

## Morality in Manufacturing: The Case of Bowen and McNamee

**Historical Thinking Skills Assessed:** Sourcing, Contextualizing

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**Course:** United States History

**Level:** Middle/High

### Task Question: In what ways do personal values influence business decisions?

#### Learning Outcome:

Students should be able to evaluate evidence in order to reach conclusions about a historical event.

#### Standards Alignment:

##### Common Core Standards for Literacy for History/Social Studies

- RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- WHST.6-8.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

##### National History Standards

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Standard 4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period

##### College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards

- D2.Civ.10.6-8 Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.
- D2.His.1.6-8 Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- D2.His.4.6-8 Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D4.2.6-8 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

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#### Materials:

- RS#01: Document A: Advertisement from *The New York Journal of Commerce*, 1850
- RS#02: Document B: Excerpts from the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (Adapted)
- RS#03: Document C: "Read and Ponder the Fugitive Slave Law!" Broadside, 1850 (Excerpt)
- RS#04: Document D: American Cotton Production, 1800-1860
- RS#05: Chronology Graphic Organizer
- RS#06: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Sourcing, Contextualizing

#### Background for the Teacher:

The Second Great Awakening was a religious revival movement that took place in America during the early part of the nineteenth century. It encompassed many Protestant religious groups, with the general theme surrounding the belief that there would be a second coming of Christ within one thousand years.

In preparation, it was posited that religious values and morals must be revisited in order to deliver a just and moral society to God. Unlike Calvinism, the religious leaders of this movement believed that humans were capable of rectifying sins through moral action. This movement became a springboard for the abolitionists, who believed themselves morally obligated by God to rid the nation of slavery. It was a very popular movement in the Northern churches, helping to fuel animosity with the Southern states.

As a part of the Compromise of 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act. This law forced all runaway slaves to be returned to their owners. Many in the North rebelled against the law, and some states enacted laws designed to circumvent the federal statute. The abolitionist movement gained greater traction as a result, which led in part to the publication of the anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

New York City was (and remains) one of the garment manufacturing and distribution centers in the world. Bowen and McNamee were silk manufacturers in New York City and were members of a larger group of garment merchants. They refused to sign a call to participate in a meeting to endorse the new Fugitive Slave Law and were vilified by other businesses. Southern states exported large amounts of cotton to New York and merchants feared backlash from these states if they opposed the Fugitive Slave Act.

Bowen was a deeply religious man whose beliefs were grounded during the Second Great Awakening. He owned property in Connecticut, where he befriended the abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Beecher's sister, Harriett Beecher Stowe would later write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

#### Sources:

Bowen, E. A. 1897. *Lineage of the Bowens of Woodstock, Connecticut*. Riverside Press.

Scott, D. *Evangelicalism, Revivalism, and the Second Great Awakening*. National Humanities Center. Online, available: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nevanrev.htm>

## Procedures

### Context Setting:

- Have students examine the ad from the *Journal of Commerce* (Document A).
- Pose the following questions:
  - Who wrote this? When? What is this publication? What kind of document is this?
  - Who were the authors? What kind of business did they own?
  - What is its message or purpose?
  - Why do you think they wrote this?

Pose the question: *In what ways do personal values influence business decisions?* Ask the students to share examples from today or from the past.

### Document Analysis:

- Before beginning document analysis, explain to students that their goal is to determine why Bowen and McNamee would be motivated to write this letter to the newspaper.
- Place students into pairs, or in groups of 3-4 depending upon class size.
- Distribute Documents A-D (Resource Sheets 1-4) and instruct students to use the Fugitive Slave Act Graphic Organizer (Resource Sheet 5) to record evidence from the sources.

### Corroborating Evidence and Constructing Interpretations – Close Analysis:

In their groups, have students discuss the following questions:

- What was the essential premise of the Fugitive Slave Act?
- Why would some textile merchants in New York be supportive of the Fugitive Slave Act?

- What might cause merchants to be resistant to endorse the Fugitive Slave Act?
- In what ways do you see connections among these documents?

**Thoughtful Application:**

Create an **annotated illustration** depicting the situation among textile merchants in New York City. Focus on the conflict between the needs of the merchants and the unpopularity among many Northern citizens about the Fugitive Slave Act. Your illustration should include evidence from the sources in the form of text to support the various illustrations.

When scoring this activity, use the *Sourcing* and *Contextualizing* sections of the ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric (Resource Sheet #06). Look for textual evidence to illustrate that students understand details about the various aspects of the issue, as well as the larger context as it relates to the morality of slavery and the reality of economics.

