

Directions: Read the views on slavery from several of the Founding Fathers, then answer the questions that follow.

"It is much to be wished that slavery may be abolished. The honour of the States, as well as justice and humanity, in my opinion, loudly call upon them to emancipate these unhappy people. To contend for our own liberty, and to deny that blessing to others, involves an inconsistency not to be excused."

- John Jay, 1786

"Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free."

- Thomas Jefferson, 1821

"I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil."

- Patrick Henry, 1773

"There is not a man living who wises more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it."

- George Washington, 1786

1.) Would you describe these views on slavery as positive or negative? Explain why you think so.

2.) How does John Jay expose the hypocritical nature of slavery in his 1786 quote?

hypocritical: to behave in a way that suggests one has higher standards than is truly the case

3.) Even though these men all agree in their views on slavery, it was widely practiced in the United States until 1865. What do you expect people on the opposite side would say about slavery?

	Source #1	Source #2	Source #3
Author			
Is this document a primary or a secondary source?			
Summarize what the author was saying.			
In 15 words or less, according to this author, why was slavery permitted to happen in a land where "all men are created equal?"			

Source #1

“The true question is whether or not the Southern states shall be a part of this country. Is it (slavery) wrong? Maybe. But, if the Northern states truly think about their interest, they will not oppose the increase of slaves because they will profit by selling the goods that the slaves produce.”

Mr. John Rutledge

Representative to the Constitutional Convention from South Carolina

Source #2

“I agree to this Constitution with all its faults because I think a federal (national) government necessary for us. When you assemble a large group of men, you will inevitably find that they will disagree with each other about their local interests, and their selfish views, such as slavery. We have to accept some of these disagreements in order to build a national government.”

Mr. Benjamin Franklin

Representative to the Constitutional Convention from Pennsylvania

Source #3

“Slavery hung over the Philadelphia Convention, threatening to divide northern and southern delegates. Even though slavery existed by law in some of the northern states in 1787, most people there favored its end. Southerners were more unsure about whether to end slavery, both because they had significantly greater numbers of slaves to deal with and because an end to [slavery] had important economic implications. The result was compromise. The Founding Fathers were more determined to fashion a new nation than they were to bring an end to slavery.”

Mr. Kermit Hall

Author of the Law of American Slavery, 1987

