavement in the United States. His work has been called groundbreaking and radical. Notice here how he uses language and framing to reorient what enslavement was in the United States.*

Some historians have called lashings "discipline," the term offered by slavery's lawgivers and the laws they wrote, which pretended that masters who whipped were calmly administering "punishment" to "correct" lazy subordinates' reluctance to work.…Perhaps one unspoken reason why many have been so reluctant to apply the term "torture" to slavery is that even though they denied slavery's economic dynamism, they knew that slavery on the cotton frontier made a lot of product.…No one was willing, in other words, to admit that they lived in an economy whose bottom gear was torture. ***Yet we should call torture by its name.*** Historians of torture have defined the term as extreme torment …

The idea that the commodification and suffering and forced labor of African Americans is what made the United States powerful and rich is not an idea people necessarily want to hear. Yet it is the truth. Forced migration had shaped their lives.…forced separations, violence and new kinds of labor…the expansion of slavery has shaped the story of everything in the pre-Civil War United States.….Enslaved African Americans built the modern United States, and indeed the entire modern world, in ways both obvious and hidden.

Questions to Consider:

1. What language does this historian compel us to use? Why?
2. How does this language reframe how we understand enslavement?

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Document B: Two Textbook Excerpts

Textbook Source #1: Boorstin & Kelley, A History of the United States. Lexington, MA: Ginn & Co, 1986. p.226.

In their simple log huts in the slave quarters—huts often not much different from those occupied by poor Southern whites—they built their private world. There they married (though sometimes owners conducted these ceremonies), worshipped, celebrated the birth of a child, mourned the death of a friend, in their own way. In their new American homeland, as their owners wanted, the blacks became Christians. But they also combined this Christianity with some elements from Africa and made it special. They often went to the master's church on Sunday morning, where they sat in a separate section. But it was at their own service later in the day that they could freely practice their religion. There they heard the sermons of eloquent black preachers.

Textbook Source #2: Stuckey and Salvucci. *Call to Freedom*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 2000. Pp.377.

Life Under Slavery
Control

Some planters offered rewards to encourage slaves' obedience. More often, however, slaveholders relied on punishment. Some slaveholders would severely punish one slave in front of all the others as a warning to the entire group…Just witnessing such cruel treatment was enough to frighten many slaves into obeying the planter's or overseer's orders.

Questions to Consider:

1. What terms do the authors use for those who enslaved people? What is the term for those who were in captivity? What term does the author use for the beatings? Why might they choose these terms vs others?

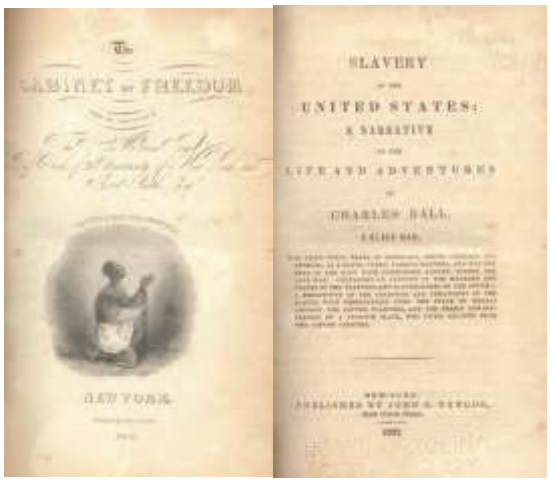
2. What are some differences between the texts?

3. According to *Call to Freedom*, how many people typically "relied on punishment"?
    a. What does the word punishment imply?
    b. Why might this implication be inaccurate?
    c. What other words might you use?

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Document C:

Source: Excerpt (pages 115-119) from the autobiography of Charles Ball, a man from Maryland who was held in captivity at a cotton plantation in Congaree, South Carolina. *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball.* New York, 1837. Retrieved from *Library of Congress.*



It was late in the afternoon before any of the gentlemen came; but, before five o'clock, there were more than twenty white people.... I was stripped of my shirt, and the waist-band of my trousers was drawn closely round me, below my hips, so as to expose the whole of my back, in its entire length ...each of my thumbs was lashed closely to the end of a stick about three feet long...my thumbs were bound, over the top of the post, which is about eighteen inches square; the chair was then taken from under me, and I was left hanging by the thumbs...The pepper tea was now brought... This doubly-burning liquid was thrown into my raw and bleeding wounds, and produced a tormenting smart, beyond the description of language....until I had received ninety-six lashes, and my back was cut and scalded from end to end....I had entered upon eternity, and that my sufferings would never end.

Questions to consider:

1. What language does Charles Ball use to describe this scene?
2. How many people where there? Why were so many white people there- what does that tell us about complicity?
3. In reading this document, what other words might you use other than "punishment" to describe this scene? Why?
4. How does this differ from how the textbooks portray the period? What can we learn as a result?
5. How is this account more or less reliable than the textbook accounts provided in this packet? In other words, which perspective/account do you believe more and why?

