

Middle Level Students' Responses to a Guided Inquiry of the Weeping Time

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HISTORIANS' TASKS, specifically their habits of mind, are meaningful far beyond the scholarship they produce and far outside the discipline of history. Historians critically evaluate ambiguous and seemingly foreign situations. They consider and weigh the best available evidence—some readily accessible, others obscure—which they rely upon to articulate findings. Historical inquiry, thus, involves gathering and reading documents; thinking carefully about what one knows, suspects, and cannot know; and communicating substantiated understandings in a persuasive way. The necessary habits of mind—or heuristics—transfer to diverse occupations, like an attorney or detective, and are associated with citizenship tasks, like discerning fact from opinion in a campaign advertisement or being an informed voter. Historians' heuristics prepare students for college, careers, and citizenship, which are central tenets of modern education initiatives.¹

History education rests at the junction between historical content, disciplinary literacy, and educational psychology.² To understand the sources and strategies that facilitate historical thinking, more inquiries are needed. How do students respond to different historical topics, texts, and tasks? Which sources and strategies best facilitate historical argumentation in young learners, bereft of a robust historical schema? What are the strengths, limitations, and ethical implications of common reading and writing prompts?

This paper reports collaboration between a seventh-grade reading teacher, a history education professor, and a graduate student. We detail how and why a particular trade book was paired with complementary primary and secondary sources, which curiously intersect. Examples of curricular resource modifications, guided reading prompts, text-based writing options, and illustrative examples of students' work are provided. The latter represents students' written responses to readings, contributions to classroom activities, and engagement with historical argumentation. With each option for historical argumentation, positive and problematic elements emerged that can inform future practice and have ethical considerations.

Teaching and learning history are complicated, yet rewarding actions. Teachers cannot upgrade students' cognitive hardware to sync prior knowledge with the latest historical software. They can, however, pair diverse sources that elicit students' interest, provide students with various text-based writing choices to spark motivation, and scaffold the writing process with effective, efficient steps that enhance its complexity.

The Landscape of Slavery-Based Historical Inquiry

The seventh-grade social studies curriculum in this particular school centers on seventeenth- to nineteenth-century America. It is typically taught chronologically, with wars and politics at the forefront; in the teacher's words, "students skip from one catastrophe to the next and from one president to the next." Chattel slavery lies within the curricular framework of this grade. From its origins until beyond its abolition, chattel slavery had a consequential impact on American society and was more complicated than simply ownership.³ Life for enslaved African Americans was brutal, and dehumanizing acts—like whipping, endless work, and family separation through

forced sale—were common.⁴ Most captives of chattel slavery worked and died in miserly conditions with shabby clothes and empty stomachs.⁵ Enslaved persons had literally no rights and few chances at freedom. Escape, enslavers' wills, abolitionists' purchasing, self-financing, and successful rebellion hardly ever provided liberty.⁶ For the generations of Africans and African Americans that experienced nothing but the yoke of slavery, the threat of sale—or being “sold down the river”—was tantamount to death.⁷ Family was the single commodity enslaved persons could hope to secure, even if only tentatively and upon condition of a pleased, financially secure owner.

Chattel slavery, though, is often minimized in history curricula. Its degradations and inhumanities are softened in textbooks⁸ and trade books.⁹ The life experiences of enslaved African Americans during the nineteenth century was a logical place to develop a cross-disciplinary unit. We relied on the latest slavery-based history education scholarship, framework, and guided inquiry suggestions.¹⁰ In doing so, we connected history and English, fiction and non-fiction, primary sources and secondary sources, and close reading and text-based writing to engage seventh graders in historical inquiry about unscrupulous enslavers and the miserable lives of the enslaved.

Selecting Curricular Resources

As family was foundational to chattel slavery, the teacher selected family separation through forced sale as the unit's focal point. Her available curricular options were textbooks, trade books, and history-based curricular supplements. Each, however, raised concerns. Textbooks are common yet costly, wide-ranging yet shallow, full of cumbersome prose and various historical misrepresentations, and gorged with details yet bereft of depth as authors target coverage and foundational knowledge.¹¹ Textbooks' singular narratives do not enable critical evaluation of divergent interpretations of the same event, a critical element to education initiatives and disciplinary literacy.¹² James Loewen's aptly titled book *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (2007) noted the egregiously minimized accounts of chattel slavery, which are often reduced to little more than a mercantilist exchange between the labor of the enslaved with enslavers' food and clothing; racism and the human cost are usually vaguely referenced.¹³ A

camouflage of euphemisms softens chattel slavery's brutality.¹⁴ These understatements include "plantation," "owner," "rebel," "slave," and "slavery," to name a few. Terminology such as "forced labor camp" more precisely depicts the intent of the land without the positive undertones of "plantation." "Owner" does not have the earned negative implications that "enslaver" does. Unlike "rebel," "freedom fighter" has no negative implications. "Captive African" and "enslaved African American" humanizes, whereas "slave" objectifies the role of the captured. "Chattel slavery," as opposed to simply "slavery," distinguishes the trafficked African peoples with no possessions and no hope for the future from the forced servitude that are often conflated.

All of these euphemisms appear at least once in the seventh-grade social studies textbook at the teacher's school, *Creating America: A History of the United States* (2005).¹⁵ Many appeared in this excerpted passage, which attempts to historicize American chattel slavery within social, economic, and especially political contexts:

Perhaps the cruelest part of slavery was the sale of family members away from one another. Although some slaveholders would not part mothers from children, many did, causing unforgettable grief. When enslaved people ran away, it was often to escape separation or to see family again.

When slave families could manage to be together, they took comfort in their family life. They married, though their marriages were not legally recognized. They tried to raise children, despite interference from owners. Most slave children lived with their mothers, who tried to protect them from punishment. Parents who lived on other plantations often stole away to visit their children, even at the cost of a whipping. Frederick Douglass recalled visits from his mother, who lived 12 miles away.

Douglass's mother resisted slavery by the simple act of visiting her child. Douglass later rebelled by escaping to the North.¹⁶

Admittedly limited, this single passage was the majority of a page in a textbook with about twenty pages—out of nearly 1,000—devoted to the three centuries of American chattel slavery. This sample illustrates how the textbook obscured the racism and human cost associated with chattel slavery. This is not to regard the book as irredeemable or to disparage the authors. To develop curricula to fill the textbook's gaps, trade books and other curricular supplements were the next step.

Trade books, in comparison to textbooks, are inexpensive and engaging.¹⁷ Most historical topics appear in dozens, if not hundreds, of trade books. Ubiquitous in English, language arts, and reading courses, trade books can add distinct elements to social studies and history curricula.¹⁸ Historical misrepresentations, however, abound. Slavery-based trade books, in particular, often minimize the physical and sexual violence, meager food and clothing, and family separation, while overemphasizing the possibility of freedom, literacy, Northern abolitionists' assistance, and Southern whites' goodwill, along with misrepresenting the proportion of house to field slaves.¹⁹ No resource is flawless, yet teachers should be aware of gaps or misrepresentations.

The teacher selected Julius Lester's *Day of Tears* (2005), which novelized the largest slave sale in American history. It rests at the intersection of history and fiction, reading and social studies. Its subtitle—*A Novel in Dialogue*—reveals prose like a play, perhaps for reader's theater. Its syntax, specifically the pseudo-nineteenth-century slave dialect, adds to its authenticity.²⁰

The historical accuracy and representation of Lester's *Day of Tears* are complicated, as previously reported.²¹ *Day of Tears* has five historical figures: Pierce Butler, the enslaver that auctioned his chattel slaves; Frances (Fanny) Kemble, Butler's ex-wife; their daughters, Sarah and Frances; and the auctioneer. There are dozens of other fictionalized characters. As is typical in slavery-based literature, violence and family separation are understated.²² There were about ten allusions to—not detailed accounts of—violence. The whipping or beatings were only to enslaved men, not children or women, suggesting diminished, not ubiquitous, violence that targeted some, but not all. The most descriptive account of brutality involved the Sampson character, who said, "Next thing I knew—*pow!* My back was burning with pain and it was wet. I knew that it was blood—mine."²³ Violence was succinct and soft in this nearly 200-page novel. Similarly, family separation was noted, but diminished. Emma, an enslaved preteen girl, lived in the Butler slave quarters in Georgia before the auction took her to the Henfield plantation in Kentucky. Emma and her parents were permanently separated, left to forever wonder about each other.²⁴ Family separation was apparent in the massive auction, but not omnipresent in American chattel slavery.

Literacy among the enslaved and benevolence among whites were conspicuous in *Day of Tears*, yet each is historically anomalous. Multiple characters showed compassion to the enslaved African Americans. The white abolitionist store owner, Mr. Jeremiah Henry, taught Joe, Emma's beau, to read. In an act of altruism, Henry later told Joe how to escape using the Ohio River. Frances (Fanny) Kemble, Butler's ex-wife, cared for enslaved African Americans; she used contacts derived from her white, educated, privileged socioeconomic status to help Emma and Joe safely arrive in Canada. These details, emergent within *Day of Tears*, are misrepresentative when not contextualized as rare. This is not to suggest the book should be jettisoned, because the prose is engaging and the story is profound.

Curricular supplements, like primary sources and experts' opinions, can fill the historical lacunae. Primary sources, like photographs and contemporaneous writing, enable students to interpret competing perspectives. Experts' opinions are secondary sources that contextualize and help students determine the significance of primary sources. The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, and other digital repositories are free for classroom use; PBS's "Africans in America" and the Understanding Slavery Initiative have some especially evocative primary sources related to this particular topic.²⁵ Teachers can modify the length and language of these old artifacts to make them accessible for twenty-first-century students.²⁶ The complexities of primary sources can easily confuse students, so appropriate scaffolding is necessary.²⁷

Scaffolding, Sources, and Students' Responses

Scaffolding assisted students' disciplinary literacy. Representative examples of student work illustrate the teacher's pedagogical steps. Guided reading queries alerted students to key details prior to initial inspection. Difficult vocabulary was identified and tactically defined. Post-reading prompts positioned students to reconsider understandings through text-based writing. Close reading prompts (labeled "Clues"), writing prompts (termed "Things to think about"), and vocabulary assistance were provided and intentionally adjusted for each primary and secondary source. The teacher offered background information along with a painting of both Fanny

Kemble and Pierce Butler for students to contextualize the historical figures (see **Appendix A: Biographies and Complementary Images**). Fanny Kemble's precocious and curious dispositions, her unique experiences and accomplishments, and Pierce Butler's marital dominance, socially elite status, and financial shrewdness are apparent within these brief biographies. Passages from Fanny Kemble's journal (**Appendix B: Fanny Kemble's Journal**) and photographs (**Appendix C: Photographs of Butler Island**) were both included and contextualized. In her journal, Fanny Kemble speaks of social, gender, and power dynamics; living conditions; birth (and death) patterns; slave punishments; and Pierce Butler's conviction that her concern evoked slaves' discontent and, therefore, must be discontinued. The photographs corroborate numerous elements and add nuance to the journal. In another exercise, students examine scholarly interviews, speeches, or writing to discover that professional judgments are not indisputable, because experts disagree on points of emphasis and revise conclusions when new information arises (**Appendix D: Experts' Understandings**). The scholars spoke about Butler Island slave culture, enslavers' fear of chattel slaves' literacy, the context and significance of rice farming, and the permanency and resultant implications of sale. The last curricular resources originated in two newspapers separated by 155 years (**Appendix E: Newspaper Accounts**). William Lloyd Garrison, the nineteenth-century abolitionist, commented on the sale in his iconic newspaper, *The Liberator*; more than a century and a half later, an article in *The Atlantic* memorialized the "forgotten history of the largest slave auction ever on American soil."²⁸ The curricula, thus, included some sources that were historical artifacts along with others that originated in the twenty-first century, some visual and others textual, some real and others imagined, some hard to read and others hard to forget.

