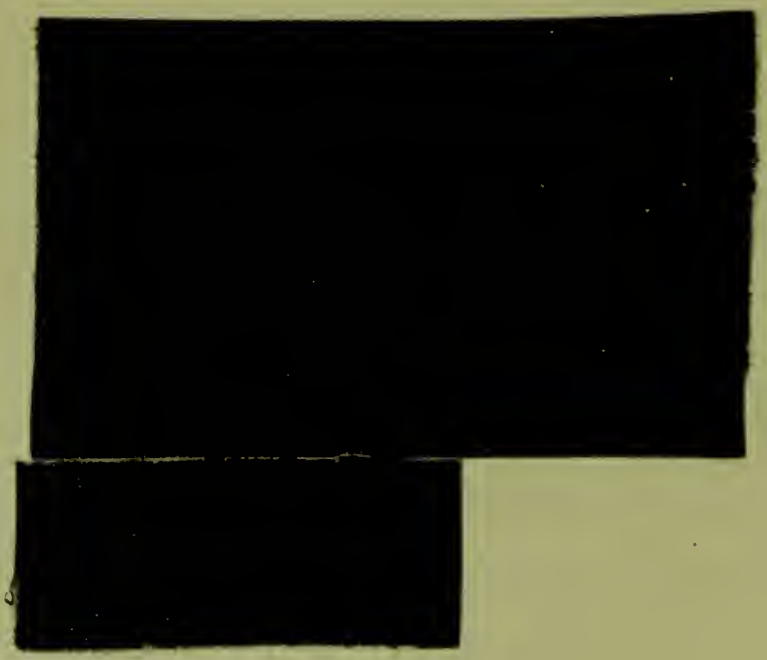
THE BLACK MAN IN AMERICA 1791-1861

by Florence Jackson

Illustrated with contemporary drawings and photographs



The Black Man in America

1791-1861

GINNING COTTON BY STEAM

The Black Man in America 1791–1861

by Florence Jackson

illustrated with photographs and contemporary drawings

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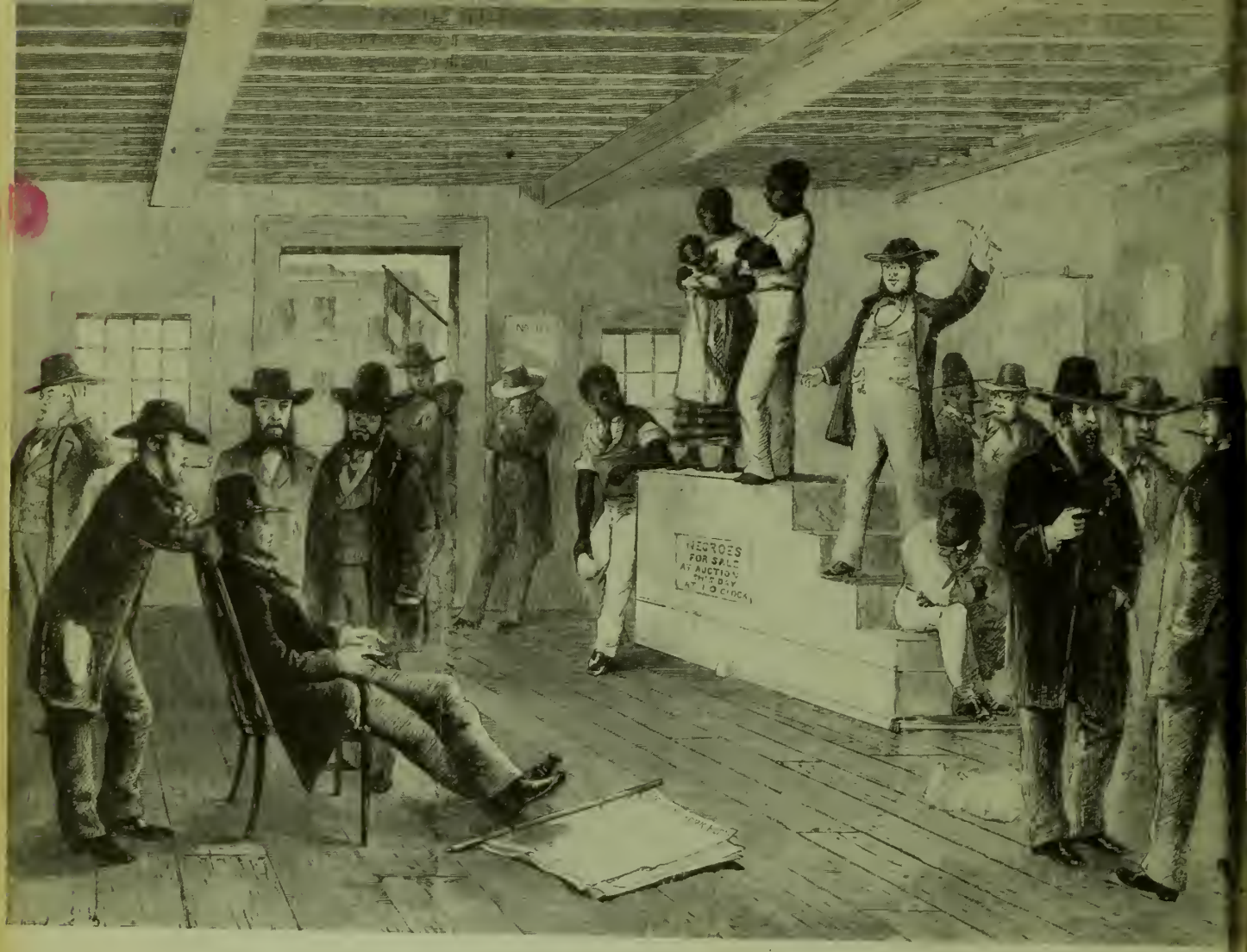


Africans brought to America as slaves were sold at auction to the highest bidder.

Introduction: Colonial Times

In colonial America, slavery became the way of life for large numbers of Africans taken from their native lands. Many who thought they were indentured servants found that their contracts were not honored by either their masters or the courts. In this way they were, in fact, enslaved.

