



# The “inconsistency not to be excused”: Slavery and the American Founding

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity Two. Gradual emancipation in the thirteen states

**Directions:** Analyze the following data sets of events and population by state and complete the questions on the quiz sheet.

### New Hampshire

1780s: Slavery ended by state supreme court decision

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	141,885	183,858	214,460
Free Black Population	630	818	970
Slave Population	158	0	0
% Free Black	0.4	0.5	0.5
% Slave	0.1	0.0	0.0

### Massachusetts

1783: Slavery ended by state supreme court decisions in *Quock Walker v. Jennison* and *Commonwealth v. Jennison*, in accordance with provisions in MA state constitution

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	378,787	422,845	472,040
Free Black Population	5,463	6,452	6,737
Slave Population	0	0	0
% Free Black	1.5	1.5	1.5
% Slave	0.0	0.0	0.0

### Rhode Island

1774: Importation of slaves prohibited

1784: State legislature passes gradual emancipation laws (male slaves are freed at age twenty-one, female slaves are freed at age eighteen)

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	68,825	69,122	76,931
Free Black Population	3,407	3,304	3,609
Slave Population	948	380	108
% Free Black	5.0	4.8	4.7
% Slave	1.5	0.6	0.2

**Connecticut**

1774: Importation of slaves prohibited

1784: State legislature passes gradual emancipation laws (slaves born before 1784 freed at age twenty-five)

1788: Slave trade prohibited

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	237,946	251,002	261,942
Free Black Population	2,808	5,330	6,453
Slave Population	2,764	951	310
% Free Black	1.2	2.1	2.5
% Slave	1.2	0.4	0.1

**New York**

1776: State of New York House of Representatives resolves that slavery is “utterly inconsistent with the avowed principles in which this and other states have carried on their struggle for liberty.”<sup>1</sup>

1785: State legislature makes manumission of slaves under the age of 50 legal

1785: Importation of slaves prohibited

1788: Slave trade prohibited

1799: State legislature passes gradual emancipation laws (male slaves born after 1799 are freed upon age twenty-eight, females upon age twenty-five)

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	340,120	589,051	959,059
Free Black Population	4,654	10,417	25,333
Slave Population	21,324	20,903	15,017
% Free Black	1.4	1.8	2.7
% Slave	6.3	3.6	1.6

**Pennsylvania**

1780: State legislature passes first law in the United States for gradual emancipation of slaves (slaves born after 1780 are freed upon reaching the age of twenty-eight)

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	434,373	602,365	810,091
Free Black Population	6,537	14,564	22,492
Slave Population	3,737	1,706	795
% Free Black	1.5	2.4	2.5
% Slave	0.9	0.3	0.1

**New Jersey**

1786: Importation of slaves prohibited

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<sup>1</sup> Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 9. As cited in Thomas G. West, *Vindicating the Founders* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 7.

1804: State legislature passes gradual emancipation laws (male slaves born after 1804 are freed upon age twenty-five, females upon age twenty-one)

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	184,139	211,149	245,562
Free Black Population	2,762	4,402	7,843
Slave Population	11,423	12,422	10,851
% Free Black	1.5	2.1	3.2
% Slave	6.2	5.9	4.4

### Delaware

1776: Importation of slaves prohibited

1785, 1796 and 1797: Proposals in Delaware legislature for abolition of slavery fails

1803: Proposal in Delaware legislature for gradual emancipation fails

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	59,096	64,273	72,674
Free Black Population	3,899	8,268	13,136
Slave Population	8,887	6,153	4,177
% Free Black	6.6	12.9	18.1
% Slave	15.4	9.6	5.8

### Maryland

1783: Importation of slaves prohibited

1786: Proposal in Maryland legislature for abolition of slavery fails

1796: Individual manumission of slaves by will legal (only for slaves under the age of forty-five)

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	319,728	341,548	380,546
Free Black Population	8,043	19,587	33,927
Slave Population	103,036	105,635	111,502
% Free Black	2.5	5.7	8.9
% Slave	32.2	30.9	29.3

### Virginia

1778: Proposal in Virginia legislature for abolition of slavery fails

1778: Importation of slaves prohibited

1782: State legislature passes a law making private manumissions of slaves legal

1796: Second proposal in Virginia legislature for abolition of slavery fails

1806: State legislature prohibits teaching slaves to read and write

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	691,737	807,557	877,683
Free Black Population	12,254	19,981	30,269
Slave Population	287,959	339,796	383,521

% Free Black	1.8	2.5	3.5
% Slave	41.6	42.1	43.7

### North Carolina

1777: Manumission of slaves legal for meritorious service

1786: Importation of slaves prohibited

1791: State legislature passes a law making the killing of a slave murder

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	393,751	478,103	556,526
Free Black Population	4,975	7,043	10,268
Slave Population	100,572	133,296	168,884
% Free Black	1.3	1.5	1.9
% Slave	25.5	27.9	30.4

### South Carolina

1788: State legislature prohibits importation of slaves (after 1793)

1803: State legislature renews slave trade

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	249,073	345,591	415,115
Free Black Population	1,801	3,185	4,554
Slave Population	107,094	146,151	196,365
% Free Black	0.7	0.9	1.1
% Slave	43.0	42.3	47.3

### Georgia

1774: Importation of slaves from other states prohibited

1798: State legislature prohibits the importation of slaves from outside of the United States

1801: Manumission legal only with approval of state legislature

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total State Population	82,548	162,686	251,407
Free Black Population	398	1,019	1,799
Slave Population	29,264	59,406	105,158
% Free Black	0.5	0.6	0.7
% Slave	35.5	36.5	41.8

### United States

1775: Slavery is legal in all 13 states, with no restrictions on the slave trade

1787: Congress passes Northwest Ordinance prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory

1798: The importation of slaves is illegal in every state (by state laws)

1808: Slave trade prohibited by Congress

1820: Congress passes a law making the slave trade punishable by death

	1790 Census	1800 Census	1810 Census
Total Population	3,929,214	5,308,483	7,239,881
Free Black Population	59,527	108,435	186,446
Slave Population	697,681	893,602	1,191,362
% Free Black	1.5	2.1	2.6
% Slave	17.8	16.8	16.5



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### Activity Two. Gradual emancipation in the thirteen states

**Directions:** Analyze the data sets assigned for Activity Two and answer the questions on the quiz sheet.

Question	Answer
1. What was the approximate total number of slaves in the United States in 1790?	
2. What Southern state had the largest slave population in 1790, 1800 and 1810?	
3. What Northern state had the largest slave population in 1790, 1800 and 1810?	
4. What percentage of the total U.S. black population were slaves in 1790?	
5. What percentage of the total U.S. black population were slaves in 1810?	
6. What was the first state to claim no slaves on a U.S. Census?	

7. In what Northern state did the number of slaves increase between 1790 and 1800?	
8. What was the first state to establish laws for the gradual emancipation of slaves?	
9. What state legislature in 1776 resolved that slavery is “utterly inconsistent with the avowed principles in which this and other states have carried on their struggle for liberty”?	
10. What Southern state passed a law in 1791 making the killing of a slave murder?	
11. What Southern state renewed the slave trade in 1803?	
12. In what year did the Congressional prohibition of the slave trade go into effect?	