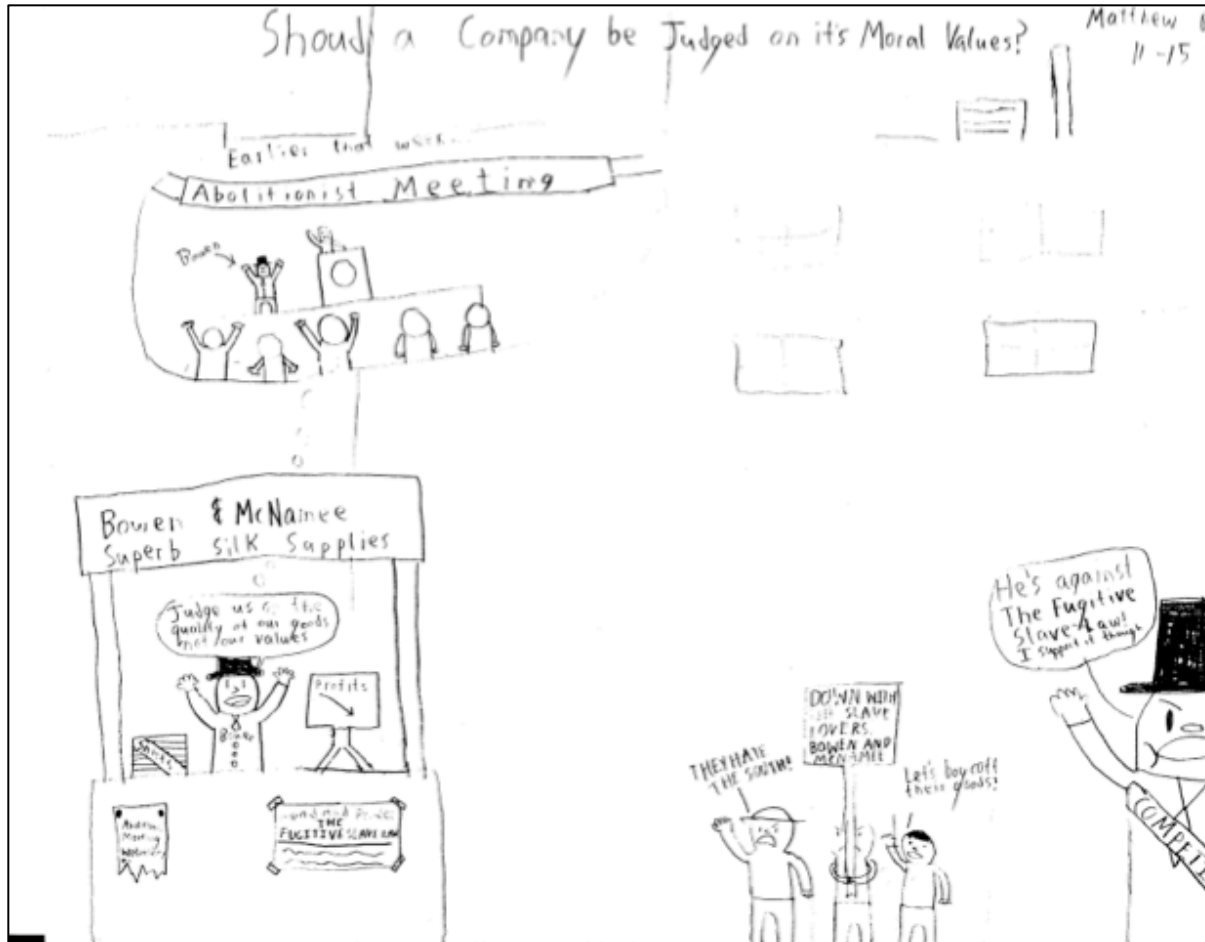
**Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 1**



**Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 2**



**Thoughtful Application: Student Sample 3**



## Resource Sheet #01

### Document A: Advertisement from *The New York Journal of Commerce*, 1850

FOR THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

A CARD. — The public, including the “New York Journal of Commerce,” are informed that we are silk merchants and keep an extensive and well-assorted stock of goods, which we offer to responsible buyers on reasonable terms. As individuals, we entertain our own views on the various religious, moral, and political questions of the day, which we are neither afraid nor ashamed to declare on all proper occasions. But we wish it distinctly understood that our goods, and not our principles, are on the market. The attempt to punish us as merchants for the exercise of our liberty as citizens we leave to the judgment of the community.

BOWEN & McNAMEE.

NEW YORK, October 28, 1850.

