

Hello everyone,

I'm hoping that we'll have time this week to do some reading in class. I want us to hear the words that people were using as the great divide between North and South heated up. We probably won't have the time to read them all, and *if* we have time, readings will be entirely voluntary. I realize that many of the quotations are tough to take, but they are important. If you can print this out, bring it to class.

“The Colonists are by the law of nature free born, as indeed all men are, white or black,” James Otis jr. insisted in a searing track called *Rights of the British Colonists Asserted* in 1764. ***“Slavery,” he said “is the most shocking violation of the law of nature. Those who every day barter away other men's liberty will soon care little for their own.”***

Gouverneur Morris of New York was a brilliant opponent of slavery: ***“The inhabitant of Georgia and S.C. who goes to the coast of Africa, and in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity tears away his fellow creatures from their dearest connections & damns them to the most cruel bondages, shall have more votes in a government instituted for protection of the rights of mankind, than the citizen of PA. or of N. Jersey who views with a laudable horror, so nefarious practice.”***

Alexander Stephens of Georgia, later the Vice-President of the Confederacy: The Founding Fathers' ***“assumption of the equality of races,”*** was ***“fundamentally wrong.”*** [The Confederacy] ***“rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition.”***

James Henry Hammond, former governor of South Carolina, published a seminal book arguing that enslaved laborers were happier, fitter, and better looked after than their “free” counterparts in Britain and the North, who were ruthlessly exploited by industrial capitalists. ***“But, sir, the greatest strength of the South arises from the harmony of her political and social institutions... the best in the***

world...In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill...Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand. A race inferior to her own, but eminently qualified in temper, in vigor, in docility... We use them for our purpose, and call them slaves."

George Fitzhugh of Virginia: Dismissed the "self-evident truths" of the Declaration as utter nonsense. *"Men are not born physically, morally, or intellectually equal. It would be far nearer the truth to say, 'that some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them.' Free laborers have not a thousandth part of the rights and liberties of negro slaves. The negro slaves of the South are the happiest and in some sense, the freest people in the world."*

Robt E Lee: *"In this enlightened age... slavery as an institution, is a moral & political evil in any Country. It is useless to expatiate on its disadvantages. I think it however a greater evil to the white man than to the black race... The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially & physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing, is necessary for their instruction as a race, & I hope will prepare & lead them to better things."*

In 1829, **David Walker**, a free black man from Boston whose father had been enslaved, published a pamphlet, *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, those of the United States of America*. In a fiery sermon, he wrote: *"I call men to witness, that the destruction of the Americans is at hand, and will be speedily consummated unless they repent period now..."* He went on to quote, with the use of italics, the *Declaration of Independence*, and then continued, *"Now, Americans! I ask you candidly, was your sufferings under Great Britain, a hundredth part as cruel and tyrannical as*

you have rendered ours under you?...The whites are dragging us around in chains and in handcuffs, to their new States and Territories, to work their mines and farms, to enrich them and their children...This country is as much ours as it is the whites, whether they will admit it now or not, they will see and believe it by and by.”

Minister and Transcendentalist, Theodore Parker: *“The Slave is not, theoretically, considered as a Person; he is only a Thing, as so much as an axe or a spade; accordingly, he is wholly subject to his master, and has no Rights—which are an attribute of Persons only, not of Things. All that he enjoys therefore is but a privilege. He may be damaged but not wronged. . . . The relation of master and slave begins in violence; it must be sustained by violence—the systematic violence of general laws, or the irregular violence of individual caprice. There is no other mode of conquering and subjugating a man.”*

From William Lloyd Garrison: *“I am a believer in that portion of the Declaration of American Independence in which it is set forth, as among self-evident truths, ‘that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ Hence, I am an abolitionist. Hence, I cannot but regard oppression in every form—and most of all, that which turns a man into a thing—with indignation and abhorrence.”*

From Abraham Lincoln: *“If A, can prove, however conclusively, that he may, of right, enslave B. — why may not B. snatch the same argument, and prove equally that he may enslave A.? —*

You say A. is white, and B. is black. It is color, then; the lighter, having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own.

You do not mean color exactly? You mean the whites are intellectually the superiors of the blacks, and, therefore have the right to enslave them? Take

care again. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an internal intellect superior to your own.

But, say you, it is a question of interest; and, if you can make it your interest; you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right to enslave you.”