By 1660, slavery was firmly established in America. And it was accepted by most people. But it was not accepted by black slaves. They resisted their fate in many ways. There were suicides aboard ships bringing African slaves to the colonies. In addition, masters were poisoned, fires were set, tools were destroyed, work was slowed down, and slaves ran away. These were all forms of resistance against the institution of slavery. These were all attempts to demand freedom.

Before too long, white colonists were also demanding freedom — they wanted independence from England. And they were willing to fight for it. During the American Revolution black people overlooked the fact that they were not accepted as first-class citizens and answered the call to arms. Approximately five thousand black men fought with the American forces. Freedom was won, but it was freedom for whites only.

Then came the harshest blow. It came when these new United States drew up the Constitution, a constitution that recognized slavery.

In spite of these setbacks, black people managed to develop their talents and contribute to American culture. The number of such people, however, was small. For the most part, blacks in America were caught in slavery, working as forced laborers on Southern plantations.

A Cotton Kingdom Emerges

TWO MACHINES were invented in Europe during the 1700's that had a great effect on life in America. Almost like a miracle, they could spin and weave cotton fiber into cloth. As a result, the cost of cotton goods dropped and the demand for them increased. The effects spread across the Atlantic Ocean. In the southern United States, a "Cotton Kingdom" emerged and slavery was expanded.

Cotton grown in America was sent to England, where it was woven into textiles. Now, with the new machines and the need for more cotton, American planters became eager to earn greater profits by sending larger shipments of cotton to the British mills. As a result, planters began to look for ways to expand their production. Merely planting more cotton did not increase the supply for shipment.

The amount of time and the number of hands needed to remove the seed from the fiber kept planters from producing large amounts of cotton quickly. At that time, slaves removed the seed from the cotton fiber by hand. By this slow method, a slave would produce about one pound of cleaned cotton a day.

Some planters along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina looked for a cotton fiber that had an easily removable seed. They

Large cotton plantations, worked by black slaves, spread through the South in the 1700's and 1800's.

experimented with a sea-island cotton that had a long, silky fiber. The sea-island cotton proved to be far better than the short type. The seed could be removed easily from the fiber, and the textile produced from it was of a better quality. But, because sea-island cotton could grow only in a few parts of the South, most planters had to continue growing the short type of cotton.

Southern planters still wanted to increase their cotton production and their profits. They tried to find a faster method of separating the seeds from the cotton. They hoped that someone would invent a machine to help them.

One fall day in 1792, a young Massachusetts man named Eli Whitney arrived in Savannah, Georgia. He was on his way to South

Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin.

Carolina to tutor the children of a wealthy family. Instead, young Whitney accepted an invitation to stay on a Georgia plantation. While there, he heard about the problem of increasing the production of cotton and decided to try his hand at building a machine to separate the seed from the fiber.

By the following April, Eli Whitney had made a machine with which one man in one day could remove the seeds from fifty pounds of fiber. His machine was called the cotton gin.

The cotton gin did more than speed up the production of cotton fiber. It also increased the demand for slaves. Some of the poorer planters switched from growing indigo, rice, and tobacco to growing cotton. And wealthy planters bought more land on which to plant cotton. Since more labor was needed to plant and harvest the increasing cotton crop, there arose a new demand for strong and healthy slaves.

Southern planters were not the only ones who benefited — New England slave traders also profited. They supplied larger numbers of Africans to Southern planters.

Each year more and more bales of cotton were sent to England to be made into cloth. (One bale of cotton weighs about 500 pounds.) About 6,000 bales of cotton were produced in 1792; 17,000 bales

A model of Eli Whitney's cotton gin. First, raw cotton was fed into the hopper at the top. Then it dropped down against the metal screen. Hooked teeth on the revolving drum took hold of the fibers and separated them from the seeds. The revolving brushes at the bottom removed the cotton from the teeth.

in 1795; 73,000 in 1800; 335,000 in 1820; 1,348,000 in 1840; and nearly 4,000,000 bales (nearly two-thirds of all cotton grown in the world) in 1860. A "Cotton Kingdom" had been created in the United States.

Attempts to Reduce the Slave Trade

AFTER THE American Revolution, a growing number of people began to speak out against slavery. As the anti-slavery feelings spread, both Northern and Southern legislatures began to pass laws either to ban slavery or to discourage the slave trade.

In some Northern states, slavery was abolished. In 1780, Pennsylvania passed a law that gradually would abolish slavery. Laws were passed that totally banned slavery in Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1784; New York in 1799; and New Jersey in 1804.

In the South, however, new laws only stopped or discouraged the slave *trade* instead of abolishing slavery. For example, the Maryland legislature, in 1783, stopped the importation of slaves into the state. But they did not put an end to slavery. In 1786, North Carolina raised the import duty on slaves; then did away with it entirely in 1790. The South Carolina legislature banned the importation of slaves in 1787 but repealed the law in 1803. The South Carolinians explained their action by claiming that it was impossible to enforce the law.

Several delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787 were also against slavery. But the idea of freedom for black people did not gain much support from most of the delegates. They argued over

The slave trade went on even after it became illegal. In this picture, captured slaves are being unloaded in Florida.

the question, "Who shall control the slave trade — the states or the national government?" instead of "How can we end slavery?" After a great deal of debate about slavery in America, the delegates agreed that the importation of slaves was to be allowed to continue until January 1, 1808. This agreement was written into the Constitution.

Some reasons for reducing the slave trade were more for the good of the master than for the good of the slave. One reason was to protect the interests of slaveholders. If new slaves were plentiful, the value of slaves purchased earlier would be reduced. But the most compelling reason for stopping the trade was to keep the rapidly growing number of black people from becoming as large as the white population. As the black population increased, slaveholders became increasingly fearful of larger and better organized rebellions.

Even though a law was passed in 1807 to ban the slave trade, traders continued to bring Africans into the States. Both Northern and Southern merchants profited from the trade. In most Southern cities, advertisements of newly arrived slaves were displayed openly and sales were held at the depots.

Service in the Armed Forces

DURING THE early 1800's, conflict developed between the United States and the European countries of Britain and France. British sailors were stopping American ships at sea. They would seize a ship's cargo and all its sailors of British background. France too was seizing American ships — including entire crews and cargo.

