QCB2d Identify the major characteristics of the abolition movement in the antebellum period, its achievements, failures, and Southern opposition to it.

Name:______________________________________________________________

My 5 Supporting Questions

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Answers

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Abolitionism

http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h477.html

The abolitionist movement called for the end of the institution of slavery and had existed in one form or another since colonial times; the early case had been stated most consistently by the Quakers. Most Northern states abolished the institution after the War for Independence, reacting to moral concerns and economic unfeasibility.

The movement gained new momentum in the early 19th century as many critics of slavery hardened their views and rejected their previous advocacy of gradualism (the slow and steady progress towards the goal of freedom for slaves) and colonization (finding land in Africa for former slaves). As the movement grew and became more formally organized, it sparked
opposition in both the North and the South; Northern mill owners depended upon slave-produced cotton every bit as much as the Southern plantation owners.

Undeterred, many abolitionists defied the original Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, as well as the later Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and actively sought to assist runaway slaves in their quest for freedom, most notably through the auspices of the Underground Railroad.

Abolitionist leaders included such figures as William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and William Lloyd Still.

Garrison adopted a militant tone which differed strikingly from the more timid proposals of prior abolitionists, who generally favored "colonization" of blacks away from white society. Garrison demanded the immediate end of slavery without compensation to slaveowners and equal rights within mainstream society for everyone, regardless of race.

Garrison’s efforts led to the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. He wrote its initial declaration, which appeared on December 14, 1833, reading in part:

The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it, is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body — to the products of his own labor — to the protection of law — and to the common advantages of society. It is piracy to buy or steal a native African, and subject him to servitude. Surely the sin is as great to enslave an American as an African.

Within five years, the society had 1,350 local chapters. The success of the abolition movement in the North, and the large amount of propaganda that it generated, enraged the South. South Carolina took the step of declaring that

Resolved, that the formation of the abolition societies, and the acts and doings of certain fanatics calling themselves Abolitionists, in the nonslaveholding states of this Confederacy, are in direct violation of the obligations of the compact of the Union, dissocial and incendiary in the extreme.

They further petitioned the federal government to have the post office stop the distribution of abolitionist literature. Congress decided that this would be unconstitutional, but in practice it was not unusual for Southern postmasters to prevent the delivery of offending material.

After the Reverend Elijah Lovejoy, editor of an Abolitionist newspaper in St. Louis, moved it in 1836 to Alton, Illinois, the citizens of Alton destroyed it on three occasions. On the fourth, on November 7, 1837, the mob murdered Lovejoy. His associate Edward Beecher, brother of Henry Ward Beecher, wrote in the narrative of the Alton riots, which appeared in 1838, “The true spirit of intolerance now stood exposed. Events were so ordered by the Providence of God as to strip off every disguise. It now became plain that all attempts to conciliate and to discuss were vain; and nothing remained but to resist or to submit.”

One of the early leaders of the Abolitionist movement was Theodore Weld, who helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, and whose 1839 work, Slavery As It Is, inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to write Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

Although some in the Abolitionist Movement, especially Garrison, felt that women should play a prominent role, that position was resented by many. When in 1840, Garrison and his followers elected a woman to the American Anti-Slavery Society’s business committee, a split in the organizations resulted. The departing members explained themselves:
We, the Undersigned, members and delegates of the American Anti-Slavery Society, as a duty and, therefore, a right, hereby protest against the principle assumed by a majority of persons representing said Society at its present meeting, that women have the right of originating, debating, and voting on questions which come before said Society, and are eligible to its various offices;

It is interesting to note that abolitionists anticipated an argument later used by the Confederacy. Just as Southerners eventually concluded that their institution of slavery could not be protected under the Constitution while the number of free states grew, abolitionists argued that since slavery could not be abolished under the existing Constitution, it was the obligation of the north to secede! In 1843, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society endorsed disunion by a vote of 59 to 21. They argued that no principled abolitionist could either vote or hold office under the Constitution as it then existed. In 1845, the group published a pamphlet to that effect with an introduction by Wendell Phillips.

