

# Intro to Abolitionism

A Brief History of Anti-Slavery America

# Abolitionism

- Root Word: Abolish
- (Usually) Movement to end slavery
  - Movement = Broad based, grassroots reform effort
    - Grassroots = from the regular people, bottom up (as opposed to from leaders, top down)
    - Broad Based = Lots of people, lots of different kinds of people
      - Strength in numbers
      - Weakness in lack of unity

# Anti Slavery in the Colonial America

- The Enslaved
  - 1st Native Americans
  - Later Africans
    - Work refusal or slowing, breaking tools
    - Escape
    - Rebellion & Uprising
- Quakers & other religious groups
- Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage (Philadelphia: 1775, 1784)

# Slavery & the Founding of the Republic

- Declaration of Independence
  - Jefferson, in an early draft, condemned the King of England for bring slavery into the American colonies
  - Removed from final draft (too divisive)
- Constitution
  - 3 Provisions specifically related to slavery
  - Slavery never referred to by name
- Many founders believed slavery was withering and dying on its own
- Importation of Slaves banned in 1808

# Abolition in the Northern States

- In early 1800s, all states north of Maryland abolished slavery in one way or another
  - State by states
  - By Legislation (ex.
  - By Court Rulings (ex. Massachusetts)
  - Often gradual
    - Ex. Current slaves stayed enslaved but children of slaves born free

# Slavery & Anti-Slavery in Antebellum Era

- Resurgence of Slavery
  - Cotton Gin & Industrial Textile Mills makes cotton cultivation much more profitable
  - Removal of American Indians in old southwest (MS, AL, LA) = available land for cotton
  - More slaves needed for planting, tending, harvesting cotton
- Spiritual Reawakening → Increased Abolitionism

# Reinforcing Cycle