## Resource Sheet #02

### Document B: Excerpts from the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (Adapted)

#### Section 1

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the persons who have been, or may hereafter be, appointed commissioners **[government officials]**, in virtue of any act of Congress, by the Circuit Courts of the United States, and Who, in consequence of such appointment, are authorized to exercise the powers that any justice of the peace, or other magistrate **[judge]** of any of the United States, may exercise in respect to offenders for any crime or offense against the United States, by arresting, imprisoning, or bailing the same under and by the virtue of the thirty-third section of the act of the twenty-fourth of September seventeen hundred and eighty-nine,...

#### Section 2

*And be it further enacted,* That the Superior Court of each organized Territory of the United States shall have the same power to appoint commissioners to take acknowledgments of bail and affidavits **[sworn statement]**, and to take depositions **[reports]** of witnesses in civil causes, which is now possessed by the Circuit Court of the United States; and all commissioners who shall hereafter be appointed for such purposes by the Superior Court of any organized Territory of the United States, shall possess all the powers, and exercise all the duties, conferred by law ...

#### Section 3

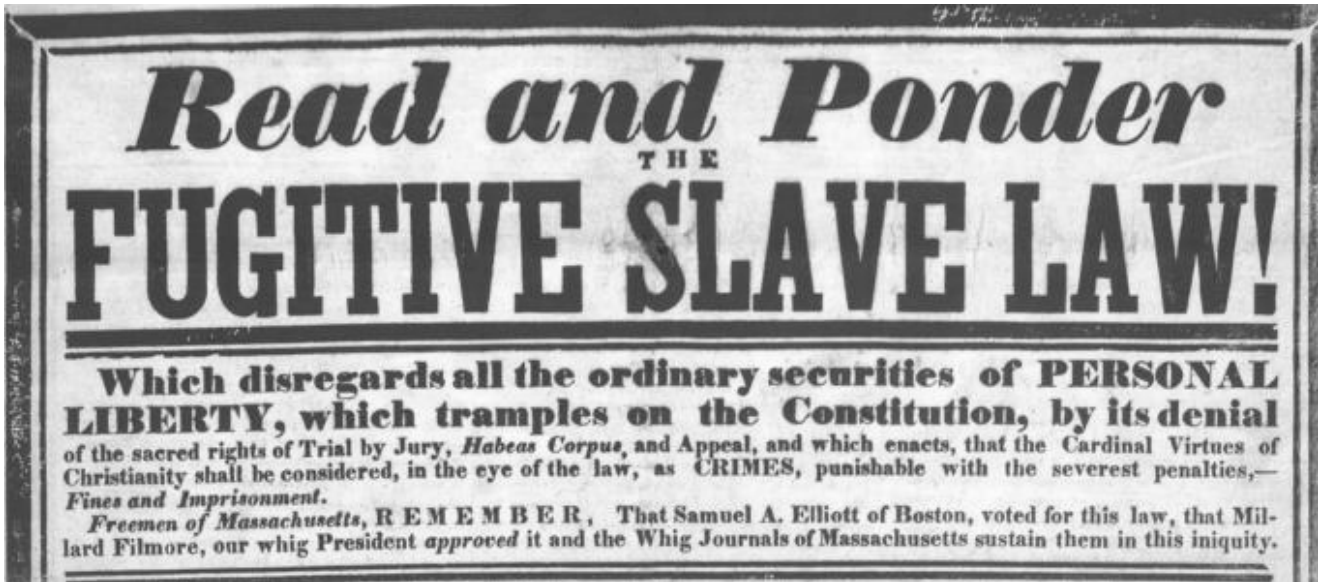
*And be it further enacted,* That the Circuit Courts of the United States shall from time to time enlarge the number of the commissioners, with a view to afford reasonable facilities to reclaim fugitives **[runaways]** from labor, and to the prompt discharge of the duties imposed by this act.

Source: "An Act to amend, and supplementary to, the Act entitled 'An Act respecting Fugitives from Justice, and Persons escaping from the Service of their Masters,' approved February twelfth, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three." *United States Statutes at Large*, 31<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session. Accessed November 3, 2013. American Memory Project, Library of Congress.

### Resource Sheet #03

## Document C: "Read and Ponder the Fugitive Slave Law!" Broadside (Excerpt) Boston, MA, 1850

This broadside was created in 1850 to attack Boston Congressman Samuel Atkins Elliott, a member of the Whig party, who voted for passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. Eliot served in the House of Representatives for just 7 months.



