

**U.S. HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2009**

I. Reading from the Textbook & Upcoming Exam!!

Make sure that you read the second half of “Chapter 6 – Westward Expansion and Civil War” from pp. 152-169 in Peiser and Serber’s *U.S. History and Government*. These pages focus specifically on the Civil War. Your final exam is on Tuesday, January 20th.

II. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a book attacking slavery called Uncle Tom’s Cabin. This book deeply touched the hearts of many people in the North and caused them to oppose slavery. At the same time, Stowe’s book outraged white Southerners. They believed the book gave a false picture of slavery. They claimed Stowe wrote it just to stir up hatred between the North and the South.

Here is part of a chapter from Uncle Tom’s Cabin. It describes Uncle Tom, a slave, being questioned about the whereabouts of two runaway slaves. Uncle Tom is being questioned by the plantation overseer, Simon Legree. A slave named Quimbo is helping Legree.

“Well, Tom!” said Legree, walking up, and seizing him grimly by the collar of his coat, and speaking through his teeth, in . . . determined rage, “Do you know I’ve made up my mind to KILL you?”

“It’s very likely, Mas’r [master],” said Tom, calmly.

“I *have*,” said Legree, with grim, terrible calmness, “*done—just—that—thing*, Tom, unless you’ll tell me what you know about these yer [here] gals [girls]!”

Tom stood silent.

“D’ye [Do you] hear?” said Legree, stamping, with a roar like that of an incensed [very angry] lion. “Speak!”

“I *han’t* [have not] *got nothing to tell, M’asr*,” said Tom, with a slow, firm, deliberate [thought-out] utterance [words]. . . .

“Speak!” thundered [roared] Legree, striking him furiously. “Do you know anything?”

“I know, M’asr; but I can’t tell anything. *I can die!*”

Legree drew in a long breath; and, suppressing [holding back] his rage, took Tom by the arm, and, approaching [bringing] his face almost to his [Tom’s], said, in a terrible voice, “Hark ’e [Listen carefully], Tom!—ye [you] think, ’cause I’ve let you off before, I don’t mean what I say; but this

time, I’ve *made up my mind*, and counted the cost. You’ve always stood it out agin’ me [refused to obey me]: now, I’ll *conquer ye, or kill ye!*—one or t’[the] other.” . . .

Tom looked up to his master, and answered, “M’sar, if you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save ye, I’d *give* ye my heart’s blood; and, if taking every drop of blood in this poor old body would save your precious soul, I’d give ’em [them] freely, as the Lord gave his for me. O, Mas’r! Don’t bring this great sin on your soul! It will hurt you more than ’t will [it will] me! Do the worst you can, my troubles’ll [will] be over soon; but, if ye don’t repent [confess your sins], yours won’t *never* end! . . .

It was but [only] a moment. There was one hesitating pause, . . . and the spirit of evil came back . . . and Legree, foaming with rage, smote [knocked] his victim to the ground. . . .

Tom opened his eyes, and looked upon his master. “Ye poor miserable critter [creature]!” he said. “There an’t [isn’t] no more ye can do! I forgive ye, with all my soul!” and he fainted entirely away.

“I b’lieve [believe], my soul, he’s done for [dead], finally,” said Legree, stepping forward to look at him. “Yes, he is! Well, his mouth’s shut up, at last—that’s one comfort!”

Source: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe.
John P. Jewett & Company, 1852

On the back of this sheet of paper or on a separate sheet, answer the following questions about the selection you have just read.

1. Why do you think Tom refused to tell where the runaway slaves were hiding?
2. In what ways is Simon Legree shown as an evil person?
3. Imagine you are a white Northerner who has read *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Write a short paragraph telling what you think of the book.

III. Free African Americans Debate the War

When the Civil War broke out, free Africans in the North asked themselves how they felt about the conflict. Two points of view are presented in this New York City newspaper for black readers.

IN FAVOR OF SUPPORTING THE UNION

Colored [African-American] men whose fingers tingle [itch] to pull the trigger, or clutch the knife aimed at slaveholders . . . will not have to wait much longer. Whether the foe [the Confederate army] attack Washington and succeed, or whether they attempt [to attack] Maryland and fail, there is equal need for calling out the nation's "Reserve Guard" [African Americans]. . . .

There are men among our people who look upon this as the "white man's war" and such men openly say, let them fight it out among themselves. It is their flag, and their constitution which have been dishonored. . . .

This is a huge fallacy [mistaken viewpoint]. In proof of which let us ask ourselves some questions. . . . What rights have we in the free states? We have the "right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." We have the right to labor, and are secured [receive] the fruits of our labor; we have the right to our wives and our little ones; we have to a large extent the right to educate our children. . . .

Are these rights worth the having? If they are, then they are worth defending with all our might, and at any cost. It is illogical, unpatriotic, nay [even] mean and unmanly [cowardly] in us to shrink from the defense of these great rights and privileges. . . .

Hence, talk as we may, we *are* concerned in this fight and our fate hangs upon its issues [outcome]. The South must be subjugated [conquered], or we shall be enslaved. In aiding the federal government in whatever way we can, we are aiding to secure our own liberty. . . . We do not affirm [say] that the North is fighting on behalf of the black man's [people's] rights, as such—if this was the single

issue, we even doubt whether they would be fighting at all. But circumstances have been so arranged by the decrees of Providence that in struggling for their own nationality [nation], they [the North] are forced to defend our rights. . . .

Source: *The Anglo-African Newspaper*, August 1861.

AGAINST SUPPORTING THE UNION

I claim that the raising of black regiments for the war would be highly impolitic [undesirable] and uncalled for [unnecessary] under the present state of affairs [the way things now stand], knowing, as we do, the policy of the [federal] government in relation to colored men [African Americans]. . . . Is this country ready and anxious to initiate [start] a new era for downtrodden humanity, that you so eagerly propose to make the sacrifice of thousands of our ablest men . . . ? No! No!! Your answer must be: No!!! No black regiments . . . no initiatory [aggressive] war measures, to be adopted or encouraged by us. Our policy must be neutral [not taking sides], ever praying for the success of that party [side] determined to initiate first the policy of justice and equal rights.

Source: *The Negroes' Civil War* ed. by James M. McPherson. Vintage Books, 1965.

On the back of this sheet of paper or on another sheet, answer the following questions about the selections you have just read.

1. Summarize the reasons the first writer gives for supporting the Union.
2. Why do you think the second writer feels that free African Americans must be neutral?
3. With which point of view do you agree? Explain your answer.



African Americans collecting bones of soldiers, Cold Harbor, Virginia, photograph by John Reekie, April 1865