



TEACHING HARD HISTORY: AMERICAN SLAVERY

The Forgotten Slavery of Our Ancestors

Introduction

In this video, scholars and historians explore slavery's impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples in what we now call the United States.

The resources below can help you analyze the video's content and its connection to the Teaching Hard History: American Slavery framework with students or colleagues. You can also use them to help build your own content knowledge.

Essential Question

Why is it important to tell a more inclusive history of the institution of slavery?

Vocabulary

- ➔ **ancestor:** (n.) [an-ses-ter] a person from whom one is descended
- ➔ **locality:** (n.) [loh-kal-i-tee] a place, spot or district
- ➔ **phenomenon:** (n.) [fi-nom-uh-non] a fact, occurrence or circumstance observed or observable
- ➔ **charter generation:** (n.) [chahr-ter] [jen-uh-rey-shuh n] the first group of individuals who were enslaved under a system that would later become more clearly defined, both legally and socially
- ➔ **Indigenous:** (adj.) [in-dij-uh-nuhs] originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country (when capitalized, refers to people whose ancestors have always lived in an area, rather than people whose ancestors came from somewhere else)

Sources: Definitions for ancestor, locality and phenomenon quoted from Dictionary.com. Definition for Indigenous adapted from Dictionary.com.

Text-Dependent Questions

- ➔ Why did Paula Peters get so upset with the way that her teacher taught about Indigenous peoples?
- ➔ According to the film, what were some characteristics of Indigenous enslavement?
- ➔ How does this film disprove claims that slavery was just a Southern institution?
- ➔ Why did Indigenous enslavement become less visible?
- ➔ Why does Tiya Miles say, “what is now known as the United States”?
- ➔ Why did it take so long for Indigenous enslavement to end in the United States?

Discussion Questions

- ➔ What surprised you about the film?
- ➔ Why do the filmmakers describe the places they film as occupied or controlled by the United States?
- ➔ How does knowing the history of Indigenous enslavement change your understanding of American slavery?



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Responses

Why did Paula Peters get so upset with the way that her teacher taught about Indigenous peoples? Peters was upset because she is a citizen of a Native nation, but her teacher was saying that her people were all dead.

According to the film, what were some characteristics of Indigenous enslavement? Indigenous people were enslaved first, for hundreds of years, and by all colonial powers.

How does this film disprove claims that slavery was just a Southern institution? It shows that slavery extended throughout New England and across the West, including Alaska.

Why did Indigenous enslavement become less visible? In part because Africans and African Americans were ultimately enslaved in greater numbers and in part because the story of slavery became a story about Africans and African Americans.

Why does Tiya Miles say, “what is now known as the United States”? Because this land has not always been the United States, and she wants to mark that for the listener. She also says that it may not always be this way because nobody knows what the future holds.

Why did it take so long for Indigenous enslavement to end in the United States? The constitutional amendment that ended enslavement of Black people did not apply to Indigenous people because they were not considered citizens of the United States until 1924.

Discussion Questions (answers will vary)

- ➔ What surprised you about the film?
- ➔ Why do the filmmakers describe the places they film as occupied or controlled by the United States?
- ➔ How does knowing the history of Indigenous enslavement change your understanding of American slavery?