

Flow of History
The Turner Family: The Business of Slavery

Overview

Slavery was an institution designed to create profit for enslavers. Slave owners treated enslaved people as pieces of property to be used for their personal gain. The business of slavery also benefited many non-slaveholding Northerners, as merchants participated in the transatlantic slave trade—supplying goods to plantations in the South and the Caribbean—and as consumers purchased goods produced by slave labor.

The three documents in this lesson demonstrate various ways in which enslaved people were treated as property by their owners.

The 1850 census pages, in which the enslaved people on John Gouldin’s plantation are listed by gender and age but not named, show the dehumanization at the root of the institution of slavery.

Alec Turner’s owner John Gouldin’s 1862 affidavit emphasizes the monetary value he placed on each enslaved person he believed was “stolen” from him by the Union Army, including Alec. In this document he is asking Virginia to reimburse him for the “property” he lost.

Frederick Douglass recalls his experience of being part of an estate to be divided after his master died so that the inheriting children would receive what they were due. The account provides a first-person insight into what the experience might have been like for the enslaved people on John Gouldin’s plantation after he died.

Gouldin’s will from 1865 reveals his legal right to give enslaved people, their children, and even their as-yet-unborn children to his own children, grandchildren, and as-yet-unborn grandchildren. For example, he wishes to give to his son Thomas the “servants” John Pendleton Jr., David Queen, Armistead, and “Caroline & her children.” The will also makes it clear that these enslaved people were inherited in exactly the same way as livestock and household items like guns and furniture.

Provide students with a counter-narrative. Either connect back to the [Resisting Slavery](#) lesson to remind students that enslaved people constantly resisted their enslavement in small and large ways or use the story about Alec Turner saving money for his freedom to make the connection.

Grade Level

Middle-High School

Enduring Understanding

Slavery was an institution designed to create profit for enslavers. Enslaved people were viewed as property and provided their masters with great wealth.

Topic(s)

Slavery

Flow of History
The Turner Family: The Business of Slavery

Compelling Question(s)

In what ways were enslaved people treated as property by their owners?

Historical Thinking Skills

Primary Source Analysis; Synthesizing Sources

Summative Task

After examining the primary sources, explain how slave owners treated enslaved people as property to be used for their personal gain.

Outline

Activating Prior Knowledge/Building Historical Context:	Formative Assessment
<p>As a class, examine the two pages of the 1850 slave census for the John Gouldin plantation, where Alec Turner was enslaved. What do the students observe? How would students describe the people represented by the census pages? NOTE: You may have already used this document in the “Resisting Slavery” lesson. In that case, you can revisit it to underscore the fact that on the census page the slaves on the Gouldin plantation did not have names. Ask students if they can think of reasons for this. How might it influence Gouldin’s attitude toward the enslaved people on his plantation?</p>	<p>Primary source analysis; Class discussion</p>
Investigation of Primary Sources	
<p>Students can work alone, in pairs, or in groups to read John Gouldin's 1862 affidavit and answer the accompanying questions.</p>	<p>Sourcing; close read; summarizing; interpretation</p>
<p>Read the excerpt from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass as a class or individually and answer the accompanying questions.</p>	
<p>To investigate John Gouldin's will, split the class into 5 groups. Each group reads an excerpt of the will and summarizes Gouldin’s wishes expressed. Each group reports out. As the groups report, have the students categorize what is inherited.</p> <p>As a whole class, discuss the fact that enslaved people, cash, guns, and animals are all inheritable and of enough value to be named in a will. Note that the children of some enslaved people are to be inherited, ensuring the long-term wealth of the family. Other, unnamed enslaved workers are to be separated and sold.</p> <p>(Side note for Group B: Josephine teaches Alec to read when she is a young girl. Rose is Alec’s mother. Lindsay is Alec’s half-brother.)</p>	<p>Sourcing; close read; summarizing; interpretation</p>
<p>Provide students with a counter-narrative. Read this story recalled by Alec Turner’s grandson:</p> <p>“Alec began stealing money every time he had the opportunity—penny by penny. He was planning to save enough to buy his freedom. To ensure its safety, he</p>	<p>Discussion</p>