These acts angered Americans. One group of young congressmen, mostly from the West and the South, charged Britain with several acts against Americans. They condemned the British for seizing American sailors and cargo. They also claimed that British fur traders encouraged the Indians to attack American settlers in the West. These congressmen became known as war hawks.

The war hawks demanded that the United States take action against Britain. They repeatedly asked the President and Congress to force Britain to respect American shipowners. In fact, they wanted the United States to go to war with Britain.

If the United States won a war with Britain, lands such as Canada could easily be claimed for American settlers. In this way, the United States frontier could expand to the west and to the north.

(Since the war hawks believed in expanding the frontier, they were among those known as expansionists.)

The war hawks had several reasons for wanting to expand the United States frontier. One reason was their wish to expand slavery into the Southwest. They decided that if Canada became part of the United States, Northerners could settle in that great area of land. This would leave the Southwest open for people who wished to own slaves.

Some Americans, especially Easterners, were against going to war with Britain. Merchants and shop owners in the Northeast felt that a war would make them lose large amounts of money. Although the people in the Northeast suffered losses when their ships and cargo were seized, they did not want war. But the Westerners and Southerners continued to pressure the President. Finally, President Madison asked Congress to declare war against Britain. In this way, the War of 1812 began.

Black men came forward to serve their country, as they had during the American Revolution. In 1814, the New York legislature passed a law that authorized the raising of two black regiments of a little more than a thousand men each. Little was done, however, to recruit black men. Slaves who received permission from their masters could also join a regiment. They were to be rewarded with freedom at the end of their service.

Some white regiments had black men, and a large number of blacks joined the navy. At first, Captain Oliver H. Perry did not want black men under his command. Later, after a major battle on Lake Erie, Perry found that the black men were praiseworthy sailors.

Another officer, General Andrew Jackson, who later became President, called upon free black men in Louisiana to join his forces. He

Captain Oliver H. Perry, a white naval officer who came to recognize the ability of black sailors during the War of 1812.

promised that their pay would be similar to what white soldiers received and that some blacks would become noncommissioned officers.

During the now famous Battle of New Orleans, over four hundred black men under General Jackson's command fought the British forces. This battle gave black men another opportunity to show that they, too, were brave soldiers.

The British, in an attempt to increase their fighting forces, offered freedom to slaves who joined them. Some slaves escaped from their masters and joined the British. After the war, however, both the American and the British forces returned many slaves to their masters.

Black veterans returning from the war brought news of a country

Free blacks in Louisiana were called into service during the War of 1812 by General Andrew Jackson, who became the seventh President of the United States.

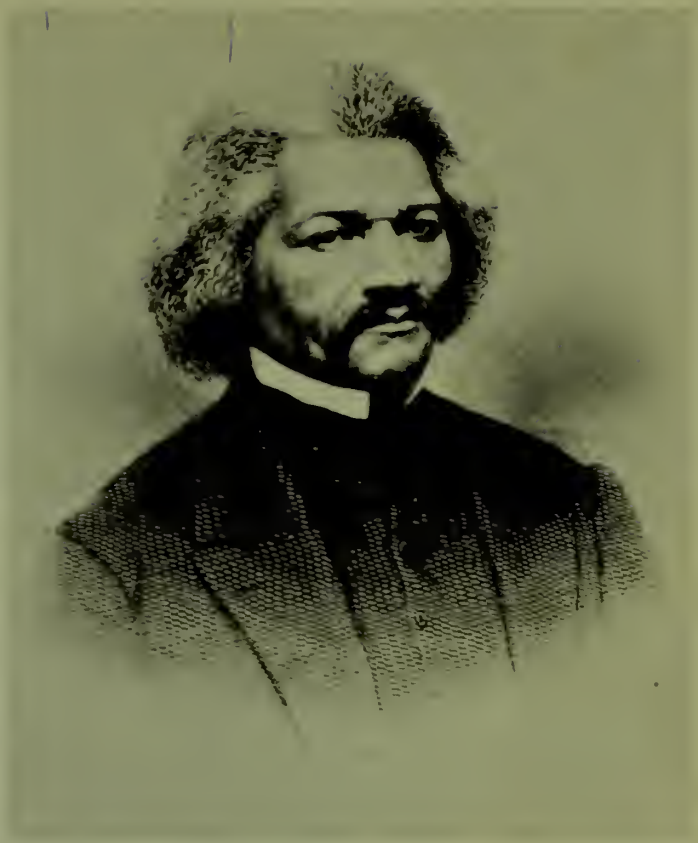
called Canada where black people could live in freedom. Slaveholders, fearing that slaves would rebel and run away to Canada, asked for new regulations to bar black men from joining the armed forces. In that way they hoped to keep their slaves from learning more about this land of freedom.

Slavery Through the Eyes of Slaves

AFTER THE cotton gin came into wide use, it became more difficult for slaves to gain freedom. But although masters worked hard to keep their slaves from running away and to catch those who did escape, some did get away. Most fugitive slaves traveled northward in search of freedom. Some of these former slaves wrote or spoke about their hardships so that more people could learn about chattel slavery in America. Their words describe the condition of slavery better than any that could be written today.

One former slave who later became famous as an abolitionist speaker and writer was Frederick Douglass. He spoke so well that many people doubted that he had ever been a slave. As proof, Douglass wrote about his experiences in an autobiography called *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*. This book was published in 1845.

Douglass was born a slave in Talbot County, Maryland, in 1817 or 1818. While he was still a baby, his mother was hired out on another plantation. Slaveholders often separated a mother and her child so that the mother could work without having to look after her baby. Usually, old women who could no longer do hard work cared for



Abolitionist Frederick Douglass presented a vivid and disturbing picture of slavery.

the children. In his book, Douglass tells about the few times that he saw his mother. He also describes her efforts to see him even though she worked miles away.

> I never saw my mother . . . more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr. Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to see me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. She was a field hand, and a whipping is the penalty of not being in the field at sunrise, unless a slave has special permission from his master. . . . Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived. . . . She died when I

was about seven years, on one of my master's farms. . . . I was not allowed to be present during her illness, at her death, or burial. She was gone long before I knew anything about it.

