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The Chew House: Slavery and Abolition in Philadelphia

Do Now

Directions: Read the following passage about the Chew family and slavery in the mid-Atlantic region. This is a challenging text, meant for high school students - your goal is to understand what you can. Be sure to annotate the text with questions and summarize the key ideas from each paragraph as you read.

History and Background	Annotations
<p>The institution of slavery is a big part of the financial and political growth and history of America. Benjamin Chew was from the British colonies that would become the United States. He was born on a Maryland plantation into a family with a history of slave-holding that went back to the 17th century. Benjamin was the patriarch (<i>male leader</i>) of a large and late slave-holding family with property in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.</p> <p>The Chews' ambivalence (<i>mixed feelings</i>) toward enslaved peoples can be found in the Chew papers. The enslaved were considered primarily to be property. Some Americans, like Benjamin Chew Jr., felt that the enslaved were better off in bondage than free.</p> <p>Much of the Chew family wealth created and sustained during the 18th and 19th centuries was built from investments directly or indirectly connected to slavery. The financial ability of Dr. Samuel Chew to send his son Benjamin to law school in London was built, in part, on the labors of the many enslaved Africans he owned. Benjamin Chew and his brother would go on to own a total of nine plantations in Maryland and the Lower Three Counties (<i>modern day Delaware</i>). At the Chews' Whitehall Plantation in Delaware, the Chew papers have uncovered sixty years of information about enslaved Africans. The lives, families, and resistance to authority of those enslaved on plantations owned by the Chews can be seen through the papers.</p> <p>Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and its first Bishop, wrote in the first sentence of his autobiography that he was born enslaved to Benjamin Chew. The Chew papers contain letters written by enslaved Africans that give a more detailed description of the hardships and heartaches they endured. Many of the enslaved people on Chew plantations can now be identified by name, location, and year of birth because of the Chew papers. The Chew family held enslaved Africans in the city of Philadelphia and in Germantown during the 18th and early 19th centuries. Urban slavery offered the enslaved an environment where they could learn from, socialize, and worship with free Blacks as well as Whites. At any given time, there were enslaved Africans working next to free Blacks and European immigrants at Cliveden. The enslaved in urban areas were used as domestic servants, trained as artisans (<i>skilled tradespersons</i>), and even rented to other slave owners.</p> <p><i>*Adapted from http://www.cliveden.org/slavery-and-servitude/</i></p>	

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Comprehension and Discussion Questions

1. The text describes Benjamin Chew as the patriarch of “*a large and late slave-holding family with property in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland.*” Explain what that means in your own words.
2. According to the third paragraph, why was Benjamin Chew able to become a lawyer? Why do you think that is important information?
3. Based on context clues from the text, what do you think the Chew papers are?
4. Plantation slavery is different from urban slavery. What are some of the ways that urban slavery is different from plantation slavery?

The United States Census

5. Find the name Rev. John Ewing. How many people were in Rev. Ewing’s household? What might that tell you about Rev. Ewing’s family?

Review Ratio and Percentage

6. Write down the percentage formula:
7. (Teacher-Led Problem) I have a group of 300 students and 7 of them are kindergarten. What percentage of the students are in kindergarten?
8. (Practice Problem) I have a group of 300 students and 20 of them are in first grade. What percentage of the students are in first grade?

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Student Practice: Slavery and Abolition in Philadelphia

1. In 1770, there were 1,375 slaves in Philadelphia and the total population was approximately 19,000 people total. What percentage of the population was enslaved persons?
2. In 1800, there were 85 slaves in Philadelphia and the total population was 81,009. What percentage of the population was enslaved?
3. 1790, there were 373 slaves in Philadelphia and 2,099 free blacks in Philadelphia. What percentage of the African Americans in Philadelphia were free persons? (Hint: find the total black population first)
4. In 1810, there were 8 slaves and 10,514 free blacks in Philadelphia. What percentage of the blacks in Philadelphia were enslaved persons?
5. In 1820, there were 7 slaves, 11,844 free blacks, and the total population was 137,097 in Philadelphia. What percentage of the people in Philadelphia were black?
6. Looking at the numbers for questions 3 and 4, why do you think the percentage of free blacks increased?
7. On the following pages, use the table of information to draw a graph of the total population in Philadelphia over time, and a graph of the slave population in Philadelphia over time.

