

The 1800s issue of slavery



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The 1800s was plagued with much controversy about the issue of slavery. Since the beginning of America slavery was a thriving industry. Many efforts were made in order to end slavery and decrease the number of the slaves in America. In 1807 an act prohibiting the importation of new slaves was passed and therefore no new slaves were allowed to be brought into the United States. This was one attempt to control slavery in the United States. Another effort was made by Thomas Jefferson who proposed an idea that would gradually end slavery. It would emancipate slaves born after a certain day and deport them back to Africa and the other slaves would die off naturally, however due the absence of one person this bill was not passed. As time passed on American citizens banded together in order to promote the end of slavery. These people were known as abolitionist. Abolitionist such as Harriet Tubman and Fredrick Douglass made many contributions toward the movement to end slavery; however their contributions did not go unnoticed by the government. As abolitionists challenged the government, new laws were passed in order to counteract the work of the abolitionists.

Abolitionists in the 1800s made many contributions to the movement to end slavery. Abolitionist took a prominent role in society with the establishment of the American Anti-Slavery Movement. This group attracted thousands of people that were interested in ending slavery. One important abolitionist is Harriet Tubman. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery and at age 25 married John Tubman, who was a freeman, and went to live in his log cabin while still working for her master. In 1849 Harriet Tubman ran away from her plantation following the North Star to Pennsylvania. While in Pennsylvania she found work became involved with abolition and anti-slavery movements

within Philadelphia. While in Philadelphia she met Thomas Garrett and she used his house as a pinpoint. Between the years of her escape and the civil war Harriet Tubman had taken about 20 trips in the Underground Railroad and had helped about 300 slaves escape to the north, sometimes as far as Canada. The Underground Railroad became one of the most dominant forces in the abolitionist movement. This was only one major contribution made by abolitionist in the 1800s. Another key abolitionist was Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland. He was cared for by his grandmother until he was able to work. At the age of 6 he went to work on the plantation, soon after he was transferred to another plantation where the wife of the master began to teach him how to read. After she was scolded by her husband she stopped her reading lessons to Frederick however he continued to learn on his own from poor white children trading pieces of bread for lessons. Using money that he earned on the plantation he would buy newspapers. He was especially interested in The Columbian Orator. It was a collection of speeches that emphasized liberty, democracy, and courage. At the young age of 13 Douglass was inspired by the speeches and grew a strong hatred for slavery. Frederick Douglass was viewed to be uncontrollable by his master when it was revealed that he was holding church services for slaves. He was again sent to another plantation. To a man that was known as the “ slave breaker” at the age of 16 he got into a fight with his master when he could not take the beatings anymore. Instead of killing Douglass his master sent him to another plantation where he was treated better. After suffering an injury Douglass began apprenticing at one of his former owners farms and fell in love with a woman named Anna. Using money that he borrowed from Anna he was able to finance his escape and

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in 1838 he arrived in New York City and he was free. He soon sent for Anna and moved to New Bedford while in New Bedford he met his idol, William Lloyd Garrison and began reading the Liberator. In 1841 during a convention Douglass spoke about his experiences as a slave and he impressed many prominent abolitionist leaders including Garrison. He was hired as a lecturing agent and made hundreds of anti-slavery speeches. In 1845 he wrote his autobiography, which became an instant success, however in writing this book he was forced to move to Europe in order to avoid capture. Soon he was able to buy his own freedom and he returned to the United States. In 1847 he published the North Star. This was only one of many anti-slavery works that he published. In addition to lecturing and publishing many newspapers he was an active member in the Underground Railroad. Until his death Frederick Douglass traveled to many places speaking against slavery. Although Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass are not the only abolitionist they made significant contributions that greatly affected America. Both abolitionist were born into slavery and escaped in order to speak out against slavery and the treatment of African Americans. Harriet Tubman made history by aiding over 300 slaves to freedom in the North and Frederick Douglass touched the hearts of many with his moving speeches and numerous publications. The contributions of these abolitionists were not overlooked however as the abolitionist took a more prominent role in society the government took steps in order to stifle their endeavors.

The 1800s was a time of expansion. While the United States expanded the issue of slavery became a hot topic. The government was trying to regulate the number of slave states and the number of Free states however the

country was not ready for the total abolition of slavery. During the time that Harriet Tubman was working in the Underground Railroad there was a bounty put out for her in the amount of 40, 000 dollars. This was only one example of the government trying to put an end to abolitionist efforts. In 1851 a law was passed that endangered the work of the abolitionist in the Underground Railroad this included Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. This law was known as the Fugitive Slave Act. This law made the federal government responsible for capturing runaway slaves and sending them back to their masters in the South. Many northern states did not support the law and wanted to protect free black slaves. This law stated that any US Marshall that failed to send a slave back to their master would have to pay a 1, 000 dollar fine. Other attempts were made to stop the abolitionist. During the time that Frederick Douglass wrote his autobiography he was forced to move to Europe in order to protect his freedom because his book gave a detailed account of his escape and his life as a slave. Since Douglass was still technically a slave at the time his book was published he had to purchase his own freedom. Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass are prime examples of the work that abolitionists did and the response of the government.

During the 1800s the end of slavery was a prominent concern. Slavery was a major issue that took many years to control. Abolition was a social reform movement that took America by storm. Abolitionists made many contributions to society that upset the government mainly in the South. Laws such as the Fugitive Slave Act were set up in order to protect the institution of slavery in America. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman are two abolitionists whose contributions to America changed history. Harriet

Tubman led over 300 people to freedom and Frederick Douglass was a great speaker that constantly spoke out against slavery. The contributions made the abolitionist became to create the picture of a free and equal America.