



Educator Resource

# Tredegar Iron Works: Industrial Slavery

Dates & Eras	Pre-War, The Civil War
Grades	5-12
Themes	Slavery, African Americans, Homefront
Standards	VS.1, VS.7, USI.1, USI.9, VUS.6, VUS.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

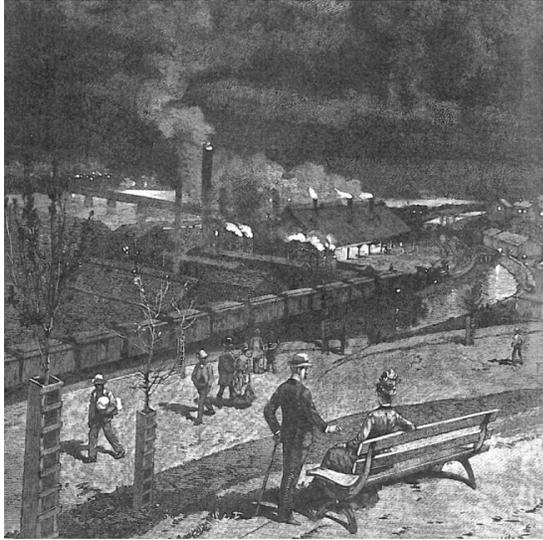


Image 1 (left). A View of Tredegar Iron Works from Gambles Hill. From Harper's Weekly, January 15, 1887. *Nathan Madison*. Source: Madison, Nathan V., *Tredegar Iron Works: Richmond's Foundry on the James*, p. 98.

Image 2 (right). Richmond, Va. Photograph of the view of the Tredegar Iron Works, with footbridge to Neilson's Island, *Alexander Gardner*, 1865. Source: Library of Congress.

## **History Overview**

The Tredegar Iron Works was established in Richmond, Virginia in 1837 by Francis Brown Deane Jr., and later bought by Joseph Reid Anderson in 1847, who continued to run the iron works during and after the Civil War. During the war, this became the biggest iron works of the Confederacy. Early in Anderson's time as operator, he took up a practice that was taking root in the counties and started utilizing enslaved labor for industrial purposes. Believing it to be cheaper to rent slave labor than to pay workers, Anderson also used it as a bulwark against "unlawful combinations" or labor unions as there was no threat of strikes from the enslaved workers. The Tredegar Iron Works company owned several enslaved workers, rented others from local owners, and Anderson himself owned as many as 28 enslaved workers, who he leased to the company. One such enslaved worker was Emmanuel Quivers, who worked as a foreman before he saved enough to buy freedom for himself and his family in 1852. The percentage of enslaved workers at Tredegar Iron Works rose from 10% before the war to almost 50% during the war as white men were drafted into service. By November of 1864, 200 enslaved people worked at the Tredegar site and several hundred more worked in the furnaces outside of the city.

## Artifacts

### I. Table:

Enslaved Workers Employed at the Tredegar Iron Works, 1838-1860, and at Armory Iron Works, 1848-1858.

Image Source: Dew, Charles B., *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works*, p. 27.

TABLE 1. Slaves Employed at the Tredegar Iron Works, 1838-1860, and at the Armory Iron Works, 1848-1858

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tredegar Works</i>	<i>Armory Works</i>	<i>Total</i>
1838	18	—	18
1839	19	—	19
1840	14	—	14
1841	5	—	5
1842	24	—	24
1843	18	—	18
1844	18	—	18
1845	24	—	24
1846	40	—	40
1847	41	—	41
1848	78	39	117
1849	63	42	105
1850	66	34	100
1851	57	5	62
1852	57	5	62
1853	47	—	47
1854	64	3	67
1855	72	26	98
1856	62	23	85
1857	60	21	81
1858	54	20	74
1859	67	—	67
1860	80	—	80

*Sources:* City of Richmond, Personal Property Tax Rolls, 1838-1860, VSL; manuscript slave schedules, Henrico County, Va., 1850 and 1860, in "Federal Population Censuses, 1840-1880."

## 2. Newspaper clippings:

### A. From the Richmond Dispatch, 7/24/1861, p. 2

LEFT the Tredegar Iron Works, about three weeks ago, a NEGRO MAN, calling himself "CHARLES BLACKFORD," the property of Mrs. F. G. Skinner, Culpeper county, and hired by us from her agent, Mr. E. D. Eacho, of this city. Charles is about 5 feet 6 inches high, well built, very dark skin, looks confused when spoken to. He has been seen once or twice about the city, but in all probability has gone to the country.

A liberal reward will be paid for his delivery to these works.

— J. R. ANDERSON & CO.

### B. From the Richmond Dispatch, 3/21/1862, p. 3, c. 2

WANTED – Forty NEGROES.

To be employed at Tredegar Iron Works, and fifty to sixty to be employed at the Iron Mines, in Botetourt county.

— J. R. ANDERSON & CO.

### C. From the Richmond Sentinel, 7/9/1864, p. 1

*Captured.* – J. Evans, Thomas Jones, John Paul, George Smith and T.A. Howall, workmen at the Tredegar Works, were, on yesterday, captured near Bottom's Bridge, while attempting to escape to the Yankees. They were committed to Castle Thunder, where it is very hot and there is no ice water.

## Suggested Questions

1. Why did J.R. Anderson of Tredegar Iron Works want to employ enslaved workers?
2. What would have happened if Evans, Jones, Paul, Smith and Howall (Artifact 2C) would have "escape(d) to the Yankees?"
3. In what ways did the Civil War impact industrial slavery?

## **Suggested Activities**

1. Before reviewing the artifacts, discuss with your students what they envision when they think about slavery. What do they think daily life looked like for enslaved workers? What do they think daily life looked like for enslaved workers in cities? After reviewing the artifacts, have students go back to these questions. Have their responses changed? What has been added or redefined in their understanding of the lives of enslaved workers? What other forms might slavery have taken before it was abolished?

2. Read the Richmond Dispatch clipping from 7/24/1861 about Charles Blackford (Artifact 2A) with the students and ask them to call out words or sections of the clipping that stand out to them, taking some time to discuss the language used to describe Blackford. How does this ad make us think about Blackford? Ask students to use these clippings and any others they may find to write an essay reflecting on the question – ‘What role did language and media play in perpetuating slavery?’

3. Go through the Table listing the number of enslaved workers at Tredegar and Armory Iron Works. Ask students to think about patterns they may notice in the number of enslaved workers employed over the years. What are the differences in the number of enslaved workers employed at Tredegar vs Armory Iron Works? What might be some reasons for these trends? What can this table tell us about the role of industrial slavery in American manufacturing and economy? Ask students to annotate their observations and inferences on the table.