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HISTORY AND MEMORY: Contrasting the Civil War South in Film and Primary Documents

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP: This lesson plan targets the undergraduate college level. However, it may also be suitable for an 11th or 12th grade history class.

OVERVIEW:

This lesson focuses on the life of John Washington, an enslaved man who lived in Fredericksburg prior to the Civil War. Unlike the vast majority of enslaved people, Washington left a written account of his life not only as a slave but of his journey to freedom. Washington is unique in many ways: he lived in an urban area, learned how to read at a young age, and achieved freedom prior to the end of the Civil War. However, his journey also provides important insights into the lives of enslaved people and the realities of their diverse experiences. In this lesson, students will examine parts of Washington's personal narrative to gain a better understanding of his life. As a group they will compare and contrast what they have learned from this primary source with their prior knowledge of slavery and the way that slavery is often depicted in media and film.

GOALS:

- Break the silence often associated with slaves' lives and illuminate the experience of slavery, emancipation, and freedom
- Illustrate the diversity of slave experience by examining the life of a slave who resided in a city
- Investigate the experience of slavery through many periods in a man's life from childhood to adulthood
- Examine primary sources to better understand the slave perspective and experience

OBJECTIVES:

BY THE END OF THIS LESSON STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Compare and contrast the diverse experience of slaves and the ways slavery is often portrayed in media and film
- Reflect on the experience of a city slave living in Fredericksburg, Virginia
- Analyze primary sources more effectively
- Explain the ways in which the experience of one slave can help us better understand the realities of slave life more generally while identifying the limits to this perspective

MATERIALS:

- Copy of the film *Gone With the Wind*
- Copies of primary sources (provided at the end of this packet) for each group. Multiple copies of each section are suggested for each group to make reading and sharing easier.

- EXCERPTED FROM: <http://www.history.vt.edu/shifflet/jwash.htm>
- PLEASE NOTE: The excerpts included in the hand out maintain the integrity of the original source. Spelling and punctuation errors have not been corrected. They reflect Washington's original manuscript.
- Access to a TV or projector connected to a computer

BACKGROUND:

John Washington lived in Fredericksburg, Virginia prior to the Civil War. Due to its location between the warring capitals in Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia, Fredericksburg became a crossroads for the major armies operating in the East – the US Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. The first major battle in the area, the Battle of Fredericksburg, occurred in December of 1862 and resulted in a lopsided Confederate victory. Following the Battle of Fredericksburg, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Taking effect on January 1, 1863 this document stated that, “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.” This was a landmark moment because for the first time the government declared that the Federal armies were not waging a war to restore the Union as it was in 1861, but rather to create a new, different and “more perfect” Union.

However, prior to December of 1862 the US Army had already occupied the city of Fredericksburg. During this occupation hundreds of local enslaved people took it upon themselves to self-emancipate and find refuge in the US Army. In many ways, each singular act of self-emancipation by individual slaves worked collectively to change the direction of the Union war effort, defining it as a war for freedom before the Federal government officially did so. John Washington was one of the many slaves residing in Fredericksburg who chose to liberate himself during the spring of 1862. Following his journey to freedom, Washington spent time with the US Army and eventually settled in Washington, D.C. with his family.



John Washington (center) and family

DIRECTIONS:

CLASS PERIOD ONE: WATCH THE BEGINNING OF *GONE WITH THE WIND*

- Introduce *Gone with the Wind* and preface why you are watching the movie.
 - This movie began as a bestselling book and was a box office hit. Its popularity and wide viewership makes it an important touchstone in American cultural memory of the Civil War and slavery in particular.
 - There are many historical inaccuracies in the movie, especially related to the realities of enslaved life. We will discuss this further after watching the film.
- Watch the beginning of the movie, through the outbreak of Civil War.
- When you are finished watching, be sure to have a short discussion about what the students observed. It may be helpful to break topics into categories such as: enslaved life, causes of the Civil War, ideas of Southern manhood and honor.

