We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....
Source: Data from varied sources including Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 1961.

**THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**

1777-1865

1787 - Northwest Ordinance passed outlawing slavery in the Northwest Territories.

1863 - Emancipation Proclamation outlawed slavery in the states rebelling against the Union.

Note:
The states displaying two dates all passed gradual abolition acts. The first date represents the year gradual abolition acts were passed. The second date indicates when the last slave died or was freed.
Document 3


Speech made by a young African-American in 1819, valedictorian of his New York free school

Why should I strive hard to acquire all the constituents of a man if the prevailing genius of the land admit me not as such, or but in an inferior degree! Pardon me if I feel insignificant and weak... Where are my prospects? To what shall I turn my hand? Shall I be a mechanic? No one will employ me; white boys won't work with me. Shall I be a merchant? No one will have me in his office; white clerks won't associate with me. Drudgery and servitude, then are my prospective portion. Can you be surprised at my discouragement?

Document 4

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...in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you Remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation.

Document 5


The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
Document 6

Source: Northwest Ordinance, 1787.

"Utmost Good Faith" Clause from the Northwest Ordinance, 1787

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress....

Document 7


Letter from three Seneca Indian leaders – Big Tree, Cornplanter, and Half-Town – to President of the United States, George Washington, 1790

When your army entered the country of the Six (Iroquois) Nations, we called you the town destroyer; to this day, when your name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling to the necks of their mothers....

You told us you could crush us to nothing; and you demanded from us a great country.... Our chiefs had felt your power...and they therefore gave up that country.... (W)e ask you to consider calmly – Were the terms dictated to us by your commissioners reasonable and just?....

All the land we have been speaking of belonged to the Six Nations. No part of it ever belonged to the king of England, and he could not give it to you.

Note: The Seneca along with the other Iroquois nations fought on the British side during the Revolution.