1. How do these documents help us understand the lives of enslaved people?

These documents help us understand different view on slavery from different perspectives though Slaves and their slave owners. We can see the duality as they have contradicting stories and ideas of what slavery was. In “Solomon Northup Describes a Slave Market, 1841” The slaves are taking to a salesroom in which they are picked and prodded at to be bought. The author compares this process to the process of a jokey examining a horse. The owners of the slaves made them “Look Smart” trying to get them to look appealing for sale. This makes the Slaves appear to be subhuman, treating them as livestock.

In the document “Mary Polk Branch remembers plantation life, 1912” the author describes Slaves singing and dancing as happiness instead of coping or as a sign of humanity. Also describing the nurses as Mammy and the Older slaves referred to as uncle or aunt. She has convinced herself that her slaves were “Family” instead of property, ignoring the obvious imbalance power dynamic happening. When this woman was offered freedom at an older age, she did not accept the freedom. The author sees this as a sign of building a connection. But she may have been worried about living on her own at an older age or being forced into slavery again by a more ruthless owner.

1. What do they suggest about seeking freedom in the North?

Regarding the underground railroad it shows that many slaves will risk their lives and leave there family’s behind for safety in the north. The story’s show the desperation they go through and their regrets of leaving their families. Just for a chance of freedom. One example is a mother who has left their children for a chance of freedom, and is anxious about her kids, and will do almost anything to get in contact with them. Describing the sacrifices this woman went to for the possibility of freedom.

However, their journey to the north did not always end well using “Charlotte Forten complains of racism in the North, 1855” We can see that even though slaves made it to the north they were still sent back when found. Even though the northern states did not believe in slavery, they still indirectly supported it by acknowledging the cruel requests of the south. And still those who made it experienced social isolation as society was still extremely racist towards African Americans. This is seen when the girl in school talks about her colleagues and how differently she is treated in school and in public. Racism is socially taught in public places and is the norm.