CLASS PERIOD TWO: BREAK-OUT SESSIONS AND PRIMARY SOURCE READING – JOHN WASHINGTON

- Introduce John Washington with the information provided in the “Background” section of this packet. Explain that students will investigate Washington’s memoir to compare and contrast his account of slavery with the depiction of slavery in *Gone with the Wind*.
- Break students into groups and provide each group with multiple copies of their section of reading and at least one copy of the focus questions. Both are provided at the end of this packet. Be sure to remind students that when they are finished they will share their document with the class to help piece together John Washington’s life.
- Allow students ample time to read through their sections. While they are reading, visit each group to help facilitate or focus their discussion.
- Once students have completed their reading and focus questions, have each group share what they found with the class. Be sure to go in order so that they are explaining Washington’s life chronologically.
- If you would like, explore the Suggested Class Discussion Questions found at the back of this packet.
- Finally, as a class compare and contrast slavery as depicted in *Gone with the Wind* with Washington’s account of his life. It may be helpful to revisit the categories you discussed in the previous class to help students conceptualize specific examples. Potential questions are included with the Suggested Class Discussion section.

A note on time: If you do not have time to dedicate two class periods to this discussion, you can eliminate the *Gone with the Wind* element and focus on John Washington. Follow instructions for class period two, omitting only the final step.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

RESOURCE	LOCATION
FULL TEXT OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION:	https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation
JOHN WASHINGTON'S WORLD: AN AUDIO WALKING TOUR	http://www.visitfred.com/podcasts#A_Slaves_World
FREDERICKSBURG AND SPOTSYLVANIA NATIONAL MILITARY PARK HOME:	www.nps.gov/frsp
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WASHINGTON FROM FREDERICKSBURG AND SPOTSYLVANIA NATIONAL MILITARY PARK:	http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2012/05/02/the-exodus-begins-john-washingtons-greatest-journey/
BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN WASHINGTON ON NPR:	http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16874985

Related Images



A modern view of the Farmer's Bank building on Princess Anne Street



The ruins of the Bridgewater Mill – known as Ficklens Mill – where Washington crossed the Rappahannock to freedom



1927 Photograph of the Bank building's kitchen dependency, the workplace of John Washington's mother.



Modern view of the kitchen dependency. Relocated to Route 1 and Princess Anne Street.

Group 1:

I was born (in Fredericksburg Virginia: May 20th 1838.) a Slave to one Thomas R. Ware Sr. who I never had the pleasure of knowing,) I Suppose it Might have been a doubtful pleasure.) as he died before I was born.

When I was about 2 years of age My Mother (who was also a Slave) was hired to one Richard L. Brown in Orange County, Virginia, about 37 miles from Fredericksburg, and I was taken along with her. But I will not promise to narate the incidents of that Jurney as I did not keep a Diary at that age in a Slave State. My recelotions of my early childhood has been no doubt the most plasant of my life. My Mother taught me to spell at a very early age (between 4 years and 8)

When at this time of Life I look back to that time and, all its most [vivid?] recollections. I see Myself a Small light haired boy (very often passing easily for a white boy.) playing Mostly with the white children on the farm, in Summer Evening among the Sweet-Scented cloverfields after the Butterflies Wading the Brooks and with pin hook and line Startling the [finny?] life.

Now in the Great Forrest Surrounded with dogs in quest of the Hare and Opossum, often on the top of Some Neighbouring Mountain trying with My young eyes, to get a View of Fredericksburg in the distant about 37 Miles Eastward,

The View from all points was splendid, the Westward View, North and Northwest a few Miles distant was the "Blue Ridge Mountains," But still nearer was the Rappid Ann River 3 miles distant, the nearest ford being "Willis Mills," where I used to Stand and Wonder at the River Damed over, and the Great Old Moss covered Wheel Slowly revolving and throwing the Water off in beautiful Showers.

And Orange Court House, where I was carried once behind the family careage, along with the White children to see a Circus. And in the great Crowd during a Violent thunder Storm I was lost. and the careage arrived at home Without me. and Mother and all thought I had fallen asleep in My Seat behind the careage and and [sic] been washed off in the

"Mountain Run," which was very high and had to be forded, by the horses.

I Wandered about the Street at the Court House. (there was but one Street) until dark and I had began to Cry and Wonder Where I should Sleep, for I did not know any one in the village, and could not think what I should do. and the crowds of Country people were clearing the place very rapidly

When all at once My Godmother found me and soon had me Safely packed away among a lot of Comforts and Countelpins [?] in an Old Lumbering ox cart going to the Next farm to my home. When I arrived safe at about Sunlite next Morning. Amidst great rejoicing.

