

**Your topic:** An Analytical Essay on Harriet Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'

**Your topic's description:** How did this narrative affect the national debate concerning slavery? Did the narrative become a valuable means to assert enslaved individuals' strength of character and resolve to destroy slavery in America? Do you think it was successful in arousing northern whites' outrage and convince them to support to the abolitionist cause?

**Your desired style of citation:** MLA

**Your educational level:** School

**Paper style** Essay

**Word count** 500

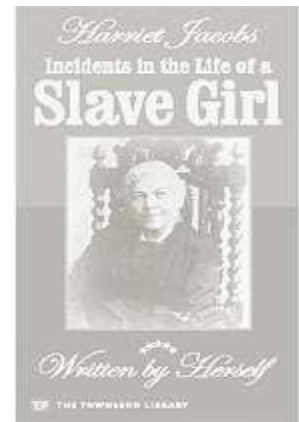
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### Harriet Jacobs's Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

“Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” is a narrative written by Harriet Jacobs in 1861. This narrative provides a different, more pragmatic, viewpoint on slave experience than that expressed in the typical “daring” male narrative.

It is fact that the influence of this narrative on the national debate concerning slavery is notable. From a literary point of view, Jacobs’s autobiographical narrative is the most extensive and powerful customs in African American literature and civilization. Up to a time of Depression period, these narratives outnumbered books composed by African Americans. A few classic writings, like most influential 19<sup>th</sup> century novel “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl”, accept the influence directly of the slave narrative. Narratives of slavery and their imaginary descendants have contributed a vital part in national debates regarding slavery, and American recognition that have challenged the moral sense and the chronological awareness of the U.S. from the beginning time.

Slave narratives in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were a significant means of developing a debate between the community of whites and blacks concerning slavery and liberty. Jacobs’s slave narrative is the most influential narrative of the antebellum period were prepared to make clear to white reviewers regarding the ground facts of slavery as an organization and the humanity of black community as human beings deserving of complete human rights (Jacobs,

111-122). Even though frequently dissolved as mere antislavery misinformation, the extensive consumption of this narrative in the 19<sup>th</sup> century United States and Britain and their ongoing standing in literature and chronological curricula in education organizations today testify to the influence of this narrative, then and now, to stimulate debate amongst the readers, mainly on questions of social equity, race, and the importance of liberty.

“Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” became Jacobs’s self-defining text for all the America, as well as offered the first thoroughly, matter-of-fact, unapologetic, non-propagandizing portrayals of what the life of slave was really like. He was energetically engaged with the movement of abolition prior to the beginning of the Civil War. Throughout the war she employed her celebrity to funding for black displaced persons. Following the war, she put great efforts to enhance the situations of the recently-freed slaves (Jacobs, 111-122). With the great efforts of Jacobs, her slave narrative became a valuable means to assert enslaved individuals' strength of character and resolve to destroy slavery.

In my opinion, in the South and later a free person in the North, due to her experiences as a slave, Jacobs was able and successful to gain the needed social and cultural experience to make her aware of how she could convince Northern whites people mainly women to support the Abolitionist movement. Jacobs knew that Northern white women reading domestic fiction had the influence to sway their husband’s opinions involving slavery issues and white men had the power to make changes. Using her understanding of the social institutions of the times, she tells her story with a cautiousness not to offend her white audience while still establishing herself as a trustworthy source of information. Establishing the sympathy and understanding of a female audience of the 19<sup>th</sup> century began with the reader’s viewing her as a woman more similar to themselves than different (Sheen and Robert, 261-265).

In conclusion, the slave narrative of Harriet Jacobs is one of the greatest and literary influential efforts to destroy the slavery in America. This Incidents' originality would have had leastwise two effects, first, a recognition between Jacobs and the readers, who would hence struggle for the elimination of slavery, and next, a model of narrative for future women writers.

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**Works Cited**

Jacobs, John S. 2000. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Published by Penguin Books. ISBN 0140437959, 9780140437959. 111-122.

Sheena, Gillespie and Robert, Becker. 2004. Cross Cultures. Published by Pearson Longman. ISBN 0321213181, 9780321213181. 261-265.

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