In a lecture, Douglass explained how masters acted toward slaves. His description tells us much about slavery in America.

First of all, I will state, as well as I can, the . . . relation of master and slave. A master is one who claims and exercises a a right of property in the person of a fellow man. This he does with the force of the law and the sanction of southern religion. The law gives the master absolute power over the slave. He may work him, flog him, hire him out, sell him, and in certain . . . [instances], kill him [without being punished for doing so]. The slave is a human being . . . reduced to the level of a brute . . . his name . . . is . . . inserted in a master's ledger, with horses, sheep and swine. In law, the slave has no wife, no children, no country, and no home. He can own nothing, possess nothing, acquire nothing.

Another person who wrote about life as a slave was Solomon Northup, a free black man who was kidnapped while traveling in the city of Washington in 1841. Northup was held in slavery in Louisiana until his wife petitioned the governor of New York for help to gain his freedom. In his book *Twelve Years a Slave*, Northup wrote about the long hours of work required of slaves. He also told how slaves suffered greatly from fear of punishment.

The hands are required to be in the cotton fields as soon as it is light in the morning. . . . With the exception of ten or fifteen minutes, which is given them at noon to swallow their al-

Slaves toiled in the cotton fields from sunrise to late into the night.

lowance of cold bacon, they are not permitted to be idle until it is too dark to see, and when the moon is full, they often times labor till the middle of the night. They do not dare to stop even at dinner time, nor return to the quarters, however late it be, until the order to halt is given by the driver.

The day's work over in the field, the baskets are "toted," or in other words, carried to the gin-house, where the cotton is weighed. No matter how fatigued and weary he may be — no matter how much he longs for sleep and rest — a slave never

approaches the gin-house with his basket of cotton but with fear. If it falls short in weight — if he has not performed the full task appointed him, he knows that he must suffer. And if he has exceeded it by ten or twenty pounds, in all probability his master will measure the next day's task accordingly. So, whether he has too little or too much, his approach to the gin-house is always with fear and trembling. . . . After weighing follow the whippings; and the baskets are carried to the cotton house and their contents stored away like hay. . . . The number of lashes is graduated according to the nature of the case. Twenty-five are deemed a mere brush . . . [given] for instance, when a dry leaf or a piece of boll is found in the cotton, or when a branch is broken in the field; fifty is ordinary penalty following all delinquences of the next higher grade; one hundred is called severe; it is the punishment inflicted for the serious offense of standing idle in the field.

Frederick Douglass gave another example of how slaveholders treated slaves. He described how the whip was used to force slaves to obey their masters at all times.

To ensure good behavior, the slaveholder relies on the whip; to induce proper humility, he relies on the whip; to rebuke what he is pleased to term insolence, he relies on the whip; to supply the place of wages, as an incentive to toil, he relies on the whip; to bind down the spirit of the slave, to . . . destroy his manhood, he relies on the whip, the chain, the gag, the thumbscrew, the pillory, the bowie-knife, the pistol, and the blood-hound.

Slaves received few, if any, comforts in life. They were given old clothing to wear. Sometimes children were not clothed at all. Douglass described the clothing generally given to the slaves.

> Their yearly clothing consisted of two coarse linen shirts, one pair of linen trousers . . . one jacket, one pair of trousers for winter, made of coarse . . . cloth, one pair of stockings, and one pair of shoes.

Douglass also described the conditions in a slave cabin.

> There were no beds given the slaves, unless one coarse blanket be considered such, and none but the men and women had these. . . . Old and young, male and female, married and single, drop down side by side, on one common bed — the cold, damp floor . . . and here they sleep till they are . . . [called] to the field by the driver's horn.

This description shows that slaveholders had little or no concern about how their slaves lived.

Other records of brutal treatment of slaves were found in Southern newspapers. Notices for runaway slaves often included descriptions of marks or scars on the body of the fugitive slave. One notice of a runaway Mississippi slave read: "large raised scars in the small of his back and on his abdomen nearly as large as a person's finger." Another notice about a slave from Kentucky stated: "a large scar immediately on her chest from the cuts of a whip."

There were other reports of slaves who were beaten so badly that they were left crippled or dead. One form of harsh punishment was salting — wounds made by a whip were washed with salted water. The salt would make an open wound burn and cause more pain.

Although branding of slaves was thought to have been done only during the colonial period, the custom actually continued into the nineteenth century. In 1838 a notice for a slave from North Carolina

The brutal practice of branding slaves took place in America from colonial times into the nineteenth century.

stated that the runaway slave Betty was newly "burnt . . . with a hot iron on the left side of her face; I tried to make the letter M."

Because of the harsh treatment, a growing number of slaves thought about freedom. Soon some free and enslaved black people began to plan ways of leading their people out of slavery.

Resistance to Slavery Increases

MANY SLAVES looked for ways to improve their lives. A large number ran away. Some showed how much they hated slavery by destroying property belonging to their masters. Still others planned rebellions.

Reports of three major slave plots spread quickly around the country. The first, in 1800, was a plan to attack Richmond, the capital of Virginia. This plot was led by a twenty-four-year-old slave named Gabriel. He was tall, six feet two in height, and looked like a leader. He was both courageous and intelligent.

It was reported that Gabriel had a cruel master named Thomas Prosser. Gabriel's plan to lead a revolt against slavery may have been a direct result of his master's cruelty.

Plans for the uprising were made on Prosser's plantation. For several months, Gabriel held meetings to plan the revolt. Weapons, such as clubs, swords, and guns, were collected and hidden until the appointed day. Gabriel made several trips to Richmond to study the layout of the city. He wanted to locate buildings where weapons and ammunition were stored. If the plot was to succeed, the slaves would have to capture weapons and ammunition. They needed the weapons for themselves and so that none would be available for the whites.

The harsh treatment slaves received led them to run away and to rebel. This picture shows a black man being hunted down like an animal.

The plan was reviewed at meetings. The slaves were to strike from three positions. One group would seize the buildings where the guns were stored. Another group would capture the ammunition building. The third group would split in two and enter Richmond from either end of the city. This last group was to kill every white person in sight except those proven to be Frenchmen, Methodists, or Quakers. These were the people most sympathetic to the problems of the slaves.