A Man was just getting ready to come and look for me.

I was never allowed to go to another Circus at Orange Court House.

Once in a Month there used to [sic] Meetings held for Divine Services (on the 4th Sundays I think) at "Mount Pisgah" Meeting house Situated on the East end of the farm Where Two Roads intersected. I know they were "Baptists," because the used to Baptize in the Creek close by.

To these Meetings Mother hardly ever failed to attend and take me with her, the church a Large frame building with Gallerys around for colored people to Sit in. Fall pine tres Surrounded the building and the horses and mules used to be fastened during the Services.

Cakes, Candy and fruits, used to be sold there under those great pine trees, on Sundays; which, to my Eyes was always a great treat. I loved very much to go to the Meeting House, as it was called then, because I never failed to come home With a load of cakes candy and .c [for etc.].

These are my first reccolections of attending a church and to-day in my 35th year [this could also be 38th year; it is important in establishing the year the recollections were recorded] the Memory is bright as events of to-day.

Minute events of my reccolection will not likely interest you, so I must pass on with a glance at some of the most important events.

Very early in my infancy Mother taught me that memorable little child's prayer not yet forgotten:

"Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the lord my Soul to Keep"

and then the "Lords Prayer" when I got older.

The Usual Routine of farm work went on for a long time (it seemed to me)

The slaves were treated kindly, and every Sunday Morning the weeks Rations were issued to them from the great meal house.

Harvest time a festival of pies and Meats fruits and vegitables would be Set out in the yard on a great table in the Shade and the reapers and binders, Men and Women Seemed So happy merry and free, for whiskey was not Withheld by the "Boss." [First indication that slaves are used in wheat or corn cultivation. Also notice how the harvest is being used as a time to reward slaves, likely as a means to get more work out of them].

And then hog killing time (near Christmas) when great fires were kindled and large Stones made red hot, then placed into great hogsheads of water until it bioled for Scalding the hogs. and Every body was busy, noisey and merry. Every one of the Slaves were permitted to raise their own hogs, and fowls, and have a garden of their own from the Eldest Man to Me -- often at night Singing and dancing, prayer Meeting or corn shucking.

"A Corn Shucking" is always a Most lively time among the Slaves, they would come for miles around to join in Singing, Shouting and yelling as only a Negro can yell, For a good supply of Bad Whiskey, corn Bread and Bacon and cabbage.

Group 2:

Chapter 2. SLAVERY

At about 4 years of age Mother learned me the alphabet from the "New York Primer." I was kept at my lessons an hour or Two each night by My Mother;

My first great Sorrow was caused by seeing one Morning, a number of the "Plantation Hands," formed into line, with little Bundles Straped to their backs, Men, Women and children. and all Marched off to be Sold South, away from all that was near and dear to them, Parents, Wives husbands and children; all Separated one from another, perhaps never to meet again on Earth.

I Shall never forget the weeping that Morning among those that were left behind, each one expecting to go next.

It was not long before all on that farm was doomed to the Same fate.

and those that did not belong to the "Planter" had to be sent home to their owner.

The farm, and farming implements, Stock and everything was Sold. and Mr Brown removed to western Virginia.

Mother with me and four other *children was sent to Fredericksburg Va.

*Louisa, Laura, Georgianna and Willie.

where we all arrived safe after 2 days travel in an Old "Road Wagon" Soon thereafter My Mother was sent to live to herself, that is to earn her own, and four little children's living without any help from our owners (simply Doctors Bills).

Poor Mother struggled hard late and early to get a poor pittance for the children all of which was to Small to help her. I was kept at the house of the "Old Mistress," all day to run errands and wait on the table (or any thing else that I could do. N.B. At this time (of the fall of 1848) Mrs Taliaferro our old mistress, she having married a Mr. Frank taliaferro who had since died, boarded at the "Farmers Bank," N.W. cor. of George and Princess Anne Streets. Mother lived in a little house on George St. Bet Sophia St. and the River.

