Lesson Plan: Emancipation and the Thirteenth Amendment

Primary Sources:

Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

Emancipation, Lithograph, 1865

Understanding the Goal:
The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in areas under Confederate control; two years later, in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery.

Investigative Question: What events led to the abolishment of slavery in the United States?

Overview:
In this lesson students will examine a legal document and a lithograph that explore life before, during, and after emancipation and the effects of the Emancipation Proclamation. They will also explore the events that brought about emancipation.

Student Performance Tasks:
Students will:

1. work in pairs and then in groups to examine one of two historical documents: a lithograph and a legal document.
2. as a team, present their findings about their historical document.
3. as a class, discuss the historical perspectives of the creators of the documents. Students will also share their own *creative dialogue interpretations* with the class.

Length of Activity:
1 class period

Standards Addressed:
Virginia Standards of Learning:

VS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to

a) identify and interpret artifacts and primary and secondary source documents to understand events in history;
b) determine cause-and-effect relationships;
c) compare and contrast historical events;
d) draw conclusions and make generalizations;
e) make connections between past and present;
f) sequence events in Virginia history;

g) interpret ideas and events from different historical perspectives;
h) evaluate and discuss issues orally and in writing

VS.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of life in the Virginia colony by
a) explaining the importance of agriculture and its influence on the institution of slavery.;

VS.7 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the issues that divided our nation and led to the Civil War by
a) identifying the events and differences between northern and southern states that divided Virginians and led to secession, war, and the creation of West Virginia; describing Virginia's role in the war, including identifying major battles that took place in Virginia.

VUS.3 The student will describe how the values and institutions of European economic and political life took root in the colonies and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas.

VUS.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major events from the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century by
e) describing the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union.

National History Standards

Era 4–2D The student understands the rapid growth of "the peculiar institution" after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery.

Materials Needed:

- The Emancipation Lithograph worksheet (with 8 vignettes and talking bubbles), copies enough for each student.
- Emancipation, Lithograph, 1865, copies for half the class
- Transcription of the Emancipation Proclamation, copies for half the class
- Historical Source Analysis Sheets for each student. Download a worksheet from the Virginia Memory Online Classroom Lesson Plans page

Background:

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that all slaves in areas under Confederate control "shall be … forever free." Lincoln had come to believe that freeing the slaves would break the backbone of the Southern economy. The proclamation did not free all the slaves in the United States. On December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the nation.

Pre-Activity Exploration:

Students should be familiar with the factors leading to the Emancipation Proclamation.

- Many people believe that the Emancipation Proclamation, issued on January 1, 1863, freed all the slaves in the United States. Actually freedom did not come to all slaves until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

- Abraham Lincoln opposed slavery, but he had been elected on a platform that promised not to interfere with slavery within the slave states. During the Civil War, his primary aim was to save the Union. He first issued the proclamation, in rough form, just after the Union victory at Antietam, in September 1862. It declared that all the slaves in the Confederacy were free (not those in the loyal border slave states).

- At the time, Lincoln had no power over the Confederate states, but nearly 200,000 slaves went north as free men and joined the Union army. The proclamation also identified the Union's cause firmly with the fight against slavery.

Teacher Actions:

The teacher should read the background information on the primary sources at the Library of Virginia's Shaping the Constitution Web site.

I. Break the class out into pairs. Distribute copies of the lithograph, "Emancipation." Have students work in pairs to complete an analysis worksheet. After they have completed the exercise, discuss their answers as a class. You may want to write the questions from the analysis worksheet on the board. Distribute transcriptions of the legal document, the Emancipation Proclamation. Have students work in pairs to examine the Emancipation Proclamation document and complete an analysis worksheet. After a set time, reconvene the class and ask students to share responses from their completed document analysis exercise and discuss.

Some questions the teacher may want to cover include:

- How did people react to the Emancipation Proclamation?
- What did the proclamation state?
- Why do you think the Emancipation Proclamation freed only those slaves living in the Confederate States?
- How did Lincoln's decree granting freedom to Southern slaves benefit the Union cause?
- Explain this statement: The Emancipation Proclamation had limitations but it drastically shifted the moral basis of the conflict from a war fought to restore the Union to a battle for human freedom.
- Was Lincoln right in his belief that freeing the slaves would break the backbone of the Southern economy? Explain.

