* **1619** English settlers in Virginia purchase 20 Africans from a Dutch ship. The Africans were sold as indentured servants, not slaves. The distinction being an indentured servant may ultimately become free for working for some number of years. It was not long before all Africans arriving were treated as slaves, bought and sold into a lifetime of slavery for them and their descendants.
* **February 1688** The first organized protest against slavery in the new world was drafted by a group of Quakers in Germantown, PA. Known as the Germantown Protest, it argued that Christians should do as they would want to be done to them, that slavery was essentially theft as you were buying something stolen and that adultery is wrong yet slave traders/owners forced adultery on men and women by breaking up marriages when they resold husbands and wives to different owners. How could as Christians, could such actions be condoned?
* **1777** Vermont, an American colony and still not a state, is the first government entity to abolish slavery.
* **1780** Pennsylvania became the first state to abolish slavery with a laws calling for gradual abolition.
* **1783** Massachusetts abolishes slavery and grants voting rights to blacks and Native Americans.
* **1787** Congress passes the Three-Fifths Clause stating that each slave is to be counted as three-fifths of a person for calculating representation in Congress. This act strengthens the power in the House of Representatives for slave states.
* **February 1793** Congress passes the first Fugitive Slave Act. The act allowed for the recovery of runaway slaves and authorized the arrest or seizure of fugitives. The act also created a fine of $500 for any person who aided a fugitive
* **March 1794** Eli Whitney receives patent for the Cotton Gin. The machine greatly increased the production of cleaned cotton thus making cotton a profitable crop for the first time and increasing the need and production value for slaves.
* **March 1807** Congress passes law banning the importation of any new slaves into the United States effective January 1, 1808.
* **1831** January - William Lloyd Garrison publishes the first issue of the abolitionist journal, the Liberator.

August - The Nat Turner Rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. Over 60 whites were killed in the uprising.

Turner was on the run for or nearly two months, but was eventually caught and hanged.

* **1834** Slavery abolished throughout the British Empire.
* **1838** Lead by black abolitionist Robert Purvis, the Underground Railroad is formally organized.
* **1845** Former slave, Frederick Douglass, publishes his autobiography - Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.
* **1849** Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery in Maryland. She reportedly returned to the South 19 times and brought out more than 300 slaves.
* **1850** September - Congress implements several measures forming the Compromise of 1850. The measures included California joining the Union as a free state, the territories of New Mexico and Utah are organized with no restrictions on slavery, slave trading is abolished in the District of Columbia effective January 1851 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 is modified and strengthened to allow slaveholders to retrieve slaves in northern states and free territories.
* **1852** Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin as a response to the pro-slavery movement.
* **1854** The Kansas-Nebraska Act passes Congress and thus overturns the Missouri Compromise opening the Northern territory to slavery. Both sides begin to send settlers into the areas in an effort to influence the future status of these areas.
* **May 1856** Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner delivers a speech attacking slavery supporters in the Senate. He singles out Senator Andrew Butler of South Carolina in his speech. Two days later, South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks, Butler's nephew, attacks Sumner on the Senate floor and beats him with a cane. The House did not expel or censure Brooks for the attack, Sumner took three years to recover.
* **1857** March - Dred Scott Decision - The Supreme Court rules in Scott v. Sandford that blacks are not U.S. citizens, and slaveholders have the right to take existing slaves into free areas of the county.
* **1859** October - John Brown attacks Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Robert E. Lee, then a Federal Army regular leads the troops and captures Brown. John Brown and two of the black members of his band were hanged.
* **1860 November** - Abraham Lincoln is elected president. Lincoln received 40% of the popular vote and won 59% of the Electoral votes. He was not even on the ballot in the deep south. **Decembe**r - On December 20th South Carolina convention passes ordinance of secession thus seceding from the Union.
* **February 1861** February 9th - Jefferson Davis unanimously elected President of the Confederacy by delegates to the Montgomery convention.
* **March 1861** March 6th - The Confederate Congress authorizes an army of volunteers.

**April 1861 April 12th, 4:30 am -** South Carolina's Fort Sumter is fired upon by the Confederates - The War Begins.