I was dressed every Morning (except Sunday in a neat white Apron and clean Jacket and Pants and Sent up to the Bank to see What Mistress might want me to do. Possibly she would have nothing at all for me to do, and if no, I would be ordered to sit down on a footstool, in her room for hours at a time when other children of My age would be out at play.

On Sundays I was dressed in my Sunday cloths (without the Apron) and Sent to the Baptist Church," cor Hanover and Sophia Sts of which the old Mistress was a Strict member. I used to have to sit where the old Lady could see me.

As proof that I was there at al at that time the White and Colored occupied the Same Church. Only all the slave solored Sat in the gallery on each Side, and the Free Colored Sat in the gallery fronting the Pulpit.

In the Afternoon of Sundays the Colored People used to have Meetings in the Basement of the church. to which I was regularly Sent and and [sic] Ordered, to bring home the text in Order that the Old Mistress might know whether I had been there or not.

Now the result of all this compulsory church attending was just the reverse of what was desired viz: I became a thorough hater of this Churhand consequently, I resorted to all kinds of Subterfuge imaginable to Stay away from Church.

I would go to the church door and there wait, until the Minister would announce his text then commit it to Memory, So I could tell When I wnet home. This No Sooner done than I would hasten off to the river to play with Some boat or any thing in Preference to Sitting in church.

I Soon became a confirmed Liar: on account of being compelled to go to church.

TOO MUCH that one Church, I was scarcely ever allowed to go elsewhere.

Group 2 Focus Questions:

1. What does Washington describe as his first “great sorrow?” Why do you think this event touched him so deeply at such a young age?

2. How did Washington learn to read? What is unusual about this?

3. Washington describes in detail what was expected of him as a young slave. How do you think this effected his childhood? Please be sure to describe these expectations for the class.

4. Prior to this chapter, Washington speaks fondly of going to church as a child. In this chapter, however, Washington discusses how much he resisted attending church. What do you think attributed to this change?

5. What events in this passage did you find most significant?

Group 3:

Chapter 3. LEFT ALONE.

I had now arrived at the age of between 11 and 12 year [In other words 1849 or 1850], and had began to see Some of the many trails of Slavery.

Mother lived alone and maintained us children for about 2 years, perhaps, When Mrs Taliaferro came to the conclusion that Mother with My Sisters Lousia, Laura, Georgianna, and brother Willie would have to be sent to Staunton Virginia, to be hired to one R. H. Phillips.

Accordingly they were, all fitted out with New dresses, Shoes and Bonnetts, With Mothers best cloths and some other few articles, and then was in readiness for their long journey across the Blue Ridge Mountains in the month of December 1850 about Christmas.

The Night before Mother left me, (as I was to be kept in hand by the Old Mistress for especial use) She, Mother, came up to my little room I slept in the "white peoples house," and laid down on my Bed by me and begged me for her own sake, try and be a good boy, Say my Prayers every Night, remember all she had tried to teach me, and always think of her.

her tears mingled with mine amid kisses and heart felt Sorrow She tucked the Bed cloths around me, and bade me good night.

Bitter pangs filled my heart and though I would rather die, on the Morrow Mother and Sisters and Brother all would leave me alone in this Wide world to battle with temptation, trials and hardships.

Who then could I complain to When I was persecuted; who then Would come early the cold winter Mornings and call me up and help me do my hard tasks; whose hands)patting, me upon the head would sooth my early trials.

then and there my hatred was kindled Secretly against my oppressors, and I promised Myself If ever I got an opportunity I would run away from these devilish Slave holders. The Morrow came and with tears and Lamentations cars left with all that was near and dear to me on Earth.

A Week afterwards I heard they had all arrived safe in Staunton.

We Wrote often to each other as circumstances Would admit. Of Course, the White people had to write and read all the letters that passed between us. About this time I began seriously to feel the need of learn to write for myself. I took advantage of every opportunity to improve in Spelling. I had to attend to cleaning Mr. William Wares Room and he kept a large quantity of Books on hand among them "Harpers New Monthly Magazine," I used to take much pleasure in reading (but imperfectly) Short Stories, which soon induced me to look for the Book with lively interest each month. Two young Men (white) used to sleep with Mr Wm Ware of nights, named Roberts and they assisted me very much in Spelling only. For it postively forbidden by law to teach a Negro to Write, So I had to fall back upon my own resources.