African-American Abolitionists


The abolition of slavery was the cause of free African-Americans.

Once the colonization effort was defeated, free African-Americans in the North became more active in the fight against slavery. They worked with white abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips to spread the word. They developed publications and contributed money. Many, such as Robert Purvis, dedicated their lives to freeing individual slaves from bondage. Although many pledged their lives to the cause, three African-American abolitionists surpassed others in impact. They were David Walker, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth.

While Garrison is considered the prime organizer of the abolitionist movement, David Walker published his Appeal two years before The Liberator. In 1829, Walker declared slavery a malignancy, calling for its immediate termination. He cited the four evils causing the greatest harm to African Americans as slavery, ignorance, Christianity, and colonization. Even white abolitionists decried the violent nature of his text. In the South, an award was raised for his capture, and nine months after publishing his Appeal he died mysteriously. Walker originated radical abolitionism.

The best known African American abolitionist was Frederick Douglass. Douglass escaped from slavery when he was 21 and moved to Massachusetts. As a former house servant, Douglass was able to read and write. In 1841, he began to speak to crowds about what it was like to be enslaved. His talents as an orator and writer led people to question whether or not he had actually been born a slave.

All this attention put him at great risk. Fearful that his master would claim him and return him to bondage, Douglass went to England, where he continued to fight for the cause. A group of
abolitionists eventually bought his freedom and he was allowed to return to the United States. He began publishing an anti-slavery newspaper known as the *North Star*. Douglass served as an example to all who doubted the ability of African Americans to function as free citizens.

Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in New York, but was freed when the state outlawed the practice in 1827. She was born Isabella Baumfree, but changed her name because she believed God wanted her to travel about the country and spread the word. Truth was one of the best known abolitionists, renowned for her stirring oratory. Also concerned with women's rights, she joined the campaign for female suffrage. When slavery was ended, she continued to fight for equality by protesting segregation laws.

**Antebellum Period**
http://www.historynet.com/antebellum-period

**The Second Awakening**

The Second Awakening was a religious revival that affected the entire country from about 1790 to the 1840s. It inspired the beginnings of the abolitionist movement in upstate New York. The basic theology popularized by the movement stated that individuals had a direct relationship with God that was unmediated by a church officials and that human dignity required freedom of will. Church membership increased, particularly among Methodists and Baptists following revivals and tent meetings, which had their greatest attendance on the frontier. Many challenged traditional beliefs and founded new denominations, including the Mormons, the Shakers, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Unitarian Universalists. This rise in spirituality intensified evangelism in America, giving rise to a shift in morality and the advent of growing abolitionist and temperance movements.

**Pre-Civil War Slave Rebellions**

Slaves in the U.S. resisted their bondage through many passive forms of resistance, such as damaging equipment, working slowly, or keeping their culture and religious beliefs alive, although that often required secrecy. They also carried out open rebellions, risking everything for freedom. Several plots and rebellions occurred in antebellum America, notably Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800 in Richmond, Virginia; an uprising in Louisiana in 1811; and Denmark Vesey's conspiracy, which was uncovered in 1822 in Charleston, South Carolina. One of the bloodiest rebellions in U.S. history occurred in August 1829 when Nat Turner organized a slave rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. About 60 whites were killed and, after the rebellion was put down, the state executed 56 slaves accused of being part of it. Militias and mobs formed in the paranoid chaos that followed and anywhere from 100 to 200 innocent slaves were killed in the aftermath. In response to these rebellions, slave codes and laws that limited slaves' movements and their freedom to gather in groups tightened considerably. In spite of this, plots and actual rebellions in slave-holding states continued into and through the Civil War. In October 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a group of followers in a raid to capture the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), in hopes of arming a general slave
uprising. The raid failed and Brown and most of his band were executed, but when Northern abolitionists made him into a martyr, it fed Southern fears that the North wanted to wage a war of extermination on Southern whites. John Brown’s Raid is considered one of the significant milestones on the road to the American Civil War.