The rebellion was to begin on the afternoon of August 30. That same day, however, two slaves revealed the plan. The governor immediately took action. He appointed three aides, asked for use of the federal armory at Manchester, and placed cannons in Richmond. Then he sent notice of the planned march to every militia commander in the state.

Ignorant of the betrayal, Gabriel continued with his plans. At midnight, about one thousand slaves assembled six miles outside Richmond and the march began. They carried scythes, clubs, and a few guns.

A heavy rainstorm began just as the slaves started their march. Bridges washed away, streams swelled, and roads flooded. It was impossible to reach the capital. The marchers scattered. But troops waiting on the way to Richmond captured several of the slaves.

A trial was held. As a result, about thirty-five slaves were hanged. Four escaped from prison and one committed suicide. Gabriel was captured late in September and he also was hanged.

Later, the governor of Mississippi Territory estimated that 50,000 other slaves were ready to join the fight after the revolt began.

In 1821, Denmark Vesey, a free black man, began to organize a slave revolt he had been planning. Vesey traveled, read widely, and spoke several languages. He also knew what it was like to be a slave.

Vesey had been a slave for twenty years before 1800, when he won enough money in a lottery to buy his freedom. As a free man, he worked as a carpenter for twenty-two years in Charleston, South Carolina. During those years, Vesey saved his money and used it to buy property.

He gained respect from both black and white people. But his goal was to see all black people receive respect and enjoy similar comforts.

For about four or five years, Vesey spoke to slaves in Charleston

about the ways other groups of people had won freedom. He talked about the uprising in Santo Domingo (now Haiti). He also talked about both the American and the French revolutions. Because Vesey tried to teach the slaves about other people who fought for freedom and tried to get the slaves to do the same, he became known as an agitator.

After talking about freedom and trying to stir the slaves, Vesey planned a rebellion. He chose an intelligent ship's carpenter named Peter Poyas as his closest aide. Poyas was responsible for getting slaves to join the rebellion.

Poyas had an ability to organize and to understand people. He believed that house slaves could not be trusted. These servants were closest to the masters and were usually treated better than the slaves who worked in the fields. Therefore, Poyas believed that they would reveal the plot.

The organizers collected weapons and disguises. Vesey and his aides studied plans for the uprising. But to make sure that they would not be betrayed, details were not revealed to all the followers.

The date of the revolt was set for Sunday, July 16, 1822. A fire was to be set in the governor's mills and in some houses near the waterfront. When the fire alarm was sounded, every white person who left his house was to be killed. But Poyas was right about house slaves. They could not be trusted. On the last Saturday in May, a house slave, who was asked to join the group by another slave who was not supposed to recruit, told his master about the plot.

Word spread that the authorities were suspicious of the slaves Peter Poyas and Mingo Harth, two leaders of the plot. To confuse the city authorities, Poyas and Harth demanded an apology from the mayor. Their trick worked, in that attention was drawn away from them; but the tension in the city continued.

By using black slaves to work their plantations, white planters made large profits.

Vesey decided to move up the date for the rebellion. But again there was betrayal. A slave who knew all the details and leaders of the plot gave the information to city authorities. Now the plot was doomed. More than 130 black people were arrested. Denmark Vesey and 46 others were convicted. The penalties included hanging and forced expulsion from the state.

By 1831, nine years later, conditions in Virginia had reached a new low, and renewed unrest developed among the slaves. This was the year of the third revolt.

The price of cotton had dropped all over the world, and the demand fell far behind production. Naturally, lowered cotton prices were followed by reduced prices for slaves. This resulted in disaster for the Virginia slave market — the major slave market in the United States.

The market was extremely important to slaveholders in eastern Virginia. These men bred slaves for sale, just as cattle are bred for the market. The slaveholders sold the slaves for profit to people from other states and from different parts of Virginia.

By 1831, Virginia had too many slaves. Actually, in some parts of the state, the total black population — free and enslaved — outnumbered the white. The slave population of the United States had increased from 700,000 in 1790 to over 2,000,000 by 1830.

Unrest among the growing number of slaves continued. The governor of Virgina, John Floyd, reported to the legislature of 1829–30 that slaves showed "dissatisfaction and insubordination." Newspapers reported other plots and uprisings. There were reports from Delaware, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Louisiana. And each report created more tension and fear of rebellion.

Another reason for unrest among slaves was the increasing number of antislavery publications. In 1829, David Walker, a free black man living in Boston, wrote a pamphlet called "An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World." In the pamphlet, Walker described the treatment of black people in America and strongly urged blacks to resist the white man.

New laws also played a part in making the atmosphere more tense. One law passed in Virginia on April 7, 1831, even provided for the enslavement of free black people found guilty of certain crimes. Free blacks caught meeting for the purpose of learning to read and write were considered breaking a law. Both blacks and whites who disobeyed such laws were punished. But black people received the harshest penalties.

New laws, antislavery pamphlets, a failing economy, and the general conditions of slavery brought about greater unrest among the slaves. The unrest helped create the atmosphere for the third uprising.

The capture of Nat Turner, leader of the most famous slave revolt in America.

This revolt took place on August 21, 1831, about 70 miles from Richmond, Virginia, in Southampton County. It was led by a slave named Nat Turner. Turner was a preacher who, like Gabriel and Vesey, wanted to help black people gain freedom. The slaves called him Prophet. They respected Turner and asked him for advice. Eventually, some slaves came to regard him as their leader.

In the confession recorded after his capture, Turner explained how childhood experience helped prepare him for his now famous rebellion.

> Being at play with other children, when three or four years old, I was telling them something, which my mother overhearing, said it had happened before I was born — I stuck to my story, however, and related somethings which went, in her opinion, to confirm it — others — were greatly astonished, knowing that these things had happened, and caused them to say in my hearing, I surely would be a prophet, as the Lord had shewn me things that had happened before my birth.

When he became an adult, Turner decided that to be great, he must appear so. As he prepared himself for greatness, he avoided making close friendships and instead, surrounded himself in mystery. As time

passed, Turner felt more and more that he must lead his people to freedom. He turned to religion to learn how to be a leader and to gain strength to prepare himself for the responsibility. Turner read and reread the Bible. He saw visions that inspired him to set forth on what became his mission in life — to free black people from slavery.