Chapter 4.
LEARNING TO WRITE.

My Uncle George, Mothers Brother was one day in the lot Where I lived with Mrs Ware and noticed me trying to copy the Writing Alphabet as shown in "Comleys Spelling Book," of that time, principally used by those trying to learn to read or Write. So he asked me what I was trying to do. I replied I am trying to Write, see here and seizing the pen, he wrote the following lines on a peice of Wallpaper,

"My Dear Mother,

I take this opportunity to write you a few lines to let you know that I am well,"

Now said he when you can do that much you you [sic] can Write to your Mother. He was at best a poor white, but the copy that he had just given me was as good as the best penmanship would have been because I could not get a Teacher of my kind or a Copy Book that I could understand. However I availed myself of the first chance I had to buy a 12 cent copy book, which was a most Wretched concern, and With its help I was most Successful in laying the foundation of a very bad Writer, for there Was nothing like form or System about the thing. About this time I, by some means or other, attracted the attention of the Rev Wm J. Walker, who was one day hanging paper in the house Where I lived.

Seeing my efforts at writing he kindly stopped, and wrote me a very good copy of the alphabet from which I soon learned to write Some kind of an inteligable hand and am Still trying to improve--But having never had a regular course of Spelling taught me, I am in consequence very defficient in every branch of a common and also[?] action. So those who may be tempted to read this paper may possibly learn for the first time the disadvantages of Slavery, with some of the attending evils.

Group 3 Focus Questions:

1. What “trials of slavery” does Washington specifically describe?
2. What event made Washington resolve that he would one day run away? Why?
3. How does Washington describe the importance of his familial relationships?
4. What does Washington describe about his life that you found surprising?
5. Washington notes that his poor spelling is evident in this manuscript. To what does he attribute this deficiency?
6. What events in this passage did you find most significant?

Group 4:

Chapter 6.

The years of 1853 - 54 was passed in the usual routine of Slave life with its many Sorrows and fears and fitting [?] hopes of Escape to Freedom. So far as I was concerned I was kept unusually close, never permitted to pass the limits of the lot after Sundown without a permission and limited time to return which must be punctually obeyed if I had any desire to go out again in a reasonable time.

On Sundays the Same of "Rules" [sic] mentioned in Chapter 5 was Strictly Enforced which if disobeyed at any one time would be Sufficient cause to keep me in many Sundays thereafter. Imagine a boy about 16 or 17 years of age in good health with many rollicking fun loving companions playing in full Sight of the house, on a bright Sunday Morning in the Months of May or June, with a beautiful Season ling [?] County spread out for miles around visible to the naked Eye; with the Sweet Scent of Clover, Locust Blossoms, Hunnysuckle, Apple, Cherry, and various Fruit Trees almost Ripened, and all nature Clothed with beauty, that can not be describe -- and that boy only permitted to See all this from an open window.

Not permitted to go out and See and Smell the Work of Him, who created all things. Imagine Such a case, I say, and you will have a very faint glimmer of my case at that time.

I was very Seldom allowed to visit any partys of young company except Fairs which was held for the benefit of one of the Colored Churches as there was not but Two The "African Baptist," and "Little Wesley" Methodist. Some time a fair would be opened at a private house for the benefit of some poor person trying to make up money to finish paying for them selves or otherwise afflicted.

But nothing of the kind could be had without a permit from the Mayor of the Town. Such specifying the times the fair should be closed, which had to be Strictly adhered to. All Such "Fairs" had to be held During the "Easter," "Whitsuntide" or "Chirstmas Hollidays."

To these fairs some times I was permitted to go which to me was almost a heavenly boon. It was at one of these fairs I frequently met Miss Annie E. Gordon, having received an Introduction through a friend in a Easter Singalar manner [?]. It was as follows, I had wrote a Valentine a few months previous for a friend of mine. Austin Bunday who had it Directed to this young Lady. I then obtained a promise from him that I would accompany him to his next visit to this Lady and be introduced under the assumed name of Mr John Bunday his Brother.