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Document D:


LIFE AND NARRATIVE
OF
WILLIAM J. ANDERSON,
Twenty-four Years a Slave;
EASY PLAN TO ABOLISH SLAVERY
IN THE UNITED STATES.
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Source: Excerpt from *Life and Narrative of William Anderson, Twenty-four Years a Slave; Sold Eight Times! In Jail Sixty Times!!! Whipped Three Hundred Times!!!* Or *The Dark Deeds of American Slavery Revealed,* Written by William J. Anderson, Chicago: Daily Tribune Book and Job Printing Office. 1857. Retrieved from *Library of Congress.*

My master came down, put irons on my hands and feet, and laughed in anger at my calamity. He took me back upon the cotton farm, where he with three or four others, stripped me stark naked, or divested me of all my apparel, drove down four stakes, about nine feet apart, then (after I was tied hard and fast to the cold ground) with a large ox whip, laid on me (he said) five hundred lashes, till the blood ran freely upon the cold ground and mother earth drank it freely in. I begged, mourned, and cried, and prayed; but all my lamentations ***(deep sadness)*** were only sport for him; he was a stranger to mercy. My pen would fail here to describe my agonizing feelings and I must leave the reader again to imagine my suffering condition. At the close of this brutal punishment he called for some salt brine ***(mixture of hot water and salt),*** of the strongest kind, and had me washed down in it. O, that, with the whipping, was another hell to undergo….It did appear as if the man had no heart at all…no one can realize such bodily anguish except one who has passed through the like…My master often … came out to the field to whip, cut, slash, curse, swear, beat and knock down several, for … nothing at all.

Questions to Consider:

1. What language does William Anderson use to describe this scene?
2. According to Anderson, why did the enslaver beat people?
3. What can we learn from comparing the textbook account to this account?
4. How is this account more or less reliable than the textbook accounts provided in this packet? In other words, which perspective/account do you believe more and why?

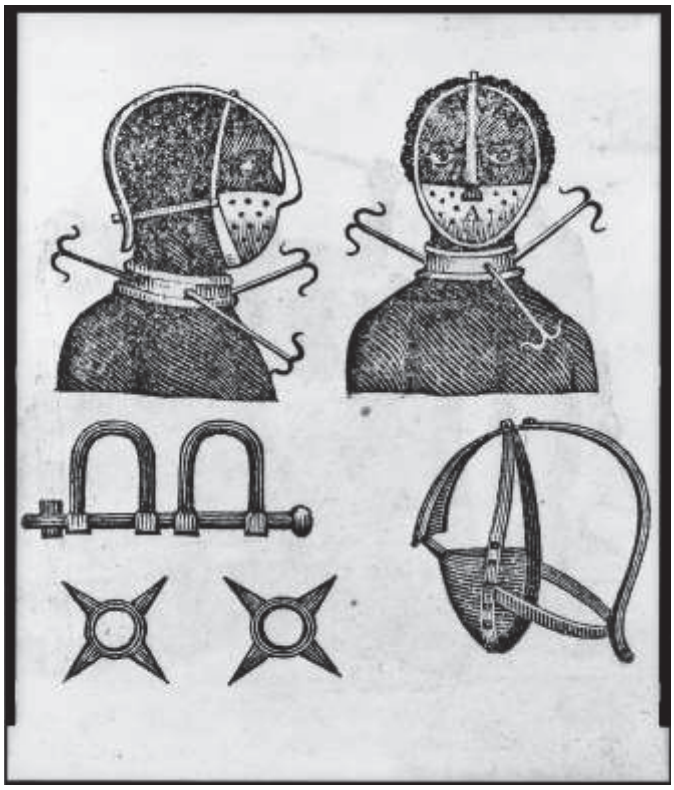
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Supplemental Sources: To Be Used at Teacher Discretion

Document E:

Source: Illustration in: The Penitential Tyrant, Thomas Branagan. New-York: Printed by Samuel Wood, no. 362, Pearl-street, 1807. Retrieved from *Library of Congress.*

Head Note: Thomas Branagan was a reformed slave overseer on slave labor camps in Antigua. He authored many works on the brutality of slavery, this image comes from The Penitential Tyrant (a poem). He immigrated to Philadelphia before its publication, this was written in the United States.



1. What does this diagram teach you about the brutality whites inflicted during the period of slavery?

2. In what ways is the blacksmith who developed this device equally responsible ethically as the slave owner/overseer who used it? What does that teach us about complicity during enslavement?

3. What can we learn from comparing the textbook account to this primary source?

4. How is this source more reliable than the textbook accounts provided in this packet?

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Supplemental Sources: To Be Used at Teacher Discretion

Document F:

Source: Ladies Whipping Girls**,** picture of slavery in the United States of America / George Bourne. Middletown, Conn.: E. Hunt, 1834, p. 109. Abolitionist publication. Retrieved from *Library of Congress.*



1. What does this image show us about the role of some white women during enslavement?

2. What can we learn from comparing the textbook account to this primary source?

3. How does this source expand the textbook accounts provided in this packet?

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