Conspicuously, there are no historic African American voices. We could not locate contemporaneous sources originating from chattel slaves on the Butler plantation. This limitation, while egregious, adds import to the novel, *Day of Tears*, in which African American chattel slaves articulate their lived experiences; the experts' conclusions, which fill in the figurative gaps; and the assessment tasks, in which twenty-first-century students speak to their understandings of this calamitous era in American history.

Whole-class novel instruction is often characterized by teacher-centered dialogue and disengaged students.²⁹ With this in mind, the teacher sought student-centered discussion for *Day of Tears* and active listening with a text-based activity she developed and implemented in literacy circles, Post-it Lit (Circle). Various prompts sparked students' reflections, which were written on Post-it Notes and placed in an appropriate box. To an observer, students first reflected individually and wrote in silence and then engaged in small-group discussion prior to placing the Post-it Note in the appropriate box. Common office supplies ensured each child participated and every voice was heard, as students wrote individually and reviewed comments collectively. Discussion originated from the text-based writing. Active listening prompts directed students to question, compliment, or critique peers.

Day of Tears, like all trade books, can be enhanced with evocative curricular supplements. Primary and secondary sources, specifically those noted above, were integrated daily. Prompts guided students' close reading (for example: "Frances kept this journal during the time she spent on the slave plantation. This was eventually published as a book. When it was published, it included both diary entries and also *correspondence* [letters, postcards, etc.]"). Text-based writing positioned students to engage in history literacy,³⁰ which included sourcing ("What can you tell about who wrote the words and drew the image?"); contextualization ("Look closely at the date. Is this a primary or a secondary source?"); and corroboration ("How is this source connected to others? How is it similar and different?"). The understandings generated from history literacy were used to engage students in historical thinking, specifically determining historical significance and taking historical perspective.³¹ Students worked on the Primary and Secondary Source Analysis activity for *Day of Tears* over two weeks (see **Appendix F** and **Appendix G** for the original format and a representative student sample). Students' efforts shaped their historical argumentation.

Historical Argumentation

Students' involvement in the whole-class novel, history literacy tasks, and historical thinking prepared them to engage in historical argumentation, which typically emerges as well-reasoned,

substantiated claims.³² While persuasive and evidentiary essays are common, historical argumentation can take many forms.³³ Historical narratives, for instance, are first- or third-person stories creatively woven from critical examination of historical sources.³⁴ Students were offered six options for their final project (**Figure 1**). In different ways, students were to write *to* the sources, to evaluate and not simply summarize. They could craft narratives of real or imagined characters (Option 1), develop an evidence-based opinion (Options 2 and 5), examine complex questions using evidence and logic (Options 3 and 4), or articulate findings in a novel way (Option 6). With an array of options, students could express their understandings the best way they knew how.

These variations of historical argumentation manifested in evidentiary, narrative, and persuasive writing; students could choose how they demonstrated understandings generated from scrutiny of diverse sources. The need for the least restrictive environment for all learners compels teachers to offer challenging tasks for the brightest learners, along with accommodations and support for those who struggle, without limiting students' choices. As such, the different options have distinctly different degrees of intensity, which enabled differentiation. Scaffolding, specifically teacher-led writing conferences to polish the prose and integrate diverse sources, assisted students in developmentally appropriate ways. For illustrative purposes, samples of student work are examined below (with student work included in additional appendices). These samples were judged as representative of typical students because they were at or near the median in criticality (argument, logical sequencing, originality, etc.), complexity (explicit reference to source material, implicit allusions to source material, length, etc.), and clarity (prose, syntax, grammar, etc.), while also recognizing lack of scholarly consensus about determining and weighing criticality, complexity, and clarity.

Option 1: Imagine yourself as enslaved on Butler Island

The first writing option enabled students to create historical narratives about their fictionalized experiences and feelings, which establishes the author's recognition of source. In doing so, they explained surroundings and circumstances, which reveals the writer's understanding of context. Students, imagining themselves

The Weeping Time: Final Project Choices

Option 1

Imagine yourself as enslaved on Butler Island. Write from the perspective of one of the enslaved characters, Frances, Sarah, or another figure (real or imagined). Write three monologues about your experiences and feelings. Explain your surroundings and circumstances. How do you get through each day? Do you have hope for freedom and a better life? Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Option 2:

Which document or person (real or imagined) best represents or illustrates this era in history? Explain your selection and explain why you did not select at least three others. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Option 3:

Create a mural of the Weeping Time. Use historical documents throughout. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Option 4:

Make a brochure for the Weeping Time. Make sure to include slaves for sale, why they are for sale, and other pertinent information about the auction. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Option 5:

Write an expository essay about the Weeping Time. What is the historical significance of this event? Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Option 6:

Have a better idea? Write out exactly what you want to do and make sure you explain what sources you will use.

Figure 1: The Weeping Time: Final Project Choices. Note: The rubric's criteria included annotations that demonstrated knowledge about the book, curricular supplements, and historical events.

as enslaved African Americans on Butler Island, articulated the trials and tribulations, hopes and dreams, revealing historical perspective-taking. They presented a vivid setting by integrating the currency, dress, speech, and technology at the time of the auctioning. Chelsie offered a representative example of student responses (**Appendix H: Chelsie's Response**).³⁵

Chelsie's writing revealed both positive and problematic patterns. The opportunity to create a monologue enabled Chelsie to write creatively from diverse sources. To give voice to a typical enslaved African American's experience about forced family separation during a notable period in history, she relied on the *Day of Tears* novel, the PBS documentary, and resources from the National Archives. Chelsie articulated contemporaneous social conditions and made intertextual connections, or areas of convergence between sources, like the reference to Fanny Kemble's letter to her friend about her Butler plantation experiences. Chelsie used primary sources (as seen in Document 2 of **Appendix B**) to give genuine sentiments about harsh incidents in her historical narrative. Chelsie engaged in narrative character development, sequentially detailing changes in Pierce Butler's character, from being kind to his slaves to being compelled to auction them to settle debts. Chelsie reasoned most of Pierce Butler's actions, and included Fanny's opposition to slavery, which was noted in her words, letter, and actions, like giving little treats to chattel slaves. To engage the reader, Chelsie used various literary devices such as irony ("life on the Butler plantation used to be a pleasant one if you call being in slavery pleasant"), similes ("Its pouring rain as hard as metal when it hits the skin and it's as loud as a seller yelling in a silent room"), and metaphors ("Crying waterfalls to each other"). The prose added depth to her historical narrative, which was intended to convey sentiment in ways unlike an expository or persuasive essay.

Chelsie's work, however, illustrated at least three problematic elements of historical narratives. First, pedagogical guidance about American chattel slavery raises concerns about role play and victimhood.³⁶ There is concern about tasking twenty-first-century, largely white, students to write as if they were nineteenth-century enslaved African Americans. Teachers should consider the ethical implications of allowing a student to recreate the mental landscape

of an antagonist such as the pattyroller (patroller, slave catcher), the Massa (master), or Uncle Tom. While not ignoble, this writing prompt positions students to reconstruct, and presumably identify with, historical prey, which relegates African Americans to victimhood. This singular curricular task is not unethical, because slavery should be taught in age-appropriate and discipline-specific ways, but oft-marginalized people must be included as more than historical sufferers. Second, creative writing may not be the most robust form of historical argumentation. Chelsie's writing, as was typical, had few cited sources. She referenced three sources in her annotated bibliography and one (Fanny's letter) in her narrative, which seems inadequate, considering that Chelsie analyzed more than a dozen primary and secondary sources. Middle schoolers are expected to substantiate claims with relevant source material,³⁷ but only three seems insufficient. Extensive attribution would bolster students' historical narratives. Third, historical narratives articulate history through an individual's optics, which may or may not convey broad social contexts and tensions of the time. Individuals were described, ideas were conveyed, but neither were historicized. Chelsie developed her fictionalized narrative well, but not the wider context. She failed to sequence events, a crucial element to determining historical significance. Softening Pierce Butler—by describing how he treated them nicely like family most of the time, issued few beatings, and offered a silver dollar as they left, as if they were children going to an amusement park—quelled a brutal historical context, which is misrepresentative. While the era and its implications were not historicized, the blame is not necessarily on the student. The prompt did not position students to contextualize so much as create a narrative originating from the figure.

Option 2: Which document or person (real or imagined) best represents or illustrates this era in history?

In the second writing option, students wrote about the document or figure, real or imagined, that best illustrated the era. In doing so, they established historical significance using evidence. Citing relevant primary and secondary sources enabled students to substantiate claims through corroboration. Becca's essay was typical (**Appendix I: Becca's Response**).

Becca's evidentiary writing illustrated trends that emerged in most every student's work who selected this task. Becca detailed the historical significance of Emma's experiences with slavery. Becca skillfully explored Emma, from *Day of Tears*, with corroborating evidence; she noted areas of intersection with and departure from diverse sources. In contextualizing Emma's experiences, Becca strengthened her argument through revision and resubmission. Her writing revealed a logical structure: enslaved African Americans' social context, Pierce Butler's greed, Emma's impact, Frances and Sarah's position on slavery, and recognition of the characters she did not select, like Jeffrey, Dorcas, Pierce Butler, and imaginary characters. Her conclusion contextualized the sorrow of Weeping Time and its historical significance. Her writing included judgement, as she considered various historical perspectives and explored their individual choices and motivations. The historical perspective-taking originated from understandings developed from source analysis, incorporated an emotional and sympathetic response, and affirmed historical significance.