Turner, however, did not set up a plan as Gabriel and Vesey had done. Instead, he waited for a sign that would reveal the time to begin the push toward freedom. Turner saw several signs. One, the eclipse of the sun in February, 1831, became a signal for him to begin leading his people on to freedom. He chose July 4 as the date for beginning the revolt, but illness forced him to put off any action. Another sign, the strange and unusual coloring of the sun on August 13, led Turner to believe that he should not wait any longer.

On Sunday afternoon August 21, 1831, Turner and a few other slaves held a meeting and decided to begin the revolt. That night, armed with a hatchet and an ax, Turner and five other slaves began marching to the town of Jerusalem, Virginia. On the way, they were to stop at each house and kill the occupants. No white man, woman, or child was to be spared. The first stop was the house of Turner's master, Joseph Travis. Inside, Travis, his wife, and three children were killed as they lay in their beds. At each stop, more slaves joined Turner until there were about sixty in the group.

The killings continued through the night. When the bodies were found Monday morning, the white population was in a panic. Later that day, Turner and his men were met by eighteen armed whites. An even larger number awaited them a short distance away.

About three thousand federal and state soldiers arrived to stop the uprising. During the hysteria that followed the massacre of the whites, the soldiers killed more than one hundred slaves. Three free blacks and thirteen slaves were hanged.

Joseph Cinque led African slaves to revolt aboard the ship Amistad.

Turner was defeated but he remained in hiding. Fear continued to grip the whites — fear that other slaves would rebel. Finally, on October 30, Turner was captured, and about two weeks later, he was hanged in the town of Jerusalem.

Most of the slave rebellions took place on land. But some Africans had rebelled aboard ships as they crossed the ocean. In 1839, one of the more famous mutinies took place on the ship *Amistad* near the island of Cuba. Joseph Cinque, a Mende chief, led over fifty other enslaved Africans in a mutiny after their ship sailed from Havana. They murdered the passengers and most of the crew, leaving two men to steer the ship to Africa.

The crew tricked Cinque and sailed northward. After several days, they dropped anchor on the eastern end of Long Island. The Africans hoped to get water and food but they were seen by a captain in the

United States Navy. They were captured and brought to trial for murder. In the few words of English that he had learned during the trial, Cinque pleaded for freedom. But the Africans were found guilty.

An appeal was made to the Supreme Court by Cinque's lawyer, former President John Quincy Adams. It was decided that since the Africans were free when they left Havana, Cuba, they did not break any laws by killing the people who tried to make them slaves. This decision meant that Cinque and his followers had won their right to be free.

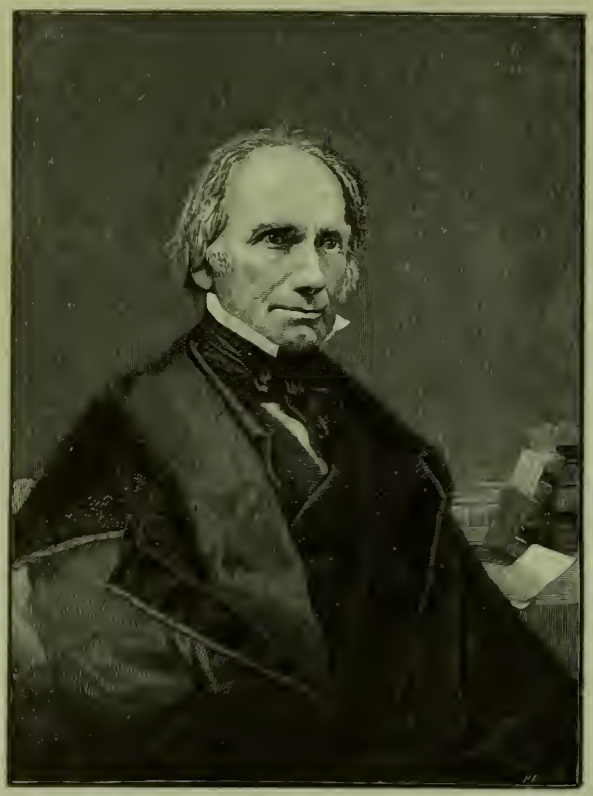
Other slaves continued to rebel against slavery. Fortunately, some of them were lucky enough to gain their freedom and to move to either the North or the West.

New States and Slavery

In 1787, slavery had been banned in the territory north of the Ohio River. South of the area, however, slavery was expanding. Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama joined the Union as slave states. By 1820, there were eleven slave states and eleven free states. The Senate was evenly balanced. The North and the South each had twenty-two senators.

In 1820, when the people of Missouri asked to join the Union, angry debates took place in Congress. Should Missouri be admitted as a slave state? Southern congressmen said yes. They wanted to change the balance of free and slave states to favor the South. Also, since the number of members a state can send to the House of Representatives is determined by its population, the Northern states, which were more heavily populated, had 105 representatives while the Southern states had 81. Therefore, the Southerners wanted to increase their number of representatives so that there would be more congressmen to vote in favor of their ideas. They argued in favor of admitting Missouri as a slave state.

The land in Missouri was not particularly suited to plantations. But it was settled mostly by people from Kentucky and Tennessee



Speaker of the House, Henry Clay. His plan to keep a balance between Northern free states and Southern slave states was the famous Missouri Compromise of 1820.

who were in favor of slavery. Moreover, a few Southerners who had settled along the Missouri River Valley had already introduced slavery in Missouri.

The debates in Congress over slavery were bitter. While some Southerners said that the slaves were happy, some Northerners said that slavery was wrong. At times, the debate became so heated that the Speaker of the House, Henry Clay, tried to arrange a compromise.

During the same time, Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, wanted to become a separate state. Since Maine would be a Northern state, Clay thought of a plan to keep the balance between Northern and Southern states. Maine would be admitted as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. Clay's plan called for a line to be drawn westward from the southern boundary of Missouri (36° 30′). North of this line, slavery would be prohibited.