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<p>wrapped his money in sheepskin and placed it in a time that he buried in his mother's garden, planting watermelon seeds over it. He would save the watermelons by burying them under a pile of hay, and then bring them out for Christmas, when watermelon season was long past."</p> <p>Discuss with the class: How is this a form of resistance to the practice of slave owners treating enslaved workers as property to be used for their personal gain?</p>	
Summative Assessment	Summative Assessment
After examining the primary sources, explain how slave owners treated enslaved people as property to be used for their personal gain.	Explanatory Essay
Connection to Contemporary Conversations	
<p>Discussion: Why do some people think that African Americans should be compensated for slavery?</p> <p>To dig further into the case for reparations, See this Facing History lesson</p>	

1850 Slave Census Schedule Caroline County, Virginia

In 1850 and 1860, the United States published slave schedules, enumerating the enslaved people in the slave-holding South. The government also published Agricultural and Manufacturing censuses. The purpose of all of these was to assess the economic production of the country.

This document lists the people on John Gouldin's plantation in 1850.

Begin by reviewing the columns with students:

1. Name of slave owner
2. Number of slaves
3. Age
4. Sex
5. Color (B = Black; M = Mulatto)
6. Fugitives from the state.
7. Number manumitted
8. Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic (presumably these were identified because they would have been unable to add to the plantation's profits).

The students should notice that there are no names listed, except for the slave owners. Why might that be?

Students can count how many enslaved people were living on the plantation, figure out how many children there were, figure the average age. See if they can identify families (the census enumerator would have gone from cabin to cabin). Help students to understand that enslaved plantation workers were human beings with aspirations, dreams, fears, and families.

SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in _____ in the County of Seaside State
of Ne, enumerated by me, on the 27th day of Nov, 1850. Thos. H. Anderson Ass't Marshal.

NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.				Fugitives from the State.	Number manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.
		Age.	Sex.	Color.				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	1	30	M	B				
	1	22	M	B				
	1	14	M	B				
	1	10	M	B				
	1	7	M	B				
	1	3	M	B				
	1	6 1/2	M	B				
	1	62	F	B				
	1	63	F	B				
	1	62	F	B				
	1	40	F	B				
	1	38	F	B				
	1	35	F	B				
	1	32	F	B				
	1	23	F	B				
	1	30	F	B				
	1	20	F	B				
	1	20	F	B				
	1	17	F	B				
	1	14	F	B				
	1	4	F	B				
	1	2	F	B				
	1	2	F	B				
John Gouldin	1	40	M	B				
	1	24	M	B				
	1	35	M	B				
	1	45	M	B				
	1	45	M	B				
	1	35	M	B				
	1	35	M	B				
	1	62	M	B				
	1	60	M	B				
	1	35	M	B				
	1	32	M	B				
	1	24	M	B				
	1	50	M	B				
	1	18	M	B				
	1	20	M	B				
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SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in _____ in the County of Caroline State
of Va, enumerated by me, on the 28th day of Nov, 1850. Thos J. Chaney Ass't Marshal.

NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitives from the State.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	
		Age.	Sex.	Color.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1	3	M	B			
	1	4	F	B			
	1	7	F	B			
<u>Robinson Henry</u>	1	37	M	B			
	1	3	F	B			
	1	18	F	B			
<u>Philip Carter</u>	1	45	M	M			
	1	64	F	B			
<u>Thos Saunders</u>	1	26	F	B			
	1	8	F	B			
	1	7	F	B			
	1	4	F	B			
	1	7	M	B			
	1	6	M	B			
	1	25	M	B			
	1	12	M	B			
	1	11	M	B			
<u>James B. P. Kunkel</u>	1	58	M	B			
	1	53	M	B			
	1	45	M	B			
	1	50	F	B			
	1	48	F	B			
	1	46	F	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	40	M	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	32	M	B			
	1	30	M	B			
	1	28	M	B			
	1	25	M	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	35	F	B			
	1	30	F	B			
	1	20	F	B			
	1	7	M	B			
	1	5	M	B			
	1	3/4	F	B			
	1	18	F	B			
	1	10	F	M			
	1	5	F	M			
	1	12	M	B			
	1	8	M	B			

NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitives from the State.	Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.	
		Age.	Sex.	Color.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1	23	F	B			
	1	14	F	B			
	1	8	F	B			
	1	1/2	F	B			
<u>John Perkins</u>	1	35	M	B			
	1	35	F	B			
	1	35	M	B			
	1	35	F	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	40	M	B			
	1	16	F	B			
	1	16	M	B			
	1	12	M	B			
	1	11	M	B			
	1	8	F	B			
	1	6	F	B			
	1	1	M	B			
	1	50	F	B			
	1	25	M	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	15	F	B			
	1	22	F	B			
	1	18	M	B			
	1	14	M	B			
	1	12	F	B			
	1	25	F	B			
	1	22	M	B			
	1	50	F	B			
	1	50	M	B			
	1	40	F	B			
	1	18	M	B			
	1	6	F	B			
	1	10	M	M			
	1	5	F	B			
	1	2	M	B			
	1	2	F	M			
	1	7	F	B			
	1	7	F	B			
	1	3	B				
	1	7	F	B			
	1	7	F	B			

State of Virginia, Caroline County

This day personally appeared before me M.S. Campbell a Justice of the Peace in and for the County of Caroline and State of Virginia, John Gouldin whose name is signed to the foregoing statement, and made oath to the facts that he is a citizen of Caroline County and the state of Virginia and has always been a citizen of Virginia, that he is the legal owner in his own right of the slaves, Daniel, Caroline, Wade, George, Steven, Henry, William, Mary, Rachell, Hewitt, Edmund, Walt, Sally, Alex, Andrew, Arthur, Humphrey, Ned Z, Ned Sale, Peter, Bob, Armistead, Loudon, Adaline, Eliza, Edward, Milly, & Francis mentioned in the foregoing statement, and the they are worth the sum of thirty three thousand and nine hundred dollars (\$33,900.00) that the said slaves were induced away and abducted by the enemy and lost to him the sd Gouldin; and that none of the aforesaid slaves been returned, but all of them have run and are now lost to him. Given under my hand this 15th day of October 1862. M. S. Campbell JP

List and statement of slaves, the property of Mr. John Gouldin, a citizen of the state of Virginia, abducted and harbored by the enemy and lost to him, and the present cash valuation of the same.

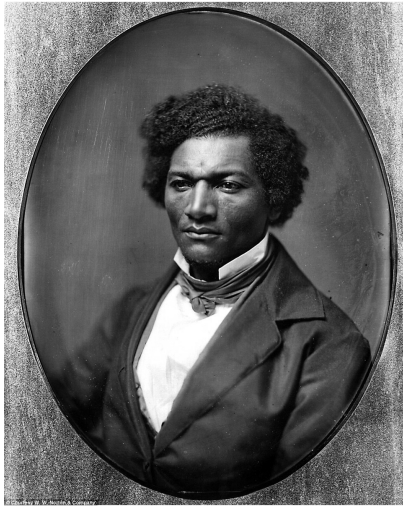
Names	Ages	Sex	Value
Daniel	18	Male	\$1500.00
Caroline	20	Female	\$1600.00
Wade	4	Male	450.00
George	1	Male	200.00
Steven	17	Male	\$1600.00
Henry	16	Male	\$1500.00
William	28	Male	\$1500.00
Ann	30	Female	\$1250.00
Mary	15	Female	\$1550.00
Rachel	11	Female	\$1350.00
Harriet	9	Female	\$1000.00
Edmund	1	Male	\$1000.00
Walt	18	Male	\$1600.00
Sally	15	Female	\$1200.00
Alex	16	Male	\$1500.00
Andrew	17	Male	\$1500.00
Arthur	22	Male	\$1500.00
John	26	Male	
Humphrey	26	Male	\$1200.00
Ned Z	24	Male	\$1700.00
Ned Sale	22	Male	\$1700.00
Peter	50	Male	650.00
Bob	45	Male	750.00
Armistead	35	Male	\$1200.00
Loudon	35	Male	\$1300.00
Adaline	24	Female	\$1300.00
Eliza	7	Female	700.00
Edward	22	Male	250.00
Milly	18	Female	\$1100.00
Francis	13	Female	\$1300.00
			<hr/> \$33,900.00
		John Gouldin	