Becca's writing illustrated problematic patterns all students faced. As with Chelsie's writing, Becca acknowledged the foundation of her understandings in her annotated bibliography, but the particularities were not substantiated. Further, Becca made Emma a hero and Pierce Butler a villain, yet humans are complicated creatures and oversimplification could be misrepresentative. Her writing, arguably, centered only on the disparity between Emma, an enslaved African American, and Pierce Butler, a slave owner. The teacher noted, "The writing prompt got students to personalize the era using one character or source, but it was so individualized that some details and themes were overlooked."

Option 3: Create a mural of the Weeping Time

The third writing option allowed students to create a mural using historical documents. Sara's sourcing and corroboration appeared within her mural, designed to be eye-catching and informative. Sara articulated the historical significance of each visual and text-based source (**Appendix J: Sara's Response**).

Sara's writing had both positive and negative aspects. Positively, this writing prompt enabled articulated opinions supported by various

supplementary images. The integrated sources, especially images of artifacts like shackles, illustrated concepts students might struggle to articulate. Sara worked to establish the historical significance of each image through the accompanying written descriptions. She thoroughly substantiated each source and articulated the foundation of her understandings within the annotated bibliography. While a mural may seem less demanding than a historical narrative (Option 1) and evidence-based opinion (Option 2), Sara demonstrated its rigor through explicit reference to the foundations of her understandings. In doing so, she made historical judgments, as with Pierce Butler's disposition ("Pierce Butler was a very greedy man he wanted everything for himself"), and engaged in historical perspectives, as with chattel slaves' anxieties ("the horrific look on their faces"). She sequentially arranged historical elements, which reveals chronological understanding.

A refined writing prompt could improve Sara's work, as well as the work of other students. The prompt did not compel students to engage in complex historical argumentation, as about half the students, though not Sara, simply filled space with images and brief descriptions. Sara's sources appear carefully selected and the writing attempted to contextualize the historical significance of each item. In every student's work who selected this topic, though, there was a dearth of intertextual connections (the cognitive task of synthesis), and there appeared to be little articulation about overarching themes (the cognitive act of evaluation). In these ways, about half of students' writing projected the cognitive task of application, a lower tier of criticality, and the other half projected analysis, which is mid-level cognition.³⁸ The prompt encouraged, but did not expect, students to engage in corroboration and sourcing; most students' writing was commentary on minutiae such as the slaves' attire rather than argumentation. Sara's attempts at corroboration ("This information provided me a lot of pictures and good information about the Weeping Time. I know that this information is true because I compared it to the PBS website and they had similar information.") were underdeveloped. Her articulation of a source's credibility ("The website had a lot more information than the book because the book talks about how the slaves acted during the time and same goes for the slave buyers. I really liked this site because it was very informational.") was superficial. While revision could have

improved Sara's historical argumentation, the teacher indicated that nearly all students who selected this particular prompt quickly fell behind. Unlike all the other options, this particular prompt generated simplistic first drafts. The teacher speculated that this was due to students' focus on primary source selection and space coverage. In the teacher's words, "The kids who chose this option started well and felt comfortable enough to not ask too many questions, but after two days—during individual writing conferences—I realized how shallow their work was. The prompt was not rigorous enough."

Option 4: Make a brochure for the Weeping Time

In the fourth writing prompt, students made a brochure for the Weeping Time. They included primary sources, determined central ideas using close reading, and established context—each of which are integral elements to history literacy and historical thinking. Megan offered a representative student example (**Appendix K: Megan's Response**).

Megan's work illustrated patterns, some positive and others negative, that represent most students' work who selected this task. Megan used sourcing, as she noted author and considered perspective, and offered contextualization, by connecting the date, location, surroundings, and experiences. She attempted to consider the source's credibility, but the noted areas were arguably superficial. Megan engaged in historical perspective-taking, rendering an account of the life of Pierce Butler and the debt-based motivation to auction his slaves ("Pierce Butler must sell most of his slaves to pay off his gambling debt. This led to the largest slave auction on American soil."). Her efforts were demonstrable, yet emerging.

Her writing did not detail any chronology, and other students who selected this option rarely sequenced the events. Megan's attempts at determining historical significance appeared more as summary than argument. The prompt did not ask students to express originality in views and critiques, and most students—including Megan—inserted facts void of context. Megan presented as speculative claims ("Rumor has it that Pierce Butler was \$700,000 in deep debt") what could easily have been confirmed with evidentiary support. Her writing did not invoke emotion or consequential details such as Butler's gambling lifestyle, the origins of and plans to settle the

debt, and his post-auction life. The teacher noted, “The worst part about this prompt was how half the students treated it like a digital bulletin board with an explanation component. The prompt could have tasked them with so much more.”

Option 5: Write an expository essay about the Weeping Time

The fifth option involved expository writing. Students determined the historical significance of the Weeping Time while explaining the importance of the cited sources. Timothy’s writing was a typical example (**Appendix L: Timothy’s Response**).

Timothy’s essay had many positive aspects. His historical argumentation was coherent and logically sequenced. Timothy wrote empathically and persuasively about the agony of enslaved African Americans’ physical and emotional condition at the auction:

Some just stood there; dead to the world, some sobbed uncontrollably, some pled for mercy, some prayed, some begged for forgiveness for whatever it was they had done, some made their final goodbyes, some cursed their owners, some screamed and ranted, some tried to fight, some just rocked back and forth and back and forth...

Timothy engaged in historical perspective-taking, as he passed judgment (“They were selling people, for crying out loud! Their owners tore their families apart for their own personal gain. After all, who cared about the movable goods and livestock?”). He wrote creatively using literary devices like idiomatic expressions (“dead to the world”), simile (“They were treated as if they had as much intellect as a pig”), and soliloquy (“After all, who cared about the movable goods and livestock? Answer: nobody except themselves.”). Timothy gave a clear, yet not detailed, sequence of the events with germane facets; he demonstrated the author’s position in the story.

Timothy’s work, like other students who selected the prompt, had negative aspects, too. Passion supplanted substantiation as he wrote emphatically without textual citation. The topic was disturbing, so provocation is expected, and Timothy was not contentious. Students, however, should substantiate claims to bolster argumentation, otherwise their writing can be critiqued as simply an impassioned claim. The teacher noted, “Timothy was like a lot of kids in that he cared deeply about the topic and knew what he was talking about, but his writing conventions could be improved further.” Lastly, Timothy—

like so many students—engaged in casuistry, or clever yet unsound reasoning (“This information was true because I got these facts from this website and went to a different website and got the same info”).

Option 6: Have a better idea?

The teacher often offered choice and flexibility to align with young adolescents' interest in independence and to differentiate to accommodate for diverse abilities.³⁹ Anne was a struggling student with a documented disability who received special support. She, like some others, requested to create a PowerPoint to articulate her newly generated understandings. Anne's work (transcribed in **Appendix M: Anne's Response**) represents an option for struggling students.

PowerPoint enables a melding of textual and visual elements. The teacher insisted that students complete the former (as seen above) prior to integrating the latter, which Anne did not have time to complete. Anne's text-based writing, however, had many positive aspects. Anne wrote about the four key elements—Butler Island, Pierce Butler, Fanny Kemble, the auction—and situated the content in a chronological form, which indicates an understanding of historical sequence. She included relevant details, which she developed further in her annotated bibliography. This, perhaps, had much to do with the medium of communication. Anne incorporated details in numerous places, like how the enslaved African Americans were treated on the day of the auctioning (“the buyers opened the slaves' mouth to see the teeth, pinched their arms and legs to check for muscle strength”).

Anne's writing underwhelmed in comparison to her peers, which was most apparent in the vague, abridged prose typical of PowerPoint presentations. This is perhaps expected, considering Anne's struggles with a documented learning disability. While diligent and motivated, Anne's processing of information—especially when obtained from reading—was quite slow. Her work is not argument and evaluation, but instead summary from notes she dictated to the teacher aide—which is arguably expected, considering the differing levels of criticality. Even with academic struggles, Anne was able to engage in corroboration (“It relates to the book because it said how the slave buyers pinched them. The book also said that it was the largest slave auction.”), if albeit simplistically.

Discussion

Kate Shuster, Bethany Jay, and Cynthia Lynn Lysterly's *Teaching Hard History: A Framework for Teaching American Slavery* (2018) and related materials contain key concepts that students need in order to grasp the historical significance of American chattel slavery.⁴⁰ Students' inquiry into the Weeping Time touched on ten concepts, but concentrated upon six: (1) slavery was central to economic growth; (2) the slave system centered on power; (3) enslaved African Americans agentively resisted enslavers while asserting and seeking to maintain their humanity; (4) slavery-based experiences were contextually contingent to factors like location, size of labor, and gender of the chattel slaves; (5) slavery impacted Americans' beliefs about race, social hierarchy, and white supremacy; and, most importantly, (6) students can gain insight into how white slave owners and enslaved African Americans experienced the slave system by engaging in historical inquiry. The curricular unit and students' responses have import for teachers and researchers.

Significance for Teachers

Chattel slavery and its implications are arguably America's greatest historical stains. Teachers should be mindful of students' responses to sensitive material. While, for example, there are Holocaust-based books intended for primary elementary children,⁴¹ kindergarteners need not be compelled to learn details of industrial genocide. Teachers' discretion is key; they should recognize and purposefully determine what is and what is not included. The age-appropriate sources within this unit were certainly accessible or not too graphic, as the most recent, most comprehensive framework and accompanying materials were consulted.⁴² While brutal punishment and family separation were central to the unit, the teacher ensured that no materials referenced sexual violence or the social implications of children born from miscegenation. A few examples of dubious pedagogical choices that have made the news include, but are not limited to, text-based writing tasks that compel students to consider the positive as well as negative aspects of slavery,⁴³ simulations that reduce the Underground Railroad into a game of tag,⁴⁴ a choose-your-own-adventure approach where children adopt a slave

persona,⁴⁵ or student work posted outside the class without context or explanation.⁴⁶ Each reported incident occurred during the school year in which this research was conducted. Teachers should follow the pledge to “first do no harm.”⁴⁷ Teachers should carefully balance discipline-specific curricular goals with age-appropriate pedagogy.

Historical narratives illustrate this concern. Positioning students to develop fiction to articulate historical experiences, accomplishments, tensions, and travails appears beneficial—unless it becomes problematic when unscrupulous sympathy manifests. It seems both engaging and principled to task middle level students with, say, exploring colonial life as a child experiencing object lessons in a one-room schoolhouse. The same cannot be said with imagining life as an adolescent who adores his father's role as the Grand Wizard of the 1920s Klan. The former is about articulating a fictional tale in a near-foreign historical context with seemingly few, if any, power imbalances, subjugation, or trauma; concerns are raised when students consider, even if in illusory ways, the latter's proximity to racism and violence. Caution and prudence must guide the way, as seemingly innocuous contexts have persecution—even if hidden. A child whose family and friends refer to themselves as “Saints”—or what we now call “Pilgrims”—in colonial Plimoth in the seventeenth century might appear harmless, until one considers the lost land, loss of life, and tumultuous foreshadowing for indigenous peoples, both nearby and far afield. If cruelty and repression are integral, like in the case of Weeping Time, the teacher should ensure students empower historical figures, real or imagined, to act with decency and indivisible resilience. The role of aggressor or abuser should not be taken, even if toyed with, because it is little more than literary caricature accompanying banal or trite action. Suffering should never be trivialized, one's sacred beliefs should not underpin another's imagination, and some perspectives should not be attempted.

