

# Primary source investigation

Business



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Slavery has a long history in the United States.

In fact, the foundation of slavery in America can be traced back to the 17th century when the European settlers in the northern parts of America began to ship in African slaves to provide cheap labor as opposed to employing poor European servants. The first group of slaves arrived in America in 1619 when a Dutch ship delivered about 20 African Slaves to Jamestown, Virginia. Thereafter, slavery spread widely to other American colonies, and by the end of the 18th century, approximately 6-7 million slaves had been imported from Africa. Most of these slaves worked in different sectors, mainly on tobacco, indigo, sugar, cotton, and rice plantations around the southern coast. However, following the end of the American Revolution (1775-83), some British colonies in North America began to push for slavery to be abolished because they no longer needed slaves to support their economies. Therefore, in 1774-1804, almost all northern states in America had abolished slavery.

On the other hand, by 1808 the U. S. Congress had abolished the African slave trade. Unfortunately, the U. S. Constitution that was established immediately after the war recognized slaves as persons who were eligible for taxation and congressional representation.

Furthermore, the Constitution allowed slavery to continue in the southern states of America whereby the slaves were vital for cotton production. The domestic slave trade had been continuing for the next 50 years since 1808 until the beginning of slave revolts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These revolts coupled with civil rights movements played a significant role in

the abolition of slavery in America. This essay reviews three historical newspaper articles on slavery with the aim of examining their historical value as far understanding the past is concerned. Article 1: Taking No Prisoners (1851-2008) This article was reproduced in November 22, 2009 from the 1923-current file in The New York Times.

It presents a review of a historical novel (Devil's Dream) about a Confederate general and his slaves. The article begins by exploring the general characteristics of a typical civil war general from the South before introducing the main character. Nathan Bedford Forest is the man at the center of the story as a result of his peculiar characteristics and criminal responsibility for the killing of black soldiers at Fort Pillow in 1864. Hence, the author portrays Forest as a fierce, hot-tempered, and tyrannical leader who did not feel pain, particularly when dealing with his enemies and deserters. Moreover, Forest is also portrayed as a general who participated in the war with the aim of ending slave trade (Wineapple C16).

Generally, this article is historically significant because it takes the reader back to the time of the American civil war in which the African slaves participated not only for the purpose of helping their masters, but also with the intention of freeing themselves from the chains of slavery. More specifically, this article calls to mind the events that followed the civil war, and it helps readers understand that the end of slavery in America did not come without major incidents of unimaginable human violence, deaths, and suffering. However, this article is biased to the extent that the author does not bring out the clear role of the black slaves who were in Forest's team. Despite indicating that the slaves played a proactive role in the slave

<https://assignbuster.com/primary-source-investigation/>

rebellion within the civil war, the author spends a lot of time talking about one man; hence the role played by his followers is completely overshadowed. Nonetheless, this article paints a good historical picture of the past. Article 2: One Man's Crusade against Slavery, Seen from Two Angles (1851-2008) This article appeared in the 1923-current file of The New York Times reproduced in October 28, 2009.

It presents the story of John Brown who led a group of about 21 men in raiding the Harpers Ferry in Virginia with the intention of stealing the federal arsenal for the purpose of advancing the slave rebellion. In the process, Brown's Provisional Army of the United States managed to capture a number of hostages and killed a few. In the end, Brown and some members of his team were captured by the Marines and hanged for treason (Rothstein C1). Further, the article portrays Brown as a hero whose fierce intelligence helped in ending institutional slavery in America. In fact, the author notes that Brown's contributions appear in a variety of Amendments to the U. S.

Constitution besides informing the rise of civil rights movements in the 1960s (Rothstein C1). As a result, this article is historically valuable because it takes the readers back to the era of slavery and civil war in America when men who were brave enough to rise against slavery and its ambassadors triumphed. From the article it is clear that the slave rebellion was not only a preserve of the black slaves but it also involved brave, rebellious, and kind-hearted white men who took center-stage in leading the slaves to fight for their rights. Further the article uncovers major incidents of dissent, terrorism, and violence, which characterized the slave rebellion and the American civil war. However, this article is quite biased as it is centered on an individual

<https://assignbuster.com/primary-source-investigation/>

whose efforts could not have gone to fruition without the help of his followers. It is important to note that the article does not provide any information regarding the black slaves who fought under the leadership of Brown until their death.

Nevertheless, this article provides important insights into the past. Article 3: First Lady's Roots Reveal Slavery's Tangled Legacy (1851-2008) This article was published in the 1923-current file of The New York Times and reproduced in October 8, 2009. Accordingly, the article reviews the historical bloodline of the current first lady of the United States, Michelle Obama. Here, the article traces the historical roots of Michelle Obama back to the 1850s when a six-year old slave girl, Melvinia, was valued at \$475 as a part of the possessions of her white master in South Carolina. After her master's death, Melvinia was taken to Georgia where she met a white man, Dolphus Shields, who impregnated her and fathered her first son.

This marked the beginning of a family blood line that stretches across different states in the United States to the current first family in the White House. This is because Melvinia Shields is the great-great-great grandmother of the first lady of the United States (Swarns and Kantor A1). The importance of this article is that it provides a good historical background of the first lady that does not only concern her, but most other African American people who pride themselves for their ancestral roots deeply seated in slavery.

Therefore, besides providing the history of the first lady, this article helps the reader understand and appreciate the importance of family lines and the positive side of slavery because most of the descendants of slaves are now significant people in the history of America. Furthermore, this article helps <https://assignbuster.com/primary-source-investigation/>

the readers understand the extent of racial intermingling during the era of slavery and the role that racial intermarriages have played in shaping the history of the United States.

On the other hand, this article exposes incidents of rapes and sexual exploitation among other unresolved atrocities committed during the era of slavery and the American civil war. Nevertheless, this article is also biased as it is dedicated to only one member of a large African American family which other members would have loved it if the authors had mentioned them in their analysis. Overall, this article is a very important piece of evidence that slavery played a significant role in shaping the history of America.