

Handout G: Slavery and the Founders

Background: *Slavery was legal in every state at the beginning of the American Revolution, but its impact on the economy of northern states was minimal. Founders in the North were, therefore, more likely to write publicly about the injustices of slavery and the inconsistency between republican ideals and the practice of enslaving human beings. However, even the slave-holding Founders were well aware of those injustices and inconsistencies. Virginians Jefferson, Washington, Madison, and Mason, all of whom wrote powerfully and carried out courageous actions on behalf of human liberty, and all of whom criticized slavery, were slave-holders.*

Directions: Use this table as a reference when studying the Founders.

Slaveholders* Among Some Prominent Founders

Name	State	Attended Philadelphia Convention?
Richard Bassett	Delaware	Yes
George Read	Delaware	Yes
Button Gwinnett	Georgia	No
Charles Carroll	Maryland	No
Daniel Carroll	Maryland	Yes
Samuel Chase	Maryland	No
Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer	Maryland	Yes
Luther Martin	Maryland	Yes
John F. Mercer	Maryland	Yes
John Hancock	Massachusetts	No
John Jay	New York	No
William Blount	North Carolina	Yes

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Name	State	Attended Philadelphia Convention?
William Davie	North Carolina	Yes
Alexander Martin	North Carolina	Yes
Richard Dobbs Spaight	North Carolina	Yes
Benjamin Franklin	Pennsylvania	Yes
<i>Benjamin Rush</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>	<i>No</i>
Pierce Butler	South Carolina	Yes
Charles Pinckney	South Carolina	Yes
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney	South Carolina	Yes
<i>Edward Rutledge</i>	<i>South Carolina</i>	<i>No</i>
John Rutledge	South Carolina	Yes
John Blair	Virginia	Yes
<i>Patrick Henry</i>	<i>Virginia</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Thomas Jefferson</i>	<i>Virginia</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Richard Henry Lee</i>	<i>Virginia</i>	<i>No</i>
James Madison	Virginia	Yes
George Mason	Virginia	Yes
Edmund Randolph	Virginia	Yes
George Washington	Virginia	Yes
George Wythe	Virginia	Yes

***All of those listed in the table owned slaves at some point in their lives**