Just as teachers should be aware of students' predictable responses to certain tasks, they should consider the classroom's social and emotional tension. Racism was endemic to slavery and has historical ripples that manifest within American society today. Teachers must consider how students may make connections between historical eras and current political initiatives, no matter if based on reasoned logic, casuistry, or apophenia. Educators can skillfully control the classroom dialogue, but they cannot silence whispered slurs or

barked innuendo in the locker room, lunch room, or school bus. Teachers must respond to vitriol directly while taking into account the aggressor, victim, and bystanders, but awareness is required. Further, teachers need to reflect on whom is consigned to curricular victimhood. Without appropriate curricular balance, history becomes a false presentation of African Americans (only) as slaves, Jews (only) as Holocaust fatalities, and indigenous peoples (forever) as being forcibly removed from land they once owned and roamed. Africans, African Americans, Jews, and indigenous peoples all have rich histories that can balance the curricular victimhood in their oft-included historical roles. This curricular unit is not unethical, if the historically marginalized groups are contextualized as more than sufferers and casualties in this and other historical units.

Intriguing curricular resources captured and held students' interests. The teacher might add to the unit's complexity with Taunya Negin's *Day of Tears: Teacher's Guide*.⁴⁸ Other online repositories of slavery-based historical resources include the Understanding Slavery Initiative,⁴⁹ Thirteen's "Slavery and the Making of America,"⁵⁰ PBS's "Slavery in America"⁵¹ and "Africans in America,"⁵² and Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora.⁵³ The first four resources are sated with text-based and visual primary sources along with secondary summaries to ground an inquiry, centering on the experiences of chattel slaves in America and sequenced chronologically. The last resource, Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, is organized thematically rather than chronologically, and intercontinentally rather than specifically American, with African themes ("Pre-Colonial Africa: Society, Polity, and Culture"; "Capture of Slaves and Coffles in Africa"; "European Forts and Trading Posts in Africa") extending into North America, the Caribbean, and South America. Each category contains dozens (if not hundreds) of visual primary sources (drawings, etchings, and photographs) with accompanying descriptions and citation information. Recognizing that a teacher's time is limited, these resources provide more material than could likely be used in a year.

The discipline-specific, age-appropriate pedagogy can be easily replicated. It positioned students to engage in all facets of history-based pedagogy. Close reading ("Clues") and careful re-readings

(“Things to think about”) prompts sparked students to unpack primary and secondary sources; these can be easily transferred to other topics. Students articulated newly generated understanding using one of many forms of historical argumentation, which can be adjusted to fit any unit. Teachers can also consider novel tasks for slavery-based units by using the online resources provided by C3 Teachers: College, Career, and Civic Life,⁵⁴ Facing History and Ourselves,⁵⁵ Stanford History Education Group,⁵⁶ and Teaching Tolerance.⁵⁷ Each website offers unique texts and tasks. C3 Teachers: College, Career, and Civic Life provides ready-made units organized for distinctly different grade ranges, a feature that elementary and middle level teachers may value since many history-based resources target high school. Facing History and Ourselves has what appears to be the most extensive collection with more than 100 slavery-based options; these include, but are not limited to, documentaries (most of which are freely accessible for live-streaming, with others for purchase), posters, and the more-common primary and secondary source offerings. The extensive array of single- and multiple-source historical inquiries offered by the Stanford History Education Group can be searched using historians' heuristics (e.g., sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, use of evidence, periodization), which skills-oriented teachers value. Teaching Tolerance provides ready-to-implement resources for any grade level and with every source type (including historical fiction and documentaries). The texts and tasks noted here will enliven any course.

Significance for Researchers

Researchers might consider how different forms of historical argumentation impact students' sourcing, contextualization, and tasks associated with historical writing. Research has considered how experience and age impact students' sourcing.⁵⁸ Other elements to historical writing—specifically contextualization, corroboration, and consideration of credibility of the source—can be examined more explicitly.

History education scholars have largely relied on assessing students' historical thinking as manifested within extemporaneous text-based writing. Research in history education has not systematically explored if multiple revisions are sensible and cost-

efficient. This teacher required multiple drafts, which take time and energy to improve, but she faced the dilemma of limited hours in a day, limited days in a year, limited computer availability, and student absences. Most students completed a revision, but many did not have time; some revisions were refinement, while others were major overhauls. The teacher relied on little more than suspicion when juxtaposing the degree of improvement, the required time needed for revision, (some) students' appreciation for improvement, and (other) students' growing indifference or resistance towards the task. There is a distinct point of saturation. Scholars could assist in determining saturation point and best practice principles, as researchers have with other areas of history and education.

History education research largely originates from argumentative or persuasive writing, but scholars could consider other forms of historical writing. The diverse writing tasks generated quite different results, as some steered students towards sourcing, while others targeted historical perspective. Researchers can explore which forms of historical argumentation compel students to efficiently and effectively engage in different aspects of historical thinking. From this inquiry, historical narrative appears worthwhile, as students' voices were particularly poignant. Researchers, though, can more systematically explore this creative passage into the past and the types of thinking, writing, and perspective-taking that manifest, while paying careful attention to previously raised ethical concerns. The previous section offered illustrations at the class median in criticality, complexity, and clarity for historical narratives and the other writing options.

Inquiry is necessary, though unexpected aspects prove meaningful. The teacher thought the annotated bibliography was a novel, meaningful extension from previous research.⁵⁹ Source attribution, however, appeared far more effective in the previous studies that inspired the modification. Students' efforts in the primary and secondary source analysis (as evidenced in **Appendix G**) did not transfer explicitly to historical argumentation. Understandings generated from the *Day of Tears* novel, along with the PBS website, appeared far more impactful on students' historical thinking than the carefully collected and curated curricular resources (as shown in **Appendix A** through **Appendix E**). This is startling, considering the sizeable time spent on the curated resources (which was no

less than one day for each) in comparison to the PBS website (one day). The most logical explanation may involve context and students' fascination with technology: students finished their guided inquiry in the computer room using the PBS website before drafting their historical argumentation. While students had access to contemporaneous notes provided by the teacher, as well as the novel, they wrote on computers with Internet access. The teacher observed students were quite motivated to explore PBS, in part, to gather more information, but also to venture off arduous scripting tasks.

Education initiatives have increased expectations of students' reading diverse sources and engaging in rigorous text-based writing. Here, we reported and unpacked what happened when one teacher developed age-appropriate curricular materials and implemented history pedagogy to spark students' criticality. Marked successes and struggles appeared, which can inform future practice and propel possible inquiries.

Notes

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Appendix A: Biographies and Complementary Images

To historicize Frances Kemble and Pierce Butler, students view paintings and read modified biographies. These originate from WGBH/PBS's "Africans in America." The modified text also includes assistance with vocabulary

Document 1: Frances Anne Kemble (Fanny)



Frances Anne (Fanny) Kemble was born on November 27, 1809 in London, England. From one of England's most prominent family of actors, she took to the stage to save her family from financial ruin. Though a brilliant actress, the stage was not the true love of Fanny Kemble as her first love was literature and writing. Fanny Kemble was a strong and spirited person. She had no formal training as an actress, but held audiences **spellbound** (fascinated) with her personality. She was described as having "masculine" characteristics: independent, strong, and intelligent. And she did not hide her talents, but lived them out passionately believing women should not be restricted. In addition to acting and writing, Kemble spoke French fluently, read widely, and was an accomplished musician. She loved the natural world and had a passion for exercise, especially riding. In 1832, Fanny set out on a two-year theater tour in America, where she was received with great enthusiasm. Audiences were **enraptured** (delighted), and she was soon being introduced to political and cultural **dignitaries** (celebrities). *One of her many admirers was a man named Pierce Butler.*

* WGBH Interactive/PBS Online, "Africans in America: Part 4: Judgment Day, 1831-1865: Resource Bank: People & Events: Fanny Kemble and Pierce Butler, 1806-1893," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1569.html>>.

Document 2: Pierce Butler

Born into a wealthy and prominent Philadelphia family in 1806, Pierce was the grandson of Revolutionary War veteran and U.S. Senator Pierce Butler. Major Butler owned two plantations, 638 slaves, and one of the largest fortunes in the U.S. Pierce, the grandson, inherited this fortune and the slaves around the time he married Fanny in 1832. Fanny escaped theater life and entered a life of wealth. At that time, she did not know this wealth was from slavery. The marriage was troubled from the start. Fanny believed Pierce would be devoted and Pierce believed Fanny would allow herself to be ruled by him. They disagreed over slavery as Pierce tried to convince Fanny of slavery's benefits and Fanny tried to get Pierce to free his slaves. Fanny even attempted to publish an anti-slavery article but Pierce **forbade** (prevented) it, as husbands could do back then.

When Pierce inherited the Georgia plantations, Pierce, Fanny, their two children Sarah and Frances, and their nurse Margery O'Brien visited. Nothing in Fanny's life had prepared her for this place. During the time, she and Pierce **clashed** (argued) over slavery. Fanny recorded her experiences in letters which she later compiled and published as her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*.

By the time the Butlers returned to Philadelphia, their marriage was in turmoil. Life for Fanny went from bad to worse as Pierce harassed her, kicked her out of the family house, and prevented her from seeing their children. Finally, Fanny gave up her attempts at reconciliation; she left for England to perform in theater. Pierce filed for divorce and claimed she had "**willfully** (intentionally) and **maliciously** (cruelly) deserted him" [he drove her away]. The divorce was granted in 1849. Fanny would be allowed to spend two months every summer with her children, and Pierce would pay her \$1,500 a year in support.

Fanny supported herself with her theater work. Pierce, however, squandered his vast fortune in gambling and bad investment decisions. In 1856, his situation became so severe that he started selling his property, which consisted of human beings, the slaves. In February 1859, Pierce Butler prepared the largest single sale of human beings in history...known as “the weeping time” because slaves were so sad at **impending** (upcoming) separation from family.

In 1861, the Civil War erupted. The family was divided as Fanny Kemble and their daughter Sarah were pro-North, yet Pierce Butler and their daughter Frances were pro-South. Following the war, Pierce returned to Butler Island with his daughter Frances. The former slaves living there became share-croppers. Pierce contracted malaria and died in August 1867. Following Pierce’s death, daughter Frances ran the plantation. Fanny Kemble died peacefully in London on January 15, 1893.

