

Name: _____ Date: _____

Northerners Had Slaves Too

The attitude towards slavery in the North was very mixed. Not every Northerner believed slaves should be free. Even among those who wanted to abolish slavery, many didn't think Blacks deserved equal rights.

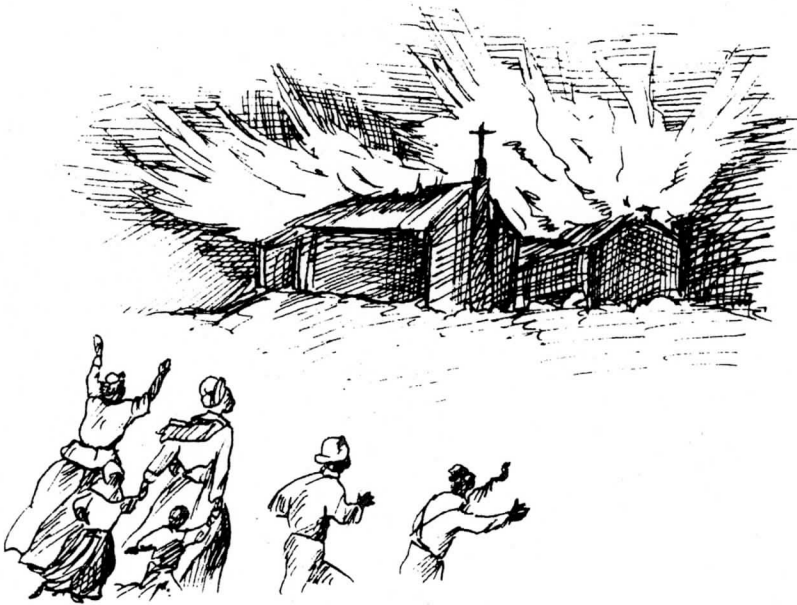
Slavery was common in all the Northern American colonies for a time. The Dutch in New Amsterdam imported slaves to work on their farms in the Hudson Valley. According to Dutch law, children of freed slaves were still legally slaves.

Other Europeans who settled in the New World kept slaves to work in their homes, on farms, and in businesses. Most shipowners and sea captains involved in the slave trade were Northerners. Several Northern coastal cities became centers for slave traffic. Slavery existed in every American colony until the Revolutionary War. Vermont was the first to end slavery in 1777. New York was the last Northern state to abolish slavery in 1817.

Even after slavery became illegal in the North, the lives of free Blacks living there were very difficult. Whites, especially recent immigrants, feared Blacks would take over jobs, leaving them unemployed. Mobs rampaged through areas where Blacks lived and worked in Ohio and New York. Many Blacks fled to Canada.

White rioters in Philadelphia in 1834 and 1842 destroyed Black churches, attacked Black men and women on the streets, and burned their homes. In some states, federal troops were needed to stop the violence.

Schools that allowed Black students to attend were destroyed in several Northern states. In Canterbury, Connecticut, shop owners refused to sell supplies to a woman who ran a private school that admitted Black girls; her neighbors even tried to poison her well. Finally, she was ordered to close the school and was arrested. The townspeople then destroyed the school building.



On your own paper, answer the following questions.

1. Imagine living in a large Northern city. Mobs of White people are rampaging through your city, attacking Blacks, and destroying their homes. What would you do?
2. If you were a White person living in Canterbury, Connecticut, how would you have felt about the woman who ran the school?