

Abolitionist Movement

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about the fundamental beliefs that shaped the abolitionist movement.

Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 7.3.3 Examine the motivations and influence of major American reform movements during the 19th century
- 7.3.5 Explain reasons for the expansion of slavery in the South after 1800 and describe the life of enslaved African Americans, and their responses to slavery

Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
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Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 7.

Primary and Authentic Sources

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about the Abolitionist movement. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 7 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 5.

Source 1: [Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Convention](#) (1833)

These are our views and principles—these our designs and measures. With entire confidence in the overruling justice of God, we plant ourselves upon the Declaration of our Independence and the truths of Divine Revelation, as upon the Everlasting Rock.

We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land.

We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and of rebuke.

We shall circulate, unsparingly and extensively, anti-slavery tracts and periodicals.

We shall enlist the pulpit and the press in the cause of the suffering and the dumb.

We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.

We shall encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions: and

We shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance.

Source 2: [The Emancipator](#) (1838)

Transcript

The **Emancipator** – Extra. February 24th, 1838. Anti-Slavery Convention.

The undersigned invite all the citizens of Connecticut friendly to the immediate emancipation of the slaves of our country, to send delegates to a Convention to be held at Hartford, on Wednesday, the 28th of February, 1838, in order to form a STATE ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY. Individuals in the State, and from other States, holding the principles of Anti-Slavery Societies, are also invited to attend the Convention. We propose the formation of a State Society, that our influence may be more efficient, and that the great cause in which we are engaged, may be carried on with more energy.

We believe we have a right, and that it is our duty, to do all that we can, consistently with the Constitution and Laws, to abolish slavery in our land: we entertain no Utopian project of “letting loose” all the slaves: but we propose to have them placed under equal and just laws; to deliver them from the yoke of oppression, and give them liberty.

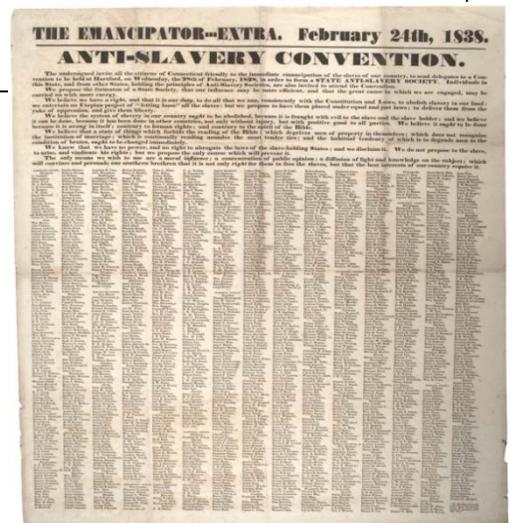
We believe the system of slavery in our country ought to be abolished, because it is fraught with evil to the slave and the slave holder; and we believe it can be done, because it has been done in other countries, not only without injury, but with positive good to all parties. We believe it ought to be done because it is wrong in itself; contrary to human rights; and contrary to the spirit of the Bible.

We believe that a state of things which forbids the reading of the Bible; which deprives men of property in themselves; which does not recognize the institution of marriage; which is continually rending asunder the most tender ties; and the habitual tendency of which is to degrade men to the condition of brutes, ought to be changed immediately.