Appendix B: Fanny Kemble's Journal

Three passages from the journal are excerpted here in modified form and originate from WGBH/PBS's "Africans in America." Close reading prompts ("Clues"), writing prompts ("Things to think about"), and vocabulary assistance are included to guide the students.

Document 1: Frances Anne Kemble's Journal, 1863

Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839

We approached the low banks of Butler Island. As we neared the bank, the steersman took up a huge **conch** (shell) and sounded our approach. A pretty **schooner** (boat) lay alongside the wharf, which began to be crowded with Negroes, jumping, dancing, shouting, laughing, and clapping their hands (a usual expression of delight with children), and using the most extravagant and ludicrous **gesticulations** (motions) to express their **ecstasy** (happiness) at our arrival. On our landing from the boat, the crowd **thronged about** (surrounded) us like a swarm of bees. They shook our hands, and almost wrung them off. One tall, gaunt slave flew to us and embraced us in her arms.

Clues: Frances kept this journal during the time she spent on the slave plantation. This was eventually published as a book. When it was published, it included both diary entries and also **correspondence** (letters, postcards, etc.) that she sent and received.

Things to think about: What were the main things you learned from this? How is this primary source connected to others? How is it similar and different?

* WGBH Interactive/PBS Online, "Africans in America: Part 4: Judgment Day, 1831-1865: Resource Bank: Historical Document: *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation, 1863*," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2922.html>>.

Document 2: Frances Anne Kemble's Journal, 1863*Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*

Before closing this letter, I have to tell you about the people who visit me, their requests and sicknesses. You will see how miserable the physical condition of these poor creatures. People who support this evil system of slavery insist they are thriving and happy. Judge for yourself and never forget that the people on this plantation are well off and consider themselves well off in comparison with the slaves on some of the neighboring communities.

1. Fanny has had six children; all dead but one. She begged to have her work in the field lightened.
2. Nanny has had three children; two of them are dead. She came to **implore** (beg) that the rule of sending them into the field three weeks after their giving birth might be **altered** (changed).
3. Leah, Caesar's wife, has had six children; three are dead.
4. Sophy came to beg for some old **linen** (sheets). She has had ten children; five of them are dead. She asked for a piece of meat, which I gave her.
5. Sally has had two miscarriages and three children born, one of whom is dead. She came complaining of pain and weakness in her back. This woman was a mulatto daughter of a slave called Sophy, by a white man of the name of Walker, who visited the plantation.
6. Charlotte has had two miscarriages, and was **with child** (pregnant) again. She was almost crippled with rheumatism, and showed me a pair of poor swollen knees that made my heart ache. I have promised her a pair of flannel trousers, which I must set about making.
7. Sarah's history is deplorable. She had had four miscarriages, had brought seven children into the world, five of whom were dead, and was again **with child** (pregnant). She complained of dreadful pains in the back, and an internal tumor which swells when working in the fields. She told me she had run into the woods, where she tried to hide but was caught and brought back. She was tied up by the arms, and heavy logs fastened to her feet, and was severely **flogged** (whipped). After this she escaped again, and lived for some time in the woods. She seems just like all the other poor creatures who come to me for help and pity.

Clues: Frances kept this journal during the time she spent on the slave plantation. This was eventually published as a book. When it was published, it included both diary entries and also **correspondence** (letters, postcards, etc.) that she sent and received.

Things to think about: What were the main things you learned from this? How is this primary source connected to others? How is it similar and different?

Document 3: Frances Anne Kemble's Journal, 1863

Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839

Mr. Butler does not want to hear any of the people's **petitions** (requests) to me. Perhaps, after all, what he says is true: when I am gone they will go back to not complaining. He says I make them **discontented** (displeased) and **idle** (lazy). He says, instead of befriending them, I am only making them suffer more when I leave and they cannot cry to me for help. Mr. Butler says my way of speaking to the people, of treating them, of living with them, the requests I make for their sense of truth, of duty, of self-respect, the compassion I feel for them makes them thirst for freedom. My existence was a danger to the institution of slavery. If I go away, the human sympathy that I have for them will certainly never come near them again.

Clues: Frances kept this journal during the time she spent on the slave plantation. This was eventually published as a book. When it was published, it included both diary entries and also **correspondence** (letters, postcards, etc.) that she sent and received.

Things to think about: What were the main things you learned from this? How is this primary source connected to others? How is it similar and different?

Appendix C: Photographs of Butler Island

Two photographs are included along with a supplementary journal passage in modified form and originate from WGBH/PBS's "Africans in America."* Background information for context and vocabulary assistance are included to guide the students.

Document 1: "Butler Plantation Slave, 1915"



Celia Davis was a slave on Pierce Butler's Hampton plantation. Davis was a child when she saw Fanny Kemble when Kemble visited the plantation in 1839. According to Celia Davis, Fanny Kemble was a "nice white lady, very rosy, [with] clothes always got on so rich." This photo of Davis was taken in 1915.

* WGBH Interactive/PBS Online, "Africans in America: Part 4: Judgment Day, 1831-1865: Resource Bank: Historical Documents: Butler Plantation Slave, 1915," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1524.html>>; "Historical Documents: Slave Quarters on St. Georges Island," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1540.html>>.

Document 2: "Slave Quarters on St. Georges Island"

Slave **dwellings** (houses). These dwellings are located on Florida's St Georges Island in the Gulf of Mexico, are typical plantation slave quarters. Fanny Kemble wrote about the slaves' homes on Butler Island:

Such of these dwellings as I visited today were filthy and **wretched** (disgusting) in the extreme. It exhibited that most **deplorable** (terrible) consequence of ignorance and horrible conditions: the inability of the **inhabitants** (people) to secure and improve even **pitiful comfort** (the cheapest of living standards). The moss with which the chinks and crannies of their ill-protecting dwelling were stuffed with dirt and dust from the ground. The back door of the huts opened upon a most **unsightly** (hideous) ditch. It was left wide open for the fowls and ducks to travel in and out, which increases the filth in the cabin.

Appendix D: Experts' Understandings

Five interviews of historical experts and an image are included in modified form and originate from WGBH/PBS's "Africans in America."* Close reading prompts ("Clues") and vocabulary assistance are included to guide the students.

Document 1: Historian Margaret Washington on Butler Island and Slave Life

Question to Margaret Washington: Please describe some aspects of African American culture at Butler Island.

Answer: Butler Island is a sea island off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. The Africans produced rice and cotton. They came from the same geographical regions of Africa at the same time.

Christianity was forced upon them, and they **embedded** (inserted) Christianity with their own African culture. For instance, they believed in good and bad medicine. An individual could bring good medicine, and that would be from the Christian God. An individual could bring bad medicine, and that would be from the Christian devil.

Another interesting aspect of their culture was their concept of the afterlife. In African culture, the afterlife was going to be like it had been on earth. But to Africans in America, they were going to be slaves. So in embracing Christianity, while they kept some of their own African aspects of good and evil, they accepted the Christian idea that in the world beyond, the good were going to go to one place (heaven) and the bad were going to go to the other (not heaven), which was not an African concept. And in their minds, most whites were going to not heaven, blacks were going to heaven, and only a few whites who had been kind to slaves would appear in heaven.

Women on the islands and in all parts of the South were very important to the community. They were spiritual leaders. They were healers and **midwives** (to assist with baby births) who took care of women and men who were ill, women in childbirth, and sometimes even for the master's family to help out, to bring their roots and herbs and cure people. Women were extremely important.

* WGBH Interactive/PBS Online, "Africans in America: Part 4: Judgment Day, 1831-1865: Resource Bank: Modern Voices: Margaret Washington on Butler Island and Slave Life," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2968.html>>; "Modern Voices: Norrece Jones on Butler Island and Slave Life," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2969.html>>; "Historical Documents: *Flogging a Slave Fastened to the Ground*, 1850," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1528.html>>; "Modern Voices: Cornelia Bailey on the Weeping Time," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2973.html>>; "Modern Voices: Cornelia Bailey on Butler Island and Slave Life," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2970.html>>; "Modern Voices: Catherine Clinton on the Weeping Time," <<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2972.html>>.

And then, of course, women had their own sense of bonding and connecting, that again was a carry-over from Africa, where women had their own **palavers** (troubles, talks, talks about troubles) and their own space, where they would go out and talk about the problems that were **peculiar** (unique, special) to women. This was a kind of female community that enslaved women continued. They had their own internal network. At the same time, they had a status symbol within the community itself, because spirituality was so important and women were spiritual leaders.

Clues: This account is not from a slave, but from a historian of slavery. Dr. Margaret Washington is an Associate Professor of History at Cornell University. Dr. Washington is an expert on Butler Island slaves.

Document 2: Historian Norrece Jones on Butler Island and Slave Life

Question to Norrece Jones: How dangerous was it for someone like Cooper London to teach slaves how to read?

Answer: For any slave to teach another slave how to read was risky for many reasons. First, to reveal that he or she could read was very dangerous. Second, if a slave was caught, the penalty was a severe lashing. There are cases of people being **mutilated** (disfigured, harmed beyond repair) once it was discovered that they were literate. Lastly, it would be added punishment that someone not only had learned how to read, but was teaching others to do so.

Clues: This account is not from a slave, but from a historian of slavery. Dr. Norrece T. Jones Jr. is an Associate Professor of History and African American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Jones is an expert on Butler Island slaves.

Document 3: *Flogging a Slave Fastened to the Ground, 1850*

Leeds Anti-slavery Series. No. 7.

**SLAVERY A SYSTEM OF INHERENT
CRUELTY.**



FLOGGING A SLAVE FASTENED TO THE GROUND.

This is an image of a whipping, a lashing. What can you tell about who wrote the words and drew the image? What type of a document is it?

Document 4: Folklorist Cornelia Bailey on the Weeping Time

Question to Cornelia Bailey: Please discuss how the threat of being sold affected enslaved people.

Answer: [The master's family was] supposed to love us and, we [were] supposed to love them—be eternally grateful—because they took care of us and it was this family. But there was no family structure. The only family we actually had was ourselves. So we had this false thing of our master loving us the same as their children. They were going to take care of us forever, so we didn't have to worry about anything because they were never going to sell us, never going to separate us. And as soon as times get tough and he said he was going to lose his 500 acres because of taxes and hard time, first thing he did, he was going to sell his supposed family member, which was you. Your skin was black, so you were going to be sold to make up the difference. You were sold for as cheap as \$200 to as high as \$2,000, but you were sold to save whatever he'd need to save. He wasn't going to sell *his* mother and father and his sister and brother. He was going to sell you and I. So we were the one that got sold. And so where was the family structure?