- Do you think the South's economy could have existed without the slave system in the first place? Why? Or Why Not?

- The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery throughout the United States, but it did not provide for the rights of the newly freed African Americans. Which two amendments followed the Thirteenth Amendment and defined the rights of citizenship and equality in voting for African Americans?

- Which three amendments are sometimes called the Reconstruction Amendments? These amendments made great steps toward providing for all Americans the promises for liberty and equality made by the founders. Since their passage these amendments have been regularly cited by civil rights activists in the fights for the freedoms and rights they promise.

II. Next, have each student chose a different partner to complete the "talking bubble" exercise as they study the images and symbols on the Emancipation Lithograph. When they have completed the exercise, reassemble the class and share each team's creative dialogue responses. Display them in front of the class or combine each set to make a booklet for each class member. Lead the class discussion with some of the following discussion points:

Emancipation Lithograph:

- The scenes were created by Thomas Nast.
- They were illustrations for *Harper's Weekly* on January 24, 1863, three weeks after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.
- Nast drew the scenes to celebrate emancipation and the end of the Civil War.
- Nast was born in Bavaria and moved to New York as a child.
- During the Civil War, Nast established himself as a political cartoonist and supported the Union and justice for African Americans.
- The central scene shows a comfortable domestic view, anticipating a happy future for free people. The family—consisting of several generations beside a stove—depicts middle-class Victorian values.
- A portrait of Lincoln and a banjo hang on the wall.
- The other scenes are split between slavery-era depictions with a Confederate flag flying on the left and post-emancipation depictions with an American flag on the right.
- The scenes on left include: escaping slaves, a family torn apart as man is sold on the auction block, and slaves being punished as a woman is whipped and a man is branded.
- The scenes on the right include: a couple sitting outside a cabin, a man playing banjo, children happily leaving for school, and African Americans being paid wages.

- A small scene shows African Americans fieldworkers removing their hats for a white man on a horse (in a world of freedmen, African Americans are still relegated to agricultural work and lower positions than that of white people).

- Discuss how lithographs are created.

III. Independent Extension Exercise/Homework: Ask students to research and create an Emancipation Timeline using the dates associated with the Emancipation Proclamation. They may include illustrations/clip art that depict the events. Ask students to end the timeline with the date of June 19, 1865, and explain the significance of that date on the timeline.

Extension Activity: Have students use the Internet to research the symbols Nast is most famous for creating. (Santa, donkey for Democratic party, and elephant for the Republican Party).

Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

Discussion Points:

Important dates associated with the Emancipation Proclamation:

April 16, 1862: Lincoln signed the D.C. Emancipation Act, allowing for the emancipation of all slaves within Washington, D.C.

September 22, 1862: Lincoln announced his preliminary proclamation, a military warning that if the war continued and states remained in rebellion he would free all slaves held in rebellious states on January 1, 1863.

The war continued, and on the first day of 1863, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

December 6, 1865: legal emancipation for all enslaved people of the United States was ratified by the Thirteenth Amendment.

The most famous and probably the last place in the former Confederate States in which the Emancipation Proclamation took effect was Galveston, Texas, where on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger read a military order announcing that all the slaves in the state were free according to the Emancipation Proclamation. This date has come to be celebrated as Juneteenth.

Analysis:
After the conclusion of the lesson, students should have examined the historical sources and have an understanding of the events that led to the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment. Either in further class discussion or in independent activities, have them write a summary of what they learned. Have a discussion about how they felt as they analyzed the images on the right and left sides of the Emancipation lithograph. Have the students explain how the feelings of the subjects may have changed from one scene to the other. Some students may wish to write a skit based on the post-emancipation side of the lithograph (the time just after emancipation). Others may wish to draw or write accounts with clipped illustrations of other scenes that would depict the Emancipation period and include talking bubbles in their work. Students should re-examine the Nast lithograph as they construct other scenes that could fit into the Emancipation time period.