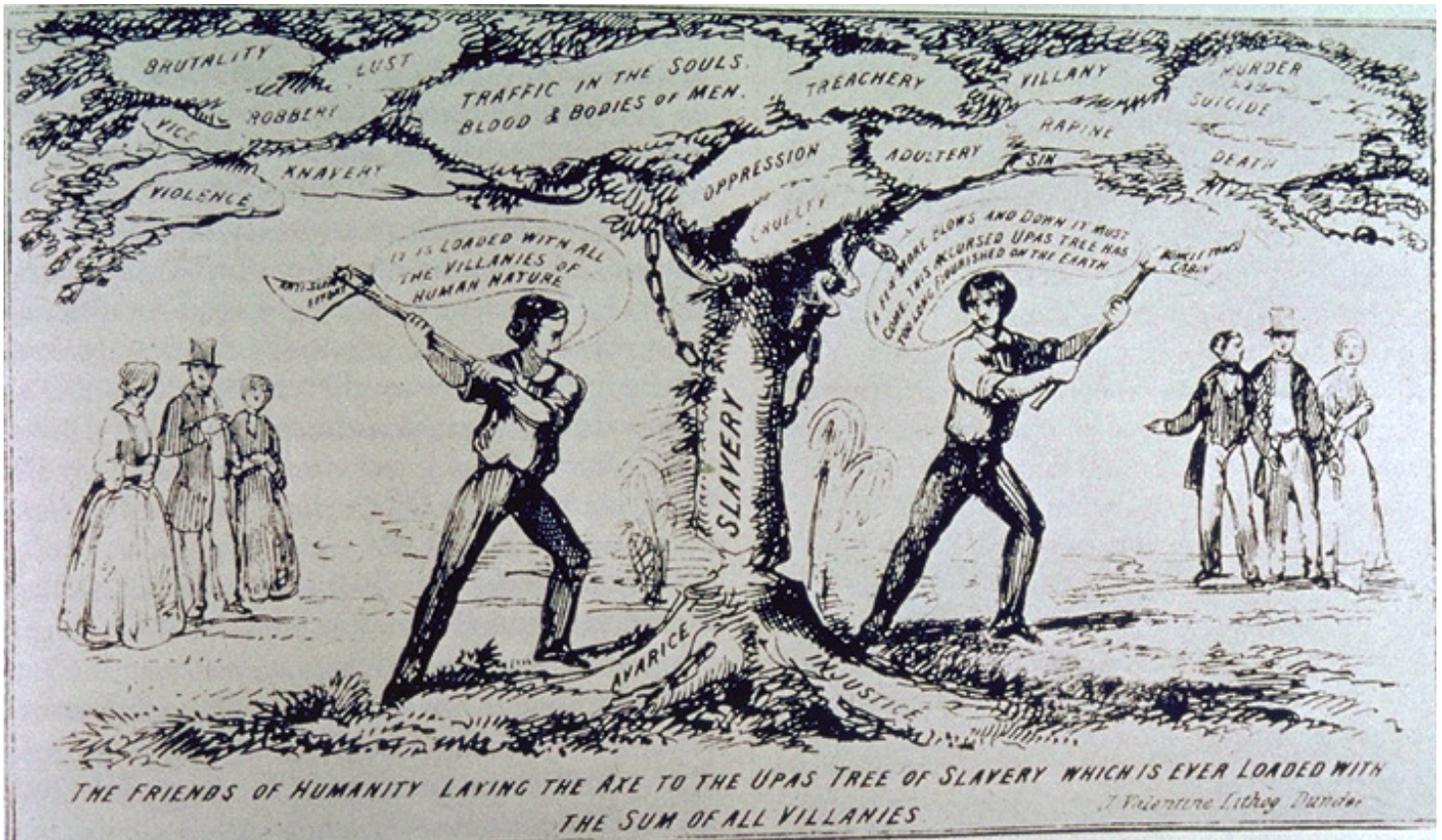
We know that we have no power, and no right to abrogate the laws of the slaveholding States; and we disclaim it. We do not propose to the slave, to arise, and vindicate his rights; but we propose the only course which will prevent it.

The only means we wish to use are a moral influence; a concentration of public opinion; a diffusion of light and knowledge on the subject; which will convince and persuade our southern brethren that it is not only right for them to free the slaves, but that the best interests of our country require it.