Clues: This account is not from a slave, but from a historian of slavery. Ms. Cornelia Bailey is a **folklorist** (she studies folklores, myths, and stories passed down) and a **slave descendent** (her relatives were slaves).

Document 5: Folklorist Cornelia Bailey on Butler Island and Slave Life

Question to Cornelia Bailey: Can you tell us something about the ways in which people worked rice on Butler Island?

Answer: You had to thresh all of that rice, and you had to put it in the **rice mortar**. You had to **winnow** it, in the large baskets. You were still not allowed to eat any of it. You planted it and harvested and do all that back-breaking work. You could not enjoy it. So the women devised a way of tying the **apron** around them, and when they tied it up, they tied it in such a way where there was like a pocket here. So when they got the basket and they had took the rice out of the mortar and **pestle**, put it into the basket for winnowing, then they would shake it up and they'd go:

Peas, peas. Peas and the rice done done, uh-huh.

Peas, peas. Peas and the rice done done, uh-huh.

And when they go with the “uh-huh”, some of it would always drop inside that **apron pocket**. When they went home at night when work was over, they had enough rice to feed their families. And without being caught. You have to be a little bit ingenious to feed your family. The ladies were ingenious, of course. That's the only way you could do it.

[Images of winnowing rice, rice mortar, pestle, and slave aprons were provided to the students and originated from Library of Congress.]

Clues: This account is not from a slave, but from a historian of slavery. Ms. Cornelia Bailey is a **folklorist** (she studies folklores, myths, and stories passed down) and a **slave descendent** (her relatives were slaves).

Document 6: Historian Catherine Clinton on the Weeping Time

Question to Catherine Clinton: Please discuss how the threat of being sold affected enslaved people.

Answer: Although you were born into a family and you might indeed **bear** (birth) your own children who would be your descendants, you were somehow cut off from them by slavery. It was a system which could destroy blood ties, which could not destroy the bonds of affection that might try and survive and rise above the system of slavery. But as you were born into the world and knew who you were, that could be denied by society around you. You didn't own your own body. You had no legal standing. You were not a person under the law. And indeed, that kind of constant reinforcement of your lack of rights was one of the greatest damages of slavery. And even if you might transcend the psychological damage that this did, you nevertheless knew that at any time, your family could be taken away.

Clues: This account is not from a slave, but from a historian of slavery. Dr. Catherine Clinton is a writer and historian.

Appendix E: Newspaper Accounts

Two newspaper articles, published 155 years apart, are provided for student analysis. Close reading prompts (“Clues”) and writing prompts (“Things to think about”) are included to guide the students.

Garrison, William Lloyd. “The Peculiar Institution: Great Slave Auction at Savannah. Sale of Four Hundred and Twenty-Nine Men, Women and Children.” *The Liberator*. April 2, 1859. p. 29.

Monroe, Kristopher. “The Weeping Time: A Forgotten History of the Largest Slave Auction Ever on American Soil. *The Atlantic*. July 10, 2014. <<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/07/the-weeping-time/374159/>>.

Clues: These are newspaper articles. Pay close attention to both what was said and when it was written.

Things to think about: What were the main things you learned from this? Look closely at the date. Is this a primary or a secondary source? How is this source connected to others? Reading closely, how does the author feel about slavery?

Appendix F: Primary and Secondary Source Analysis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from this? • Why is this significant? • What questions do you have? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this connect to <i>Day of Tears</i>? • What is similar? • What is <u>not</u> in <i>Day of Tears</i>?
Biographies and Complementary Images (Appendix A)		
Fanny Kemble's Journal (Appendix B)		
Photographs of Butler Island (Appendix C)		
Experts' Understandings (Appendix D)		
Newspaper Accounts (Appendix E)		

Appendix G: Student Primary and Secondary Source Analysis

Primary Document Analysis for <i>Day of Tears</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from these documents? • Why are these documents important? • What questions do you have? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these documents connect to <i>Day of Tears</i>? • What's <u>not</u> in the book? • What's similar to the book?
Bios of Pierce & Fanny (Docs 1 & 2)	Fanny was very good at acting and Pierce Butler had a Grandfather that was in the war. It talks about Fanny and Pierce Butler.	The big slave auction. When Fanny was born and died, and when Butler was born and died. Fanny and Pierce Butler.
Experts' Understandings (Docs 1-5)	Slaves looked like they worked hard. Because it shows what slaves did, what tools did they do.	African culture embedded Christianity into African culture. God.
Butler Island (Docs 1 & 2)	Slaves houses were horrible and Celia Davis knew Fanny. Because they are talking Butler Island. How did Celia know Fanny?	Yes. Celia Davis, slave houses, Fanny, and the bad conditions of the slave houses.
Frances Anne Kemble's Journal (Docs 1-3)	lots of slaves suffered the same punishments pain and lots of slave have lost lots of babies	Slaves. Steersman Butler Island.

lives were beaten

Primary Document Analysis for *Day of Tears*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from these documents? • Why are these documents important? • What questions do you have? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these documents connect to <i>Day of Tears</i>? • What's <i>not</i> in the book? • What's similar to the book? |
|---|---|

Pierce was born wealthy and was very controlling. It shows how terrible Pierce was. Why was this allowed?	She was a great actress and born in England.	He was controlling in the book. He made her sleep in slave quarters.	Not She was from England Pierce was a fan
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1 Slaves thought very highly of Fanny	2 Fanny found the slaves quarters very dirty	Slaves liked Fannie they called her a nice white woman There weren't any small children slaves	there is none How nasty the quarters were None
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They only thought slaves weren't worth anything. It showed how badly slaves were treated.	Slaves weren't punished. Reading it shows how much slaves wanted freedom.	they were treated fairly.	there were different tools Slaves could be taken at any time	I do not connect Heaven's not in book	It doesn't	yeah	Port the slaves got tools none	Slaves sold randomly none People got taken away
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1 I learned the slaves were great. Fanny celebrated the arrival of these owners.	2 There was many misdeeds and death of children. It shows that women were over worked while pregnant.	3 It shows how little slaves were respected. Fanny had people who respect slaves. It shows that people who respected slaves were disrespected.	1 It doesn't show some times celebrare there owners.	2 It doesn't show a lot of children they didn't respect woman slaves.	3 Slaves weren't respected in the back either. The slaves complained. Slaves got no respect no matter what.
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Appendix H: Chelsie's Response to Prompt 1

Chelsie's historical narrative and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 1): Imagine yourself as enslaved on Butler Island. Write from the perspective of one of the enslaved characters, Frances, Sarah, or another figure (real or imagined). Write three monologues about your experiences and feelings. Explain your surroundings and circumstances. How do you get through each day? Do you have hope for freedom and a better life? Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Student Response

Hello I am a freed slave I used to live on the Butler plantation. My name is Chelsie I am going to tell you the story of my life on the butler plantation. So life on the Butler plantation used to be a pleasant one if you call being in slavery pleasant. But what I mean is that we were not beaten as much as the mean slave owners were. We were treated like family most of the time I remember when master Pierce as a kid would lend me his toys because I had none being a slave. He always treated as nicely. Until he started gambling and had to pay his debt off by selling all of, it hurt my heart to see him sell us away like we was not his family. Then something clicked in me and I realized that we wasn't his family anymore we was his property. I was sold to a man named Jake Whithertom he was a ruthless slave owner he would whip us if he thought we thought about freedom. He fed us raw rice and worked us until the day was over and the next one was already here and we get no rest. When a slave tried to escape he beat you till you felt like God couldn't help you. But enough about Jake Whithertom.

Master Butler as a grown man treated us fairly most of the time in fact some of the other slave owners would say he spoiled us but if he really loved us he would set us free. Misses Fanny Kemble would set us free if she had the chance she was a nice lady she always brong us little treats and treated us with respect as if we was free. My last story of the Butler Plantation is the auction Master Pierce sold us away for his gambling debts to be paid. That day was the saddest day of my life. Master even tried to give us a silver dollar as we left as if we were his children going to a distant cousin and wanted dollar for candy. This made me so entirely mad for him to think he could pay us off. Well when I left that day it was like the heavens was crying for the injustice that went on that horrible day I was separated away from the family I've only ever known and that day I couldn't help but wish he was dead, I wish that day will saved his life never happened. "I have sometimes been haunted with the idea that it was an imperative duty, knowing what I know, and having seen what I have seen, to do all that lies in my power

to show the dangers and the evils of this frightful institution.” Fanny Kemble. (This was written to a friend of Fanny after just one day on the Butler plantation)

All this way just to be right here again. That is how I always feel anyways. I am back from the fields its night now. When I went out at first it was early enough to see the sunrise. Why do I always feel like I am coming back to the same thing? Well that is because I am. It might just be myself thinking that. Or maybe it's just true that I am always back here but something is different. Something is quite different tonight. Its pouring rain as hard as metal when it hits the skin and it's as loud as a seller yelling in a silent room. The clothes I was wearing were soaked since I just came back in from the rain. It was cold as well but I kept the clothes on. I had not cleaned my work clothes yet and I was not going to at this time of the night. The only thing clean was my party attire for when we was stuck in the house serving and I wasn't going to waste that on sleep. It will be difficult to sleep tonight but who's sleep “in any way with the fear of what we heard from one of us in the house about how much master been gone of late coming home with a driver and him looking like a baby horse taking its first steps when walking up to the house. Looked real bad yesterday when he was counting money then he said it. He said he was goanna sell some of us now everyone's scared and mad at him. Crying waterfalls to each other or alone in the corners of the barn. I got nobody so I get the scariness of going alone. I just hope my friend don't get sold. She's the only one I hope gets to stay and keep going strong. She's had so much trouble already that's all for now but I'm goanna try to bed or try with this rain.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears*. Jump at the sun, 2007. From this source I learned how the slaves were treated and how they acted on the Butler plantation. I also learned that Sarah and Francis were Pierce and Fanny's children. One believed in slavery and wanted to follow her father's footsteps, and the other one had her mom's heart and wanted to do what her mom did. There were a lot of good facts throughout the story.

“The Weeping Time.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service. I learned multiple things from this source, for instance March of 1836 Pierce and his brother John inherited the plantation. Another thing Fanny was born in London, England on the 27. Pierce met Fanny in 1832 and they got married in 1834.

National Archives, <http://www.americaslibrary.gov/>. I learned from this source that Pierce owed over \$700,000 and the and the auction didn't cover it. Sold 436 men, women, and children and separated families and friends, the auction was March 2 and 3 in 1859. This information was on multiple sites, it was in the book and was on other sites. It relates to the novel because almost everything in this site is in the novel.