John Gouldin Affidavit—Worksheet

1. What is the date of this document? What kind of document is this? Look up the word “affidavit” and write down the definition.
2. In your own words, summarize John Gouldin’s request: What does he say happened? What does he want the court to do?
3. What is your reaction to the dollar values associated with the people’s names?
4. What does Gouldin mean when he states “the said slaves were induced away and abducted by the enemy and lost to him”? How might Alec Turner and the other enslaved people have explained the event differently?





Frederick Douglass,
Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass.

<https://archive.org/details/DKC0109/page/n61/mode/2up>

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland. As an adult he escaped into freedom. He became a writer, speaker, and advocate for the abolition of slavery.

This is a passage from his autobiography.

“In a very short time after I went to live at Baltimore, my old master's youngest son Richard died; and in about three years and six months after his death, my old master, Captain Anthony, died, leaving only his son, Andrew, and daughter, Lucretia, to share his estate It was therefore necessary to have a valuation of the property, that it might be equally divided between Mrs. Lucretia and Master Andrew.

I was immediately sent for, to be valued with the other property. Here again my feelings rose up in detestation of slavery.... We were all ranked together at the valuation. Men and women, old and young, married and single, were ranked with horses, sheep, and swine. There were horses and men, cattle and women, pigs and children, all holding the same rank in the scale of being, and were all subjected to the same narrow examination.

At this moment, I saw more clearly than ever the brutalizing effects of slavery upon both slave and slaveholder. After the valuation, then came the division. I have no language to express the high excitement and deep anxiety which were felt among us poor slaves during this time. Our fate for life was now to be decided. We had no more voice in that decision than the brutes [animals] among whom we were ranked. A single word from the white men was enough—against all our wishes, prayers, and entreaties—to sunder [split apart] forever the dearest friends, dearest kindred, and strongest ties known to human beings.”



Frederick Douglass--Questions

1. In your own words, describe what happened to Frederick Douglass:
2. What event caused the valuation to happen?
3. Why were people included along with animals in the valuation?
4. What were the emotions of the enslaved people as they were divided?

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

What is the document?
Who wrote it?
When was it written?

What is the purpose of the document?
What are the key words or phrases?

What is the main idea of the document?
Write a 2-3 sentence summary about Gouldin's wishes.

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Gouldin Will, February 1, 1863

As a portion of the army of the confederate
has settled for winter on several parts of my land,
I wish the said Confederate Government shall pay my
the damage done to it by the said army, that the
paid by the said government on each separate lot
divided shall go to & be the property of the
that lot.

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

Because the Confederate Army has settled on parts of my land, I wish the Confederate Government to pay damage done to my land.

The amount paid by the Government should go to the inheritors of my land.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

- What is the document?
- Who wrote it?
- When was it written?
- What is the purpose of the document?
- What are the key words or phrases?
- What is the main idea of the document?
- Write a 2-3 sentence summary about Gouldin's wishes

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Gouldin Will, February 1, 1863

I give to my granddaughter Josaphine A Broadus for life, with the sum of three thousand dollars of my bank stock in the farmers bank of VA at Fredericksburg and my servants Lindsay & Lucy children of Rose for her use & benefits during her life & at her death as above directed.