This plan was duly carried out and Miss Annie Gordon was fully Satisfied that it was My true name - Until the Hollidays of "Easter," or Whitsentide 1853. When by an accedent, She over heard Some other Young Ladies of my acquaintance Call me by my right Name. when she asked me what it Meant, and I then told her of the fact, She Seemed Some what annoyed, but it was alright in the course of time. I had conceived a particular fancy for this Young girl at first Sight.

I was then very bashful and backward in Speech with probably no kind of idea of love making. Only this girl had a Sad, but very pretty face, and Shy half Scared look as if she thought I would bite her. She talked but little in My presence and then So low you might have thought she was talking to herself. So I

some time visited her at her Mothers or saw her at the Churchs and in the Street. I did not visit her often for a long time afterward.

The African Baptist Church was situated on the N.E. cor. of Sophia and Hanover Sts (At the time I am Speaking of the "White people," worshipped in the upper part of the Building and the "Colored people," in the Basement.) In the Spring of 1855, A great Revival of Religion prevailed among both White and Colored people of that church and a great many was added to its membership. Among these that joined at that time was many young Men and young women of my particular friends.

It was during the revival that I was Sincerely troubled about the Salvation of my Soul. And about the 25th of May I was converted and found the Saviour precious to my Soul, and heavenly joys Manifested, and began to be felt at that time, are Still like burning coals; fanned by the breeze (after a laps of Nearly 17 years) and is to this day the most precious assurance of My life, God grant me more faith and a better understanding, for these things let rocks and hills this lasting Silence breake; And all harmonious human tonnges their Saviours praises Speak. I was Baptised in the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, Va. by Rev. WmF. Broaddus June 13th 1856.

And many happy moments have I spent with the Church in its Joys and Sorrows at that place. I was permitted to attend divine Service on Sundays but at nights I was not allowed to go out but little - During my Close imprisonment (I do not know what else to call it) The "Word of God," was to me a Source of Unfailing pleasure. I became a close reader of the Bible. And wrote many comments on different Chapters which has since been lost.

It was during the autumn of 1856, that I Experienced my first attack of Sickness of any duration which soon developed itself into a Severe and protracted case of Typhoid Fever which wore itself off in "Chills and Fevers," about 3 months from the commencement.

Be it said to their credit that Mrs. Taliaferro and her son Wm Ware was the most attentive to me during my whole sickness. I could not have been better attended to by my nearest Relations.

I have often wished it had pleased "Devine Providence," to have taken me from this world of Sin then - When I had not, as Now Seen so Much of the Exceeding "Sinfullness of Sin."

I Remained on the lot in service with Mr Ware and his mother, until January 1st 1869. T. Hart, next door, Where I had to Drive Horses, Attend a cow, help in the Garden and everything else like work. But to me the change was very agreeable indeed all Sunday and night restrictions was removed except what was really necessary. My Clothing was abundant and good. My opportunities to make money for Myself was increased tenfold. I lived with Mrs Hart one year 1859.--

January 1st 1860 I went to live with Messrs Alexander & Gibbs, tobacco Manufactoeres, where I, in a month or Two learned the art of preparing Tobacco for the Mill. We were all "Tasked," to Twist from 66 1/8 to 100 lbs per day. All the Work we could do over the task we got paid for which was our own money, not our masters in this way some of us could make \$3.00 or 4 extra in a week.

The Factory weeks began on Saturdays and ended on Fridays, When the Books were posted and all the men that had over work were paid promptly on Saturday.

Group 4 Focus Questions:

1. What did you find surprising about Washington's daily life as an urban slave?
2. What role did church and religion play in Washington's life?
3. Why do you think Washington's owners paid such close attention to him while he was sick?
4. What, if anything, did you find abnormal about the circumstances of Washington's work life?
5. What events in this passage did you find most significant?

Group 5:

In July 1861. the 21st day the Union Army, and the "Rbels met at Bull Run and a great battle was fought and the Union army was defeated. [no closed quote] Already the Slaves had been Escaping into the Union armys lines and Many therby getting of [sic] to the Free States. I would read the papers and eagerly watched fhem for tidings of the war which had began in earnest, almost every day brought news of Battles. the Union troops was called "Yankees and the Southern "Rebs." It had now become a well known fact that Slaves was daily Making their escape into the Union lines. So at Christmas 186?, I left Richmond, having been provided with a pass and fare to Fredericksburg Va.