Appendix I: Becca's Response to Prompt 2

Becca's evidentiary writing and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 2): Which document or person (real or imagined) best represents or illustrates this era in history? Explain your selection and explain why you did not select at least three others. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Student Response

For this project I decided to the second option, which was to tell which person in your opinion that best represents this era real or imagined. This time was a very sad and desperate time, but it was very important time for this country. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be a slave, already in a tough time, getting pushed and pulled around everywhere you go then finally find a descent plantation where you could be with your family. Then boom, you get separated and never see them again all because of a big entitled greedy man who already has everything he could ever want and need but he bit off more than he knew he could swallow. That man's name was Pierce Butler, the largest slave plantation owner and seller in the world. In my opinion Emma from the book Day of Tears by Julius Lester is the person who best describes this era. Because, she was in the house and in the field so she has a point of view from both sides and she knows what is going on. Like hearing what the house members were planning to do or say to the slaves. Also, her parents have lived on the Butler plantation their whole lives so they can tell her what they know about Pierce Butler and how he "raises his slaves". Then, she is in the middle of Francis and Sarah, Francis liking slavery and 100 percent thinks it is ok but, she thinks of Emma as her mom because she raised her. Francis is very confused while on the other hand Sarah doesn't care for or about her dad, she knows what he is doing is wrong and, loves Emma more as a parent instead of her dad. She also is a good person to describe this era because she was one of the very few slaves that weren't going to get sold but, once again, Pierce Butler had to be the selfish man he is and had to think "oh what would make me the most money even when I don't need it, I like to destroy families and make everything about me, my life is the only one that matters, and since my daughters don't put any attention to me but they do to that nasty old slave." (he didn't say that, that is what I imagine going through his mind if he realized what he was actually doing.) Again, Emma fits this era because she has gone through being one of the only slaves that were going to be kept but then they get moved around and sold anyway. Next, she got sold to a new plantation where she, Joe, Charles and Winnie tried and succeeded to run away from Mrs. Heinfeld's plantation. Which, caused all the other slaves to get sold again to a much harsher plantation owner than her. So, she knows what it is like to be a runaway.

Now three other people that I didn't choose and why are. Jeffrey and Dorcas, I didn't choose them even though they would be another good example they only really show one side of the story. They both got out of slavery and had to go looking for each other but only Jeffrey did. By the time he found her she had already married a new man and had children. Another reason why I didn't choose even though they got separated and that shows that the weeping time was a very hard time and people who had been together almost their whole lives got separated, families, husbands, and wives, mothers and children, anybody and everybody could have got separated no matter what. Only very few were lucky enough to even have the same people with them from the plantation before. But, it doesn't really show how badly they got treated and disrespected right in front of their faces. Another person that I didn't choose was an imaginary person or character. I didn't choose or make up an imaginary character because, yes I know about the weeping time, what went on, and why it happened but, I don't know the feelings that the slaves had during this time. For me just to imagine that heart felt time where families got spilt up for money I couldn't handle it and I know I especially wouldn't like it some made up some feelings about it when they actually don't know how it felt and what it actually was like in person happening right in front of their face it's just kind of rude in a way. The last person and why I didn't choose them was, Pierce Butler. Again, he would have been a good example but, he only showed one side of the story. Pierce Butler didn't really cope with what he was actually doing and how much he effected the general population. He only showed the side that slavery was good. And he doesn't really deserve a whole essay about him nor does he deserve to be someone who is recognizable to best describe a whole era to himself.

In conclusion, the weeping time was very hard, sad, depressing, meaningful and terrible time but was a very important time for this country. Emma is the person who best describes this era to me. Pierce Butler is a huge, greedy, selfish man who ruined lots of lives and doesn't deserve to be recognized for describing a whole era to himself. And, the weeping time was Georgia's largest selling of human beings.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears*. Jump at the Sun, 2007. The book *Day of Tears* is about the largest slave auction in America's history. It is from the perspective of Master Butler, Master Butler's two daughters, the slave auctioneer, and some of the slaves that belonged to Master Butler. It takes place in 1859 in Georgia. The book is very sad because it is a true story. Many families and friendships were torn apart in this time. That is why this time period was called the weeping time.

"The Weeping Time." PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2918.html>. Accessed: Web. 6 December 2017. From this cite I learned that 436 men, women, and children were sold in the auction. It states that Pierce lost around 700,000 dollars in gambling debts. I also learned that in total, the auction received 303,850 dollars. I know that this website is reputable

because in another website I used, called African American Registry, had a lot of the same information. This website relates to the novel because the novel says that Pierce lost a lot of money gambling and that is why he had to sell the slaves. This website tells you about how much he lost but they said that it was rumored he lost 700,000 dollars but rumors are not always true.

“The Largest Slave Auction March 3, 1859.” Americas Library, http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/reform/jb_reform_slaveauc_2.html. Accessed: Web. 5 December 2017. From this website I learned that all the hotels in and around Savannah Georgia were packed because everyone was going to the slave selling. I also learned that the selling started two hours late because it was raining so hard. It also said that some slaves tried to convince buyers to buy their whole family while they were waiting. This cite is reputable because it has information that connects with other resources like the website myajc.com which is a news and history cite. It connects to the novel because it talks about how families were trying to convince people to buy their whole family or like in the novel when Jeffrey tried to convince his buyer to purchase Dorcas.

Appendix J: Sara's Response to Prompt 3

Sara's mural, informative writing, and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 3): Create a mural of the Weeping Time. Use historical documents throughout. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.



Student Response

Image 1

The reason I picked this picture of the book *Day of Tears* by Julius Lester is because the picture in the background has a really deep meaning. That deep meaning is it crying from being sold away from family or friends, or is it crying because it has been hurt in some way shape or form. This book was phenomenally written because he used his words really well, and used words that made people uncomfortable.

Image 2

You may not know, but this is Pierce Butler's home on his plantation in Georgia. Pierce Mease Butler was born in 1806. He was the son of the elder Pierce Butler who was born in 1744. Pierce took over the plantation in March of 1836 both him and his brother John did. This is the house that Pierce took Fanny Kemble (his wife from 1834 to 1848) to when she was begging him to see. Soon did Fanny know that he was a slave owner. So this is a replica not the actual one, but it looks the exact same.

Image 3

This is a picture of what the majority of slaves wore. Men normally wore long sleeves because when they wore in the fields they don't want to get caught or something. They also wore long pants for the same reason. Women normally wore a dress because it looked nice and lady like. But don't get me wrong there dresser weren't top of the line material. They had longer clothing for the same reason. This is important because slaves back then did not have as expensive or even as nice, comfortable or as good as fabric as the whites.

Image 4

As you can probably tell that this is an auction. This is representing the "weeping time" because look at the horrific look on the woman slaves face. Every slave at the auction had this look on their face and some of them had no expression at all on their face, so everyone thought that the person with no expression didn't know what to think or just didn't know what was going on.

Image 5

This is a picture of the slave quarters at the Butler plantation. As you can tell there a slaves hanging out in front of the houses. This picture is important because it shows a little bit of the way the houses were built and what the slave quarters looked like. You can also see that not many of them are there, there are maybe about 10 slaves by the houses.

Image 6

This is a picture of an auction flyer that they used for Pierce Butler's auction. This auction took place in March of 1859. He sold almost 440 slaves. Pierce only had like 19 slaves left to work on his plantation. As you can see on the picture this took place at the race course on Savannah, Georgia. This was a very sad time for the slaves because they knew their family would be split up.

Image 7

This is a picture of a pair of shackles. I couldn't find the exact pair that Pierce Butler used on his slaves. This was the closest to it. This is important because shackles let slaves do absolutely nothing. Sometimes they would use shackles to make sure slaves didn't try to hit them during a procedure or something. Pierce only used shackles when he needed to otherwise, he would hurt them which is worse.

Image 8

This is a picture of slaves working on a plantation. I think this is important enough to use it because it kind of shows how much back breaking field work they had to do. The guy behind the woman in the front is an overseer that is a person who watches over other people doing work and the overseer makes sure they do it and do it correctly. Sometimes there are more than one, but it depends on the size of the field. I can infer that there are more than one overseer because this is a big field to work.

Image 9

This is like a memorial stand. I think this is important because it tells you all of the info and it is true and this was a big moment in the U.S history. This stand is located in the "Weeping Time" park in Savannah, Georgia. This is a closeup of it, this stand is surrounded by chairs.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears. Jump at the Sun*, 2007. The book *Day of Tears* is about a plantation in Georgia who is owned by the Butler's. Pierce Butler was a very greedy man he wanted everything for himself. He had almost 900 slaves. One-day Pierce started to gamble and he lost all of his money. Even though he lost all of his money for some reason he thought he was a good gambler even though he wasn't. So he had to sell almost 440 slaves to get his money back. This was forever known the "Weeping time."

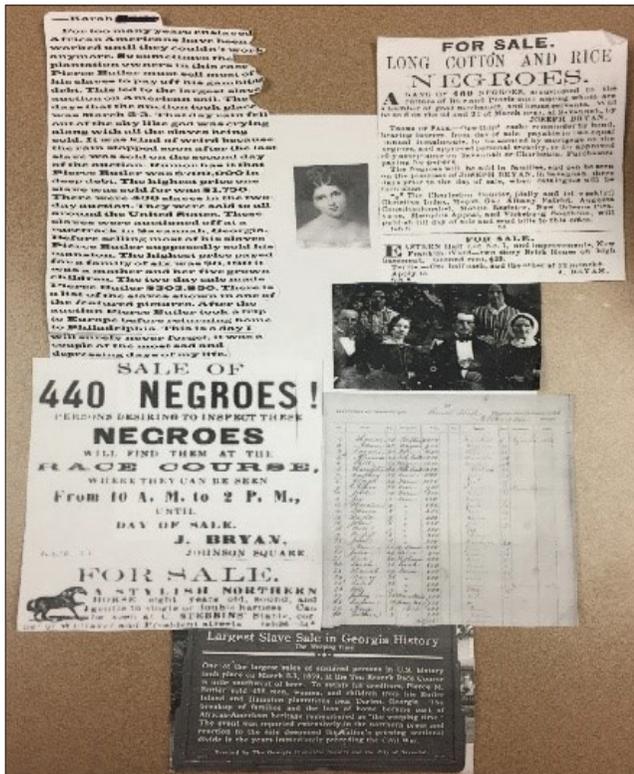
"The Weeping Time." PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2918.html Web. 4 December 2017. This website provided me a lot more information that I never knew about the weeping time. I also knew that this information was true because I could compare it to other websites and the dates were the same. This article compares to the novel because they both talk about the weeping time and also talks about the Butler plantation. It also compares because there were different time dates just like in the book. The website had a lot more information than the book because the book talks about how the slaves acted during the time and same goes for the slave buyers. I really liked this site because it was very informational.