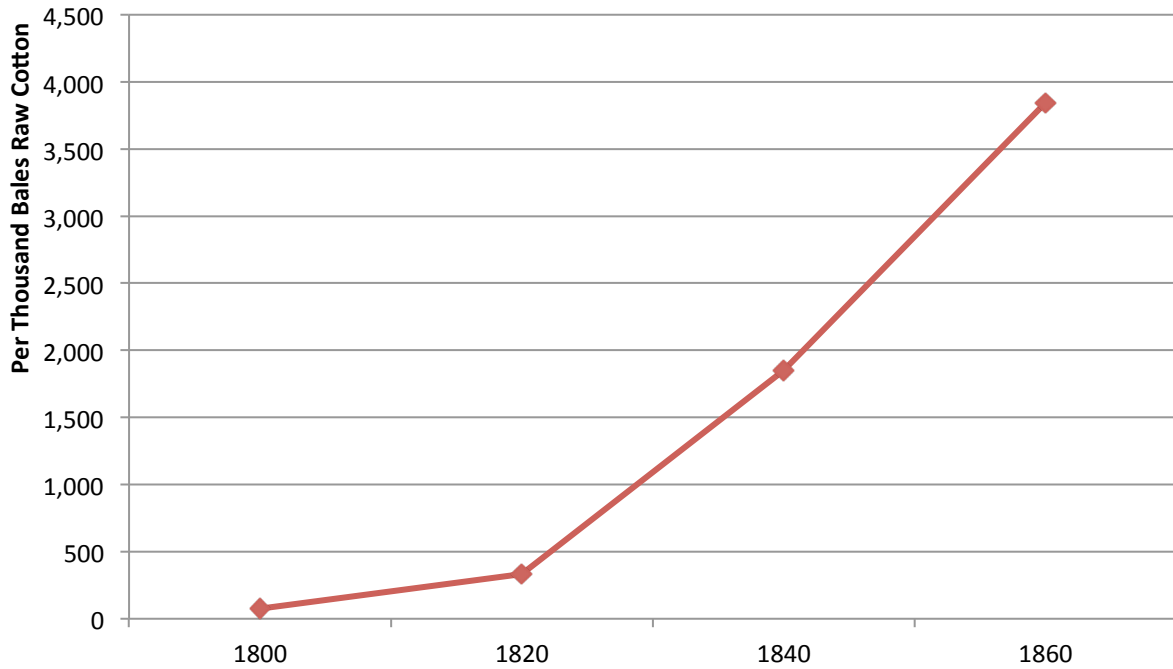
### Transcription:

Read and Ponder the Fugitive Slave Law!, Which disregards all the ordinary securities of PERSONAL LIBERTY, which tramples on the Constitution, by its denial of the sacred rights of Trial by Jury, Habeas Corpus, and Appeal, and which enacts, that the Cardinal Virtues of Christianity shall be considered, in the eye of the law, as CRIMES, punishable with the severest penalties,...



## Resource Sheet #04

### Document D: U.S. Cotton Production, 1800-1860



Year	# Bales of Raw Cotton (1 bale = 500 pounds)
1800	73,000
1820	335,000
1840	1,848,000
1860	3,841,000

Source: "Series E 211-224 – Crop Statistics – Hay and Cotton, Acreage, Production, and Price, 1790 to 1945." *In Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States*, prepared by the Bureau of the Census with the Cooperation of the Social Science Research Council, 109. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949.

**Resource Sheet #05**

**Fugitive Slave Act Graphic Organizer**

**Source A**

Title:  
Date:  
Brief Summary

**Source B**

Title:  
Date:  
Brief Summary

**Source C**

Title:  
Date:  
Brief Summary

**Source D**

Title:  
Date:  
Brief Summary

## Resource Sheet #06

### ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Secondary

	Close-Reading Strategies	Strategies/Procedural Concepts
Criteria	Sourcing	Contextualization
4	<p><b>Identification:</b> Fully understands the meaning and content of sources.</p> <p><b>Attribution:</b> Cites all authors and all original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> Evaluates the reliability of sources based on the author's perspective and when and why they were produced.</p>	<p>Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of sources. Uses that setting to interpret the sources within the historical context as opposed to a present-day mindset.</p>
3	<p><b>Identification:</b> Mostly understands the meaning and content of sources.</p> <p><b>Attribution:</b> Cites most authors and most original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> Examines the reliability of sources based on the author's perspective and when and why they were produced.</p>	<p>Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of the sources. May attempt to interpret sources with a present-day mindset or with a limited application to the historical context.</p>
2	<p><b>Identification:</b> Understands the meaning and content of sources with appropriate scaffolding and support.</p> <p><b>Attribution:</b> Cites some authors and some original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> Attempts to evaluate the reliability of sources.</p>	<p>Attempts to determine the historical setting of sources without fully understanding the historical context.</p>
1	<p><b>Identification:</b> Attempts to understand the meaning and content of sources with appropriate scaffolding and support.</p> <p><b>Attribution:</b> Cites few authors and few original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><b>Perspective:</b> Does not adequately examine reliability.</p>	<p>Demonstrates no attempt to understand the historical setting of sources.</p>