I told Mr Wendlinger and my fellow Servants good by They expected me back the 1st of January again to live with them another year.

Soon after I arrived in Fredericksburg I Sought and obtained a home for the Year of 1862, at the "Shakespear House," part of the time as "Steward," and the balance as Bar-keeper -- My Master was not pleased when he heard of my intention to remain in Fredericksburg that year; he Seemed to think I wanted to remain too near the "Yankees," though he did not tell me these words.

The War was getting hotter Every day, and the Unakees had approached Within a few Miles of the Town more than once. The later part of February, 1862, the Rebs began to withdraw their forces from the Aquia Creek Landing which was then the terminus of the "Richmond Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad." Early in March the Rebs began to fall back from the Potomack River.

The Town was now filled with Rebel Soldiers, and their Outrages and dastardly acts toward the colored people can not be told. It became dangerous to be out atal of nights.

The Whites was hastening their Slaves off to Safer places of refuge...

About the last of March there was a good deal of talk about Evacuating Fredericksburg, Which was Soon after Commenced. by the 15th of April Most of the Troops had been Withdrawn. On the night of the 15th or 16th the Yankees advanced and had a Skirmish and drove in the Rebel pickets with Some of them Wounded and the others Most frightfully Scared.

The Proprietors of the Shakespear now told Me the house would have to be closed very Soon in consequence of the near approach of the Yankees; and that I would have to go to Saulsbury, North Carolina to Wait on Capt Payton the balance of the Year.

I could not very well Make any objection as the Pirin [?] had always treated Me well and paid Me besides for attending the Bar for them, When I was hired only for a Dining room Servant. I was easily induced to change from the Dining room for \$37.00 and Extra Money every Week.

So When I was told that I would have to go to Saulsbery I became greatly alarmed and began to fear that the object in Sending me down there, Was to be done to get me out of the reach of the Yankees. And I Secretly resolved not to go But I made them believe I was Most anxious to go...

Chapter 8.

April 18th 1862, Was Good-Friday," the Day was a mild pleasant one with the Sun shining brightly and every thing unusually quite [?]. the Hotel was crowded with boarders who was Seated at breakfast a rumor had been circulated among them that the Yankees Was advancing, but nobody Seemed to beleive it, until Every body Wa Startled by Several reports of canon.

Then in an instant all Was Wild confusion as a calvary Man dashed into te Dining Room and Said "The Yankees is in Falmouth." Every body was on their feet at once, No-body finished but Some ran to their rooms to get a few things, officers and Soldiers hurried to their Quarters Every Where was hurried Words and hasty foot Steps...

As Soon as I had Seen all things put to rights at the hotel, and the Doors closed and Shutters put up, I call all the Servants in the Bar-Room and treated them all around plentiful. and after drinking "the Yankees," healths, I paid each one according to Orders. I told them they could go just Where they pleased but be Sure the "Yankees," have no trubble finding them...

Safe in the Lines.

After delivering the hotel keys to Mrs Mazene I then Walked up Water St above Coalters Bridge Where I noticed a large crowd of the people Standing eagerly gazeing across the river at a Small group of officers and Soldiers who was now approaching the river Side and immediately raised a flag of Truce and called out for Some one to come over to them. A White Man named James Turner, Stepped into a Small boat and went over to them...

As Soon as the Officer had left the Constables was told to order the Negroes home Which they did, but While we dispersed from thereabout, a great many did not go home just then. I hastened off in the direction of home and after making a circuitous route, I 'm in company with James washington, my first Cusin and another free Colored Man, left the town near the Woolen Mills and proceeded up the road leading to Falmouth [,] Our object being to get right opposite the "Union Camp," and listen to the great number of "Bands" then playing those marching tunes, "the Star Spangled Banner," "Red White and Blue," etc.

Very Soon one of a party of Soldiers, in a boat call out to the crowd Standing arround Me do any of you want to come over -- Every body Said No. I hallowed out, "Yes I Want to come over." "All right -- Bully for you," was the response. and they was Soon over to Our Side...