"How the Weeping Time Became a Lost Piece of Georgia History" MyAJC. Cox Media Group, 25 November 2015. Web 3 December 2017. <http://www.myajc.com/news/local/how-the-weeping-time-became-lost-piece-georgia-history/loDnj5RYMAA69iGvLfG2b0/> This information provided me a lot of pictures and good information about the Weeping Time. I know that this information is true because I compared it to the PBS website and they had similar information. This website and novel compares to each other because it talks about who Butler sold and for how much money. It also talks about how many slaves he sold in one day and the second day but all together he sold 436 slaves. I really like this website because it gave me more information about where it took place rather than what the butler plantation looked like.

Appendix K: Megan's Response to Prompt 4

Megan's informative writing (pamphlet) and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 4): Make a brochure for the Weeping Time. Make sure to include slaves for sale, why they are for sale, and other pertinent information about the auction. Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.



Student Response

For too many years enslaved African Americans have been worked until they couldn't work anymore. So sometimes the plantation owners in this case Pierce Butler must sell most of his slaves to pay off his gambling debt. This led to the largest slave auction on American soil. The days that the auction took place was March 2-3. That day rain fell out of the sky like god was crying along with

all the slaves being sold. It was kind of weird because the rain stopped soon after the last slave was sold on the second day of the auction. Rumor has it that Pierce Butler was \$700,000 in deep debt. The highest price one slave was sold for was \$1,750. There were 436 slaves in the two-day auction. They were sold to all around the United States. These slaves were auctioned off at a racetrack in Savannah, Georgia. Before selling most of his slaves Pierce Butler supposedly sold his mansion. The highest price paid for a family of six was \$6,180 it was a mother and her five grown children. The two-day sale made Pierce Butler \$303,850. There is a list of the slaves shown in one of the featured pictures. After the auction Pierce Butler took a trip to Europe before returning home to Philadelphia. This is a day I will surely never forget, it was a couple of the most sad and depressing days of my life.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears*. Jump at the Sun, 2007. This book is about the Weeping Time when Pierce Butler sold 436 of his slaves in a two-day auction. The slave auctioneer lost his voice because he had to yell over the rain hitting the metal roof in the barn. The auctioneer in the book never got his voice back. One of Pierce Butler's two daughters, Francis, was going to take over the plantation of like 20 slaves someday. But his other daughter Sarah not so much, she was like her mother, Fanny Kemble. She was against slavery and was an abolitionist that means that she was against slavery. In the book Emma was like a mother to Sarah and Francis. Fanny got to visit her daughters every once and awhile.

"The Weeping Time." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2918.html. Accessed: 6 December 2017. This website gave me this info. In March 1857 the largest sale of slaves ever in American history took place. Pierce Butler was the owner of the plantation. He had a debt to pay off said to be like \$700,000. The highest price paid for one slave was \$1,750. The two-day sale netted \$303,850. I knew that this website was reputable because my teacher recommended it and I know that P.B.S is a reliable source. This website directly relates to the book because it has the tiniest little details that some websites may not give you and the book had great details too. Another reason it relates to the book is because they both have similar facts. Like, Pierce promised not to separated families but guess what he did and wasn't very sorry about it. He separated Will and Mattie from their daughter Emma.

Monroe, Kristopher. *The Weeping Time*. The Atlantic Monthly Group. July 10, 2014 theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/07/the-weeping-time/374159. 6 December 2017. This source provided this information. There is a historical marker no more than 1/5 of an acre of "largest slave sale in Georgia history." The surrounding neighborhoods are some of the most distressed and depressed sections of the city. The marker was dedicated March 3 2008, 149 years after the slave auction had occurred. It was said that the heavens were weeping for

the inhumanity that was being committed. "By 1859 the trustees were still unable to extricate Pierce Butler from his debts, and it was decided that half the "movable property" on the Georgia plantations would be sold at auction to relieve his remaining financial obligations." This is what the website stated. I know this website is reliable because it has pictures that I printed out and it talks about Savannah, Georgia. This website directly relates to the book because it talks about how people were crying from up in heaven and they said in the book something like God was crying with the slaves.

Appendix L: Timothy's Response to Prompt 5

Timothy's expository writing and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 5): Write an expository essay about the Weeping Time. What is the historical significance of this event? Cite your sources (from documents and books we used in class, as well as online searches) and explain the significance of your sources.

Student Response

Some just stood there; dead to the world, some sobbed uncontrollably, some pled for mercy, some prayed, some begged for forgiveness for whatever it was they had done, some made their final goodbyes, some cursed their owners, some screamed and ranted, some tried to fight, some just rocked back and forth and back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. This is what slave auctions did to people. They were selling people, for crying out loud! Their owners tore their families apart for their own personal gain. After all, who cared about the movable goods and livestock? Answer: nobody except themselves. They weren't even treated as human beings! They were treated as if they had as much intellect as a pig. During the biggest slave auction in history, dubbed "the weeping time", four hundred ninety-six men, women, and children were sold, including forty babies. When Pierce Butler Sr. died he left his fifteen hundred acre plantation to his two grandsons, Pierce went into gambling debt, Pierce and John split the plantation between them; half of them going to John's plantation, half of them staying at Butler Island. Pierce then sold all but twenty of his slaves and moved to Philadelphia. During the auction, there was a real life Jeffrey and Dorcas. But the real reason that the slave owner that bought Jeffrey didn't want Dorcas was because she was to be sold in a family of four and it would've cost too much to buy all of them. Sometime after the auction the Ten Broeck Race Course, the place that the auction was held, was destroyed.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. Day of Tears. Jump at the Sun, 2007. Day of Tears was a slavery book. This book was about Pierce Frances Emma and Sarah. This book takes place on the butler plantation. This was the place where Pierce had the largest slave auction in America. Pierce Butler sold 464 slaves to a bunch of buyers. Pierce even sold Emma to Mistress Henfield. Pierce even had to hit Sarah to make her get off of Emma.

"The Weeping Time". PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2918.html. Accessed: 6 December 2017. This cite was about the

Butler plantation and about the people who lived on the Butler plantation. But this was not just about the Butler plantation it was also about other plantations to. This source provided facts about Pierce Butler and other plantations. This information was true because I got these facts from this website and went to a different website and got the same info. This relates to a novel because it describes the Butler plantation.

www.theatlantic.com/.../2014/07/the-weeping-time. This cite was about the Butler plantation and the slave sale. This provide facts about the sale and were it took place and when. Because at the bottom it show a different website but with the same facts. Because the sale was at the same time.

Appendix M: Anne's Response to Prompt 6

Anne's PowerPoint presentation and accompanying annotated bibliography (all student names are pseudonyms and student work is presented as originally written by the students).

Prompt (Option 6): Have a better idea? Write out exactly what you want to do and make sure you explain what sources you will use.

Student Response

Butler Island

- Butler island was the biggest slave plantation
- Its was an inhospitable place—hot and steamy, a breeding ground for malaria carrying mosquitoes
- No wonder why Pierce Butler wanted to keep Fanny away from the plantation
- The slaves homes were horrible. And Pierce Butler said they were well treated. He lied and it was a bad lie to
- Butler island has two parts to it
- Fanny wrote about how bad Butler island was
- Fanny and Butler would argue over slavery

Pierce Butler

- Pierce butler was born on 1806
- He owned 2 plantations
- Owned 638 slaves
- He met Fanny Kemble in 1832
- He married her in 1834
- Had 2 kids Sarah and Francis
- Butler and Fanny argued over the issue of slavery
- Pierce Butler died in August of 1857 at 57 years of age

Fanny Kemble

- Fanny Kemble was born on November 27, 1809
- She was a brilliant actress

- She took stage herself to save her family from financial ruin
- But acting wasn't her true love
- Her first love was literature and writing
- She was physically strong, independent, highly intelligent, and very spirited
- In 1832, she sent out on a two-year tour in America
- One of her most ardent admirers was Pierce Butler
- She protected a slave from a beating once
- She died on January 15, 1893

The Slave Auction

- The slaves to do list was nothing, all they could do was hope
- Pierce Butler owned a great deal of money
- 436 men, women, children, and infants were brought to a race track in Savannah, Georgia, and put in stalls used for horses
- Some waited for days, others for weeks, for the auction to begin on March 3, 1859
- It was advertised for several weeks
- Some people tried to pay Pierce Butler to do this so they would get famous
- The buyers opened the slaves mouth to see the teeth, pinched their arms and legs to check for muscle strength
- The slaves had to deal with because of Pierce Butlers gambling problem.

Annotated Bibliography

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears*. Jump at the Sun, 2007. Here is summary of the day of tears. In the beginning of the book, it said that Pierce Butler had 436 slaves. He has two daughters. A slave named Emma took care of his daughters. One daughters name was Francis, and the other was Sarah. Francis wanted to be just like her father. She wanted to take on her family's history. She wanted to own slaves. Sarah wanted to be just like her mother. She wanted the slaves to be free. Emma was a slave who the two a lot. She was like a mother to them. Sarah loves Emma. One day Pierce Butler loss all of his money playing cards. Therefore, Pierce had to make an auction of slaves to get some more money. During the auction, most of the slaves got sold except 20 of them. On the second day of the auction while all of the slave were being sold. Pierce knew how much Sarah loved Emma but he decide to sell Emma while she was taking care of Sarah. The book also said that Pierce likes cards more than he loves his

own children. That day Sarah cried because her dad sold Emma. Also on that day, Sarah never forgave her father for what he did. Then when Emma was sold lucky her best friend Joe was with her. And Charles and his wife was with them too, and together they helped each other escape. While they were trying to escape, they ran into Charles dad Samsung. Samsung tried to talk to them out of it. But Charles throw a rock at him and it hit his father and his father draped a lamp which put the barn on fire. The four got out while they still can. Then they found Mr. Henry and he helped them escape. When they got across the river they saw Sarah and Francis mom and, she told them they got to go to Canada. Because there was a new law were if you see a runaway slave turn them over to their rightful owner. So, she helped them get to Canada. Then when Pierce died Sarah was told by her mother were Emma is. Sarah understood why she was not told sooner.

“The Weeping Time.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Services www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p298.html. Web accessed 4 December 2017. This source provided how many slave Pierce Butler had. It said how much Pierce got from the auction. It said how he loses his part of the Butler plantation. It said that Pierce’s brother got to keep his plantation but, Pierce did not. It said how many people came to Savannah just for the auction. It relates to the book by how the racetrack in Savannah was filled with buyers at the time. How Pierce loss all of his money so he had to do the auction.

The other website is The Largest Slave Auction at www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/reform/jb_reform_slaveauc_1.html. It also say how many slaves he had. It said what happen to the slaves. It said that the auction was large. It said more about March 3rd. It said that many of the slaves were humiliated because the slave buyers were pulling on their skin. It relates to the book because it said how the slave buyers pinched them. The book also said that it was the largest slave auction.