I give to my son Thomas W. Gouldin, my servants John Pendleton Jr, David, Queen & Armistead (children of Char?) & Caroline & her children one man out of my estate named Ned young together with my two small single barrel guns."

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

I give to my granddaughter, Josaphine, for life \$3,000 of my bank stock and two servants, Lindsay and Lucy, the children of Rose for her use & benefits during her life. At Josaphine's death Lindsay and Lucy go to any children of Josaphine.

[Note: Rose was Alec's mother, Daisy's grandmother. Josaphine, as a young girl, taught Alec to read.]

I give to my son, Thomas W. Gouldin, my servants John Pendleton Jr, David, Queen, & Armistead (children of Char?) & Caroline and her children. Also one man named Ned together with my two small single barrel guns.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

What is the document?
Who wrote it?
When was it written?

What is the purpose of the document?
What are the key words or phrases?

What is the main idea of the document?
Write a 2-3 sentence summary about Gouldin's wishes

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Gouldin Will, February 1, 1863

I give to the estate of my son Silas B. Gouldin the interest
of John Pendleton Sr & his children Watts & Rebecca & one man
named Ned Sale one named Jino Smith one named Stephen & one
named Edy & four good mules four oxen four cows & twelve
sheep of which stock he is to select from my entire stock and
the balance of my guns.

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

I give to my son Silas B. Gouldin, John Pendleton Sr and his children
Watts and Rebecca. One man named Ned Sale, one named Jino
Smith one named Stephen and one girl named Edy.

And four good mules, four oxen four cows and twelve sheep
the rest of my guns.

IONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

document
What is the document? _____ Who wrote it? _____ When was it written? _____
the document
le key words or phrases
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te a 2-3 sentence summary about Gouldin’s wishes

ENT TRANSCRIPTION

Gouldin Will, February 1, 1863

to my daughter Martha J Broaddus, Luce Alma & her children & to
White, Martha & her increase & to Betty J Conway, Nancy & her
All the balance of my servants lent to my daughters are to be
to my estate to be disposed of with the balance of my servants as
r to be directed.

that my executors will allow any of my daughters to take as a part
gacy any of the servants that I have lent them at appraised value
he girl Rebecca, which I want to go with her father as heretofore
in this will, and I further require that if any of my daughters or
bands shall refuse to comply with this arrangement & distribution
servants that such refusal forfeit their entire interest in my estate.”

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

I give to my daughter Martha, Luce Alma & her future ch
Lavinia, I give Martha and her future children. To Betty, I
and her future children.

The rest of my servants that I have lent to my daughters
returned and disposed of with the other servants.

My daughters may buy any of the servants that I have le
their appraised value, except for the girl Rebecca which I
with her father.

If any of my daughters or their husbands disagree with th
arrangement, they lose all the money from my estate.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING A PRIMARY SOURCE

Read the document

What is the document? _____ Who wrote it? _____ When was it written? _____

Examine the document

Identify the key words or phrases

Interpret the document

Write a 2-3 sentence summary about Gouldin's wishes

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Gouldin Will, February 1, 1863

I give and bequeath to my daughter Lavinia C White the money I lent her husband
Silas B Gouldin & my watch & to my daughter Bettie I convey one thousand
dollars to be added to what she has already received and to my daughter
Martha Broaddus I lend the farm on which she now resides for her use &
during her life and at her death to return to my heirs or their legal
representatives.

I wish that all the balance of my estate not already disposed of be equally
divided into four parts after the sale of the land hereafter directed one part
to go to the heirs of my son Silas B Gouldin--one part to my daughter
Martha Broaddus --one to Lavinia C White --one part to Bettie J Conway."

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

I give to my daughter Lavinia my watch and the money I lent her
husband. I give to my daughter Bettie \$1,000 to be added to what she
already received. I lend my farm to my daughter Martha to use during
her lifetime.

I wish that the rest of my estate be equally divided into four
parts after the sale of the land. One part to go to my son Silas B
Gouldin's heirs. One part to my daughter Martha. One part to Lavinia
C White. One part to Bettie.