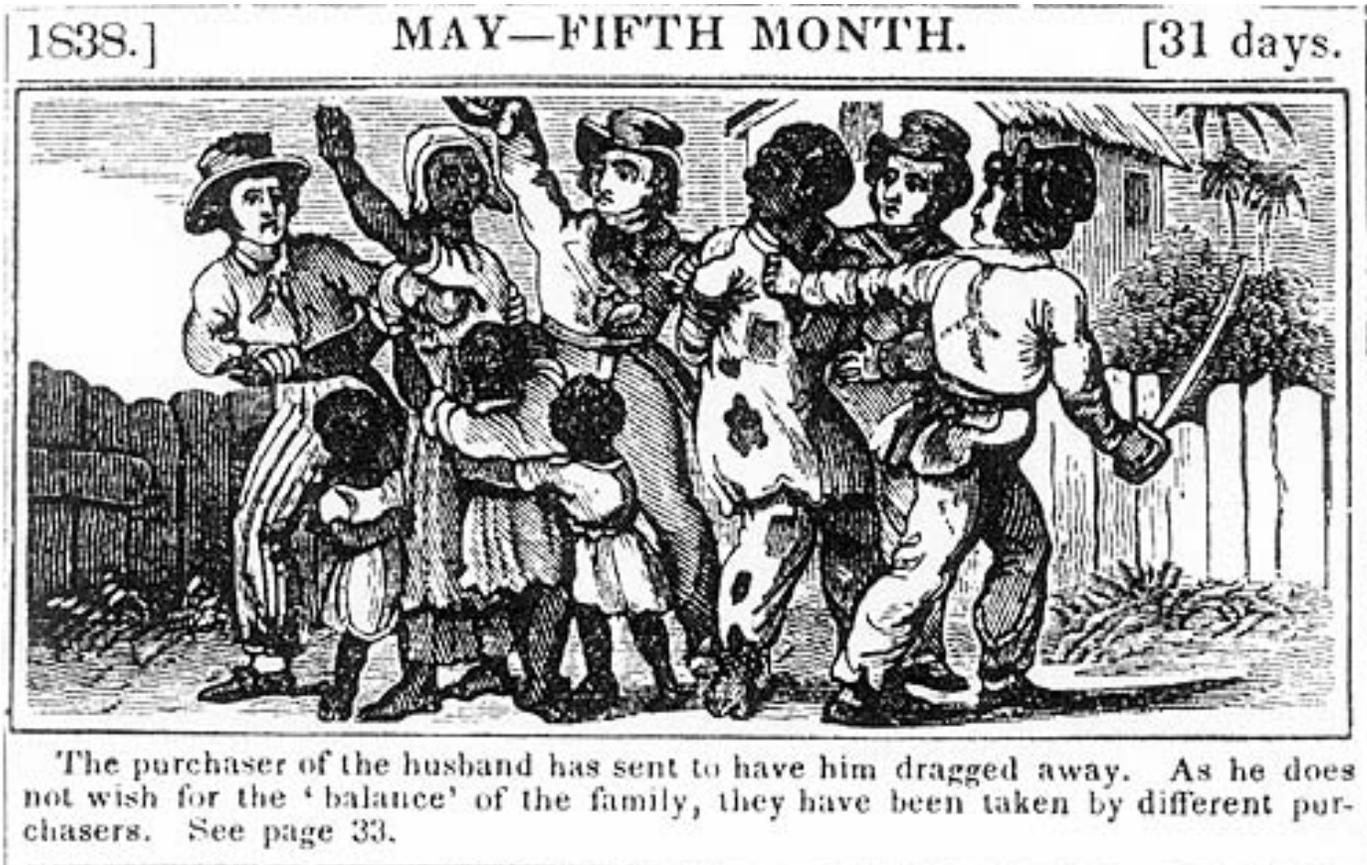
(Signatures)



Source 3: "Tree of Slavery" (1850)



Source 4: [A Family Sold Apart](#) (1838)



Item 1: Multiple Choice

According to Document 1, which of these best describes the methods endorsed by the American Anti-Slavery Society?

- A. to incite violence to achieve abolitionist goals
- B. to promote morality to support the cause
- C. to make exceptions as needed
- D. to discourage consumer boycotts

Item 2: Multiple Choice

Based on Document 2, what are the abolitionists trying to prevent?

- A. a war between the North and South
- B. enslaved persons from becoming free
- C. enslaved persons from revolting against their owners
- D. Connecticut from becoming a slave state

Item 3: Multiple Choice

Which of these would best summarize the practice of slavery as depicted in Document 3?