Finally, both Northerners and Southerners agreed to the plan that became known as the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Southern congressmen, however, felt that while they won the admittance of Missouri as a slave state, they would lose other future states north of the line that might want to be admitted as slave states.

An Abolitionist Movement Begins

LONG BEFORE the American Revolution black people worked to abolish slavery. They helped people understand why slavery was wrong and why it should be abolished.

Free and enslaved black people worked together to end slavery. Many of those who learned to read and write protested against slavery through writing. Others gave speeches and carried the message of slaves to whites and free blacks. Some wrote and signed petitions. Several established antislavery organizations or joined with white abolitionists to continue the fight for freedom.

Abolitionists began their work while slavery was still taking root, but the movement gained in strength and became better organized after the American Revolution. It was then that such black men as Richard Allen, Prince Hall, Absalom Jones, and Benjamin Banneker wrote about the evils of slavery.

Although white-owned abolitionist newspapers revealed the harshness of slavery, black men wanted to speak for themselves. It was not, however, until many years after the Revolution that the first black newspaper in America was published. Owned and edited by Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm, the newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*,

Black and white abolitionists listen to a speech at a meeting on the Boston Common.

appeared in New York City on March 16, 1827. Its owners stated their purpose: "We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us."

Several other black men began to write against slavery. One of the better known was David Walker, who wrote "An Appeal of the Colored Citizens of the World." Walker was born in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1785. His father was a slave but his mother was free.

Benjamin Banneker was born free in 1731. He was a remarkable man. Banneker's talents ranged from mathematics to writing to inventing and city planning. For several years he published an almanac. Banneker was a member of the committee that planned the city of Washington, D.C.

Fortunately for David, a child born of a free black woman in North Carolina at that time was also free.

Walker remained in the South until he was thirty years old. Before he left, he wrote, "If I remain in this bloody land, I will not live long." Walker traveled north and settled in Boston in the 1820's. There he opened a secondhand clothing shop. But memories of slavery in North Carolina still remained with Walker.

Before long he became involved in antislavery work. As the Boston agent for the abolitionist newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, Walker was able to pass on his thoughts about slavery to a large number of people. On September 28, 1828, the first of four articles written by Walker was published in *Freedom's Journal.* All four of the articles printed together made up the pamphlet known as "Walker's Appeal."

Walker urged black people to seek freedom even though they might

lose their lives or have to take the lives of slaveholders: "They keep us miserable now, and call us their property. . . . They want us for their slaves. . . . We can help ourselves; . . . Never make an attempt to gain your freedom or natural right, until you see your way clear — when that hour arrives and you move, be not afraid."

As expected, slaveholders were very much against the pamphlet. The Georgia legislature passed a law that would penalize anyone caught circulating abolitionist literature. When such materials were found in the South, government officials became alarmed. Police searched incoming ships for copies of "Walker's Appeal." Any black seaman found with a copy would be whipped and jailed. Mayor Harrison Otis of Boston was called upon by Southern mayors to see that the pamphlet was no longer circulated. The mayor replied that he had no power to do as they wished, but he did say that he shared their feelings about the pamphlet.

Walker might have written more antislavery literature but he died mysteriously in June, 1830. Many people believed that Walker had been murdered because of his views on slavery.

Other militant abolitionists were beginning to look for ways to publish their views on slavery. William Lloyd Garrison, a white journalist, was encouraged by black abolitionists to establish an antislavery newspaper. More than three-fourths of the people who bought and read the paper were black. And several donations to support the newspaper came from wealthy blacks.

On January 1, 1831, the first issue of Garrison's newspaper was published in Boston. His most important message was in the form of a demand for the immediate abolition of slavery. With the following words, Garrison joined Walker in becoming a militant abolitionist: "On this subject [slavery], I do not wish to think, to speak, or write with moderation . . . I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single

Militant abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison founded an antislavery newspaper, the Liberator.

inch — AND I WILL BE HEARD." Many whites became alarmed at Garrison's demands to free black people.

An attempt to gain rights for black people through law took place in New York City on February 20, 1837, when a meeting was held to obtain political and civil rights for black people. The main purpose of the meeting was to send petitions to the state legislature in Albany, New York. The petitions were to stress the following ideas:

1. The repeal of laws authorizing the holding of a person as a slave.
2. Trial by jury for those accused of being fugitive slaves.
3. A change in the Constitution, so that all male citizens of the state could vote without distinction of color.

A petition for each purpose was drawn up, signed by hundreds of people, and sent to Albany. But they were defeated by the state legislature by a vote of 71 to 24. This is an example of just one type of setback that black people received from lawmakers.

Another means of working to end slavery was through antislavery organizations. As early as 1792, such groups could be found from Massachusetts to Virginia. Fifty were operating by 1830. Their members worked in different ways. Some wrote petitions to Congress and to state legislatures. Others wrote articles for newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets. Several well-known white members, such as John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and Benjamin Rush, also wrote antislavery articles. Other well-known black members founded newspapers in which they presented their views on slavery. Some outstanding writers were William G. Allen and Henry Highland Garnet, who edited a newspaper called *National Watchman*. Frederick Douglass established the *North Star*, and David Ruggles issued the quarterly *Mirror of Liberty*. Still other members of antislavery organizations worked to get manumission laws, which would end slavery, passed. And other groups organized schools for black children.

One famous organization, started with the help of many blacks, was the American Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1833. The constitution of the society stated its purpose: "The object of this society is the entire abolition of slavery in the United States."

Speakers from the society lectured at meetings around the country. Often they were met by angry white mobs. There were, however, many whites who respected the society; among the most prominent were William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Russell Lowell, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and John Greenleaf Whittier.

By 1840, the American Anti-Slavery Society had fifteen state or-

Charles Lenox Remond was one of several outstanding black spokesmen in the fight against slavery.

In this photograph Sojourner Truth looks like a quiet homebody. She was, however, a strong woman, famous for traveling through much of the United States, delivering fiery speeches against slavery.

ganizations and about two thousand local chapters. It had a total membership of about 250,000.

Local and regional antislavery organizations received help in the form of time and money. Black men, such as Robert Purvis, Dr. James McCrummell, and William Still in Philadelphia; Frederick Douglass in New England; and David Ruggles in New York were leaders in the organizations.

