

Slavery's Secrets

Educators spread the word about slavery in the North.

Sojourner Truth is best known as an outspoken **abolitionist**—someone who worked to end slavery. But what people may not know is that Truth was one of thousands of slaves in the United States who were bought, sold, and forced to do labor in the North.

"Many people are surprised when you talk about slavery in the North," Alan Singer, a professor of education at Hofstra University, told *Weekly Reader*. "We associate slavery with the South, even though the biggest importer of slaves—after South Carolina—was New York City."

Spotlight on Slavery

Singer and other educators spread the word about slavery in the North. Although there were fewer slaves in the North than in the South, slavery flourished in New York City, northern New Jersey, rural Pennsylvania, and the shipping towns of Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 1771, slaves made up about 12 percent of the population of New York City.

Some slaves in the North were offered freedom to fight for the British during the Revolutionary War (1775–1783). However, slavery wasn't abolished in the United States until the end of the Civil War (1861–1865). New Jersey, for example, reported 18 slaves in 1860.

Singer explains that the slave trade helped support the **Industrial Revolution** in many major Northern cities, such as Boston and New York City. The Industrial Revolution was a rapid change in the economy in the 1800s, when factories and power-driven machines were introduced. Many U.S. businesses got their start with profits from the slave trade and slave-produced goods.

Lasting Effects

Singer tells students that the effects of slavery linger today through racial prejudice and discrimination. "Kids see slavery as something

Reading Passage

that happened in the deep past. I want children to know that we still live with the effects of that slavery society."

History Maker: Sojourner Truth

Isabella Baumfree (1797–1883) was born one of 13 children but never got to know her siblings because they were sold into slavery. She was emancipated, or freed, in 1828. In 1843, she changed her name to Sojourner Truth. She traveled throughout New England and the Midwest, speaking publicly against slavery and in favor of women's rights.