- A. It is necessary.
- B. It is constitutional.
- C. It is acceptable.
- D. It is unjust.

Item 4: Multiple Choice

Which is a reason why the abolitionists might have used images such as Document 4 to promote their cause?

- A. Many northerners were already aware of the practices related to slavery.
- B. Most southerners had attended slave auctions.
- C. People needed to see slaves as people rather than property.
- D. People needed to understand the importance of slavery to the southern economy.

Item 5: Extended Response

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on pages 8 and 9 in this answer document.

Describe the fundamental beliefs that shaped the abolitionist movement and at least 3 actions taken by abolitionists based on those beliefs.

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 7 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on pages 8 and 9 in this answer document.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page 7 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 8 and 9 will be scored.

Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

Dimension: Content	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects thorough knowledge of the fundamental beliefs held by abolitionists and tactics employed to promote their cause by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response; • Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects general knowledge of the fundamental beliefs held by abolitionists and tactics employed to promote their cause by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses all parts of the prompt.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects limited knowledge of the fundamental beliefs held by abolitionists and tactics employed to promote their cause by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses part of the prompt.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects minimal knowledge of the fundamental beliefs held by abolitionists and tactics employed to promote their cause by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Minimally addresses part of the prompt.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Dimension: Claims

Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a valid claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic; • Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources; • Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a relevant claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic; • Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources; • Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an inadequate claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic. • Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources; • Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; OR develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources; • Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- Abolitionists sought to achieve equality for enslaved people by releasing them from the bonds of slavery and providing them with liberty protected by the law. Abolitionists believed that they had a right and duty to rid the country of slavery. They believed that slavery was unjust and a violation of human rights. Many abolitionists joined anti-slavery societies around the country. They joined together to distribute newspapers and brochures as a means to gaining support for their cause. Abolitionists believed that eliminating slavery in favor of paid labor and accepting African Americans as citizens was in the best interest of the country.
- The beliefs of abolitionists were rooted in the teachings of the Bible and believed that it was their moral responsibility to end slavery. Abolitionists were opposed to slavery because they did not believe that God created the enslaved people as inferior to others. Most abolitionists were white Christians who believed that slavery was an evil that contradicted the Bible. Abolitionists thought it was wrong that the system

prevented enslaved people from being able to read the Bible. These abolitionists often used their churches and church leaders to help educate people about the evil of slavery and gain public support for the abolition of slavery.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- Abolitionists used many tactics to promote the cause of abolition. They joined together to form societies to help promote their cause. Newspapers and brochures were often used to help spread information. Many abolitionists joined with church leaders as well as members of the congregation. (Source 1)
- The reasoning behind the abolitionist movement was based on the belief that enslaved people were human beings, not property. Abolitionists felt that the practice of slavery violated human rights and contradicted the teachings of the Bible. (Source 2)
- Abolitionists believed that slavery was deeply rooted and that all of the negative aspects of humanity, such as violence, oppression, and cruelty, came together in the institution of slavery. (Source 3)
- Enslaved persons were bought and sold as property. As they were purchased by different owners, the families of enslaved people were often separated. (Source 4)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing additional tactics used by abolitionists. Many abolitionists attempted to gain support for their movement by educating the public about the atrocities of slavery. They formed societies, published newspapers and brochures, and gave speeches and sermons. Other abolitionists resorted to more drastic tactics such as consumer boycotts, riots, and attempts to help slaves escape such as the Underground Railroad.
- Describing how enslaved people were bought and sold. Enslaved people were those of African descent. They were put up for sale at auctions and sold to the highest bidder. Young, strong men often sold for a higher price because they were in demand for hard labor in the fields. When individuals were sold into slavery, they were often separated from their parents, spouses, and children. Abolitionists were opposed to the enslavement of people, but they were also outraged at the disregard for family and the institution of marriage.