Many other blacks were agents of and spokesmen for antislavery societies. Some of the better-known agents were William Wells Brown, Charles Lenox Remond, and his sister Sarah Remond. A very famous abolitionist was a woman known as Sojourner Truth. She came from New York and traveled through the states giving antislavery speeches.

As more people joined this more militant abolitionist movement, antislavery feelings began to spread.

Of course, many Southerners were against the abolitionist movement. They were angered by the aid given to runaway slaves and the attempts to encourage slave rebellions. Some of their anger turned into mob violence. In 1835 an angry mob in Charleston, South Carolina, broke into the post office and seized abolitionist newspapers. They took the newspapers to the public square and burned them. During the 1830's and early 1840's, Southern congressmen in the House of Representatives saw to it that petitions from abolitionists did not get much attention.

Although Southerners made several attempts to crush the abolitionist movement, they were never successful. Membership in antislavery organizations continued to grow. And their leaders continued to become more militant in the struggle to help slaves obtain their freedom.

An Underground Railroad Leads to Freedom

OF ALL THE abolitionist activities aimed at ending slavery, the Underground Railroad was most disturbing to slaveholders. As the number of runaway slaves grew, slaveholders spent large amounts of money to advertise for them. Some masters even hired bounty hunters and federal officials to catch runaway slaves.

Many slaves ran away because they were treated badly by their masters. But there was another reason why slaves wanted freedom. Most wanted to be their own masters. They wanted to decide for themselves how they should live. They wanted to keep their families together. And they wanted to be able to earn a living and support their families.

The problem of runaway slaves increased in the eighteenth century. By the end of the American Revolution, the beginning of a system to help runaway slaves was developed.

After the War of 1812, larger numbers of slaves wanted freedom. As we know, black veterans of the war with England spoke of that land named Canada to the north. Within a short time, slaves were talking about following the North Star to the free country called Canada.

A group of slaves travel north to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

By 1815, people in Ohio joined others in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in helping fugitive slaves. Soon many people in Ohio were working on "underground," or secret, roads on the Ohio River. The number of fugitive slaves grew, and the name "Underground Railroad" came into use for the escape route sometime after 1831.

The Underground Railroad became a system that directed fugitive slaves to stations on the way to free areas in the North. These stations were about a night's journey, or ten to twenty miles apart. Field agents made themselves known to fleeing slaves. The agents directed the slaves to a "conductor" who in turn took them to the first "station." The station was usually the home of a conductor. The conductor was usually a sympathetic white or free black person.

In the West, major stations were found on the Ohio or upper Mississippi rivers. Major Eastern stations were in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

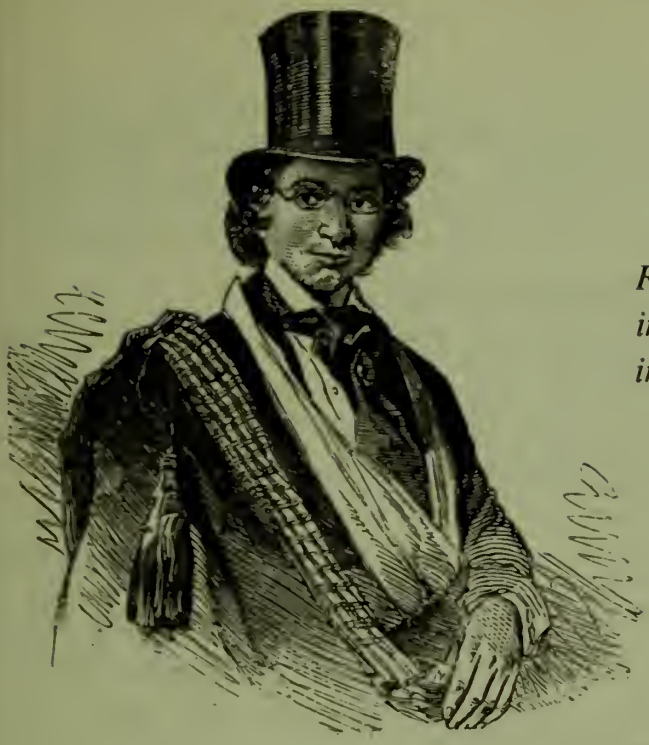
Most of the operations of the Underground Railroad took place at night, when it was safer to travel. During the day, the runaway slaves would be hidden in such places as barns, caves, and attics. While the slaves rested, messages were sent on to the next station to alert the conductor. Thus, he had time to prepare for the fugitives. In the meantime, the slaves were fed and sometimes given disguises. At night, the journey northward continued.

All lines on the Underground Railroad went north. The lines began on several Southern plantations and ran northward through valleys, over mountains, and up rivers. The North Star, the rivers, and mountain chains guided conductors and fugitives as they traveled.

In the early days, most of the fugitives were men traveling alone on foot. When women and children began fleeing, transportation and escorts were provided. Farm wagons with secret compartments, covered wagons, and closed carriages were used to transport fugitive slaves.

One famous couple who escaped slavery was Ellen and William Craft of Macon, Georgia. Ellen Craft, who was very fair skinned, dressed in men's clothing and disguised herself as a male slaveholder. Her husband dressed as a slave. Ellen, who could neither read nor write, carried her right arm in a sling so that no one would ask her to sign steamboat or hotel registers. In this disguise, the couple traveled through the South until they reached the North and freedom.

The cost of running the Underground Railroad grew as more slaves began to use it. Funds were raised by various sympathetic groups. Often, the conductors and others who ran the railroad would contribute money to pay the expenses.



Runaway slave Ellen Craft in the disguise she wore during her successful escape.

Harriet Tubman led more than three hundred slaves north to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

A Quaker named Levi Coffin led about three thousand slaves to freedom and earned the title "President" of the Underground Railroad. Coffin used his home, located on three important routes to the North, to hide many of the runaway slaves.

One of the most daring conductors was Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery to the North. She returned to the South about nineteen times to lead other slaves to freedom. It is believed that Harriet led more than three hundred slaves north to freedom.

Harriet Tubman was known as "Moses." It is believed that the spiritual "