Just here" [?] one of them asked me I Guess you ain't a Secessish," then. Me "Said I," Why know colored people ain't Secessh" why you ain't a Colored Man are you "Said he." Yes Sir I am I" I replied." and a Slave all my life. All of them Seemed to utterly astonished. "So you Want to be free inquired one." by all Means "I answered." "Where is your Master? Said another. In the Rebel Navy, "I said." well you don't belong to any body then, "Said Several at once" the District of Columbia is free now. Emancapated 2 Days ago. I did not know what to Say, for I was dumb With Joy and could only thank God and laugh...

Before Morning I had began to fee like I had truly Escaped from the hands of the Slaves Master and With the help of God, I never Would be a Slave no more. I felt for the first time in my life that I could now claim Every cent that I should Work for as My own. I began now to feel that Life had a new joy awaiting me.

Group 5 Focus Questions

1. Do you think Washington had an abnormal amount of freedom as a slave?
2. How did Washington know that with the advent of the Civil War slaves had been self-emancipating?
3. The Union occupation of Fredericksburg is usually seen as an unwelcome and destructive part of the city's history. Conversely, Washington mentions that there were problems when the *Confederates* occupied the city. What are they and how does this change our perspective on wartime occupation?
4. Do you think Washington intended to gain freedom on April 18? What factors contributed to his decision to run away?
5. How does Washington describe his feelings upon realizing he was free?
6. What events in this passage did you find most significant?

Suggested Class Discussion Questions

The following questions are suggested questions for further discussion after students have shared from their individual readings. These questions are designed to help students synthesize the information further and determine both the possibilities and limits of using a source like Washington's memoirs to understand the broader experience of slavery in the American South.

1. How do you think John Washington's experiences compare to that of other enslaved people?
Follow up: What makes it unique? What makes it similar?
2. John Washington lived most of his life in a city as an urban slave (with the exception of his early childhood). In what specific ways do you think his life and daily activities differed from that of plantation slaves?
3. John Washington was clearly connected to a larger community of both free and enslaved African Americans, how do you think this might have contributed to his conceptions (and dreams) of freedom?
4. How did John Washington's experience compare and contrast with the depiction of bucolic slave life in *Gone with the Wind*?
5. How did the depiction of the slave-master relationship in *Gone with the Wind* compare with what John Washington describes? Please use specific examples.
6. Many enslaved people never had the opportunity to gain freedom like Washington did. Others made the decision to wait for the end of the war. What factors that John Washington describes do you think contributed most to his decision to escape to freedom in 1862?
7. John Washington discusses his relationships with other enslaved people beyond his immediate family in a fair amount of detail. How do his relationships compare with the relationships amongst slaves depicted in *Gone with the Wind*?

Potential Lesson Expansion

Additional resources provide an illuminating contrast to various elements of *Gone with the Wind* such as ideas of Southern chivalry, causes of the Civil War, and the role of white women in the antebellum South. Below is a list of additional primary sources and short, informational clips available through the park website that can serve as potential points of departure for these various topics

MARY MINOR BLACKFORD was a Fredericksburg resident who became an influential member of the American Colonization Society. This organization advocated ending slavery and sending freedmen to Liberia, Africa. However, despite her antislavery views, Blackford and her family owned slaves. Additionally, her sons all served in the Confederate Army. Blackford's fierce participation in politics contrasts with Scarlett O'Hara's disdain for talk of "war, war, war." Her role as the matriarch of an influential Southern family provides an important foil to Mrs. O'Hara in the opening of *Gone with the Wind*.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: The story of a Virginia Lady, Mary Berkeley Minor Blackford, 1802-1896 (1954)

Short biography of Blackford available at Encyclopedia Virginia
<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/blackford-mary-berkeley-minor-1802-1896/>

DAVID HOLT was a Confederate soldier from Mississippi who fought at the Battle of Fredericksburg as well as other battles located within the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Holt claimed to hate slavery, yet fully supported the cause of Southern independence – a cause avowedly in defense of slavery. Holt's enthusiasm for war mirrors that of many Southern men portrayed in *Gone with the Wind*. However, his mixed views on slavery – though his family owned a handful of slaves – provides unique insights into the conflicts of interest many Confederate soldiers faced at the outbreak of war.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: the Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt (2001), available through GoogleBooks