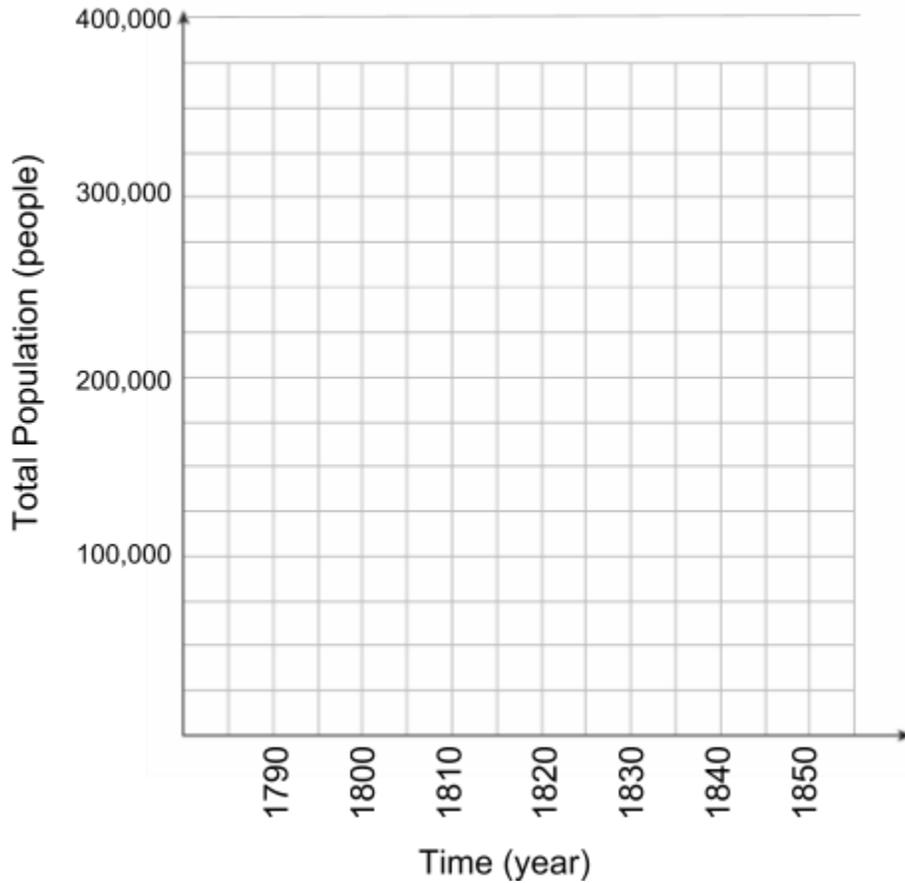
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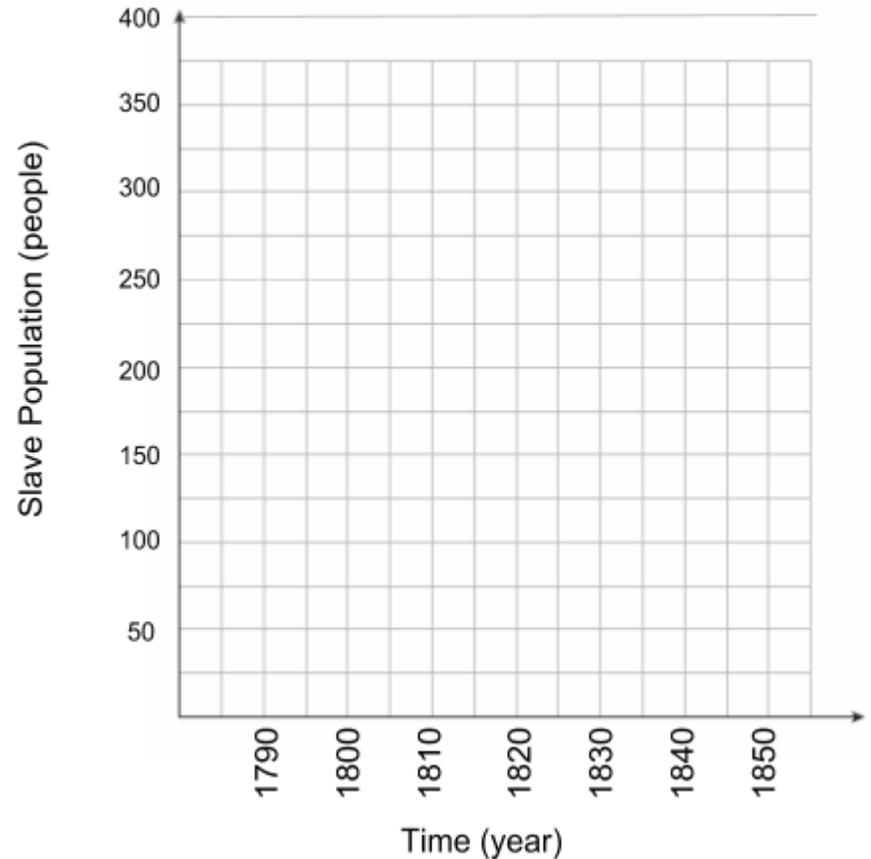
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Year	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850
Total Population	54,388	81,009	111,210	137,097	188,797	258,037	408,762
Slave Population	373	85	8	7	20	2	0

Total Population of Philadelphia



Slave Population of Philadelphia



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8. Compare the trend lines of the two graphs. Do they have similar trends or different trends?

9. Why do the trend lines mean?

10. Pennsylvania's Gradual Abolition Act of 1780 was the first legislative emancipation in history, but it didn't immediately free slaves. It led to three key things:
 - a. No slaves were immediately freed, slaves continued to be property of their slaveholder,
 - b. Any child born to a slave mother in Pennsylvania after the 1780 would be freed 28 years after they were born,
 - c. No more slaves could be brought into the state on a permanent basis. If a slave from another state was brought into Pennsylvania and they stayed for six months without leaving, they would be released from slavery.

How do you think the Gradual Abolition Act impacted the graphs above?

11. How do you think the Gradual Abolition Act of 1780 would have impacted lives for slaves at the Chew house in Germantown that came with the Chew family from their plantations in other states?

12. What challenges do you think the government had in completing the first census?