**Printable
Student Version**

***Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

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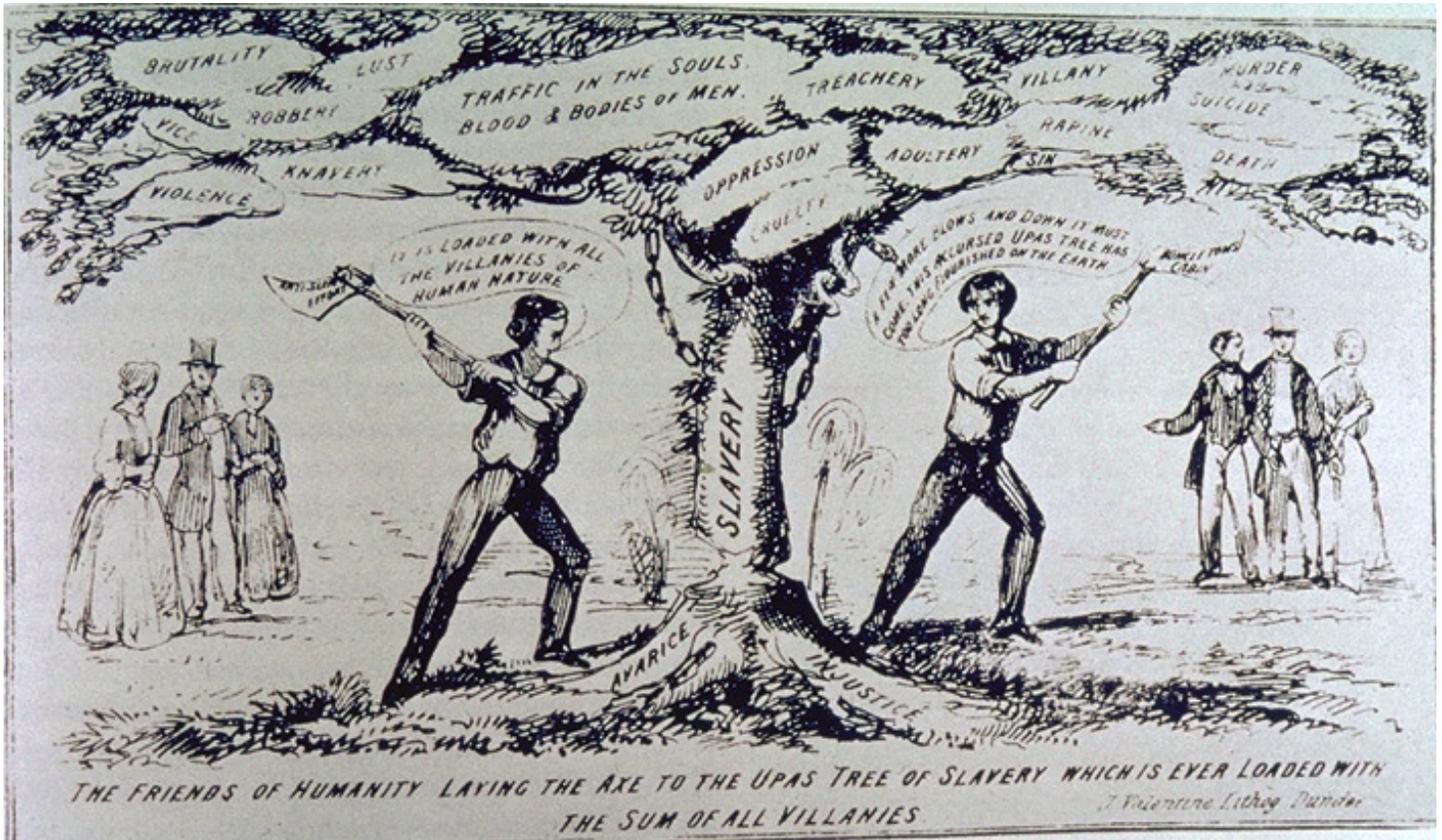
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(Signatures)



Source 3: "Tree of Slavery" (1850)



1838.]

MAY—FIFTH MONTH.

[31 days.]



The purchaser of the husband has sent to have him dragged away. As he does not wish for the 'balance' of the family, they have been taken by different purchasers. See page 33.

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Use for notes and planning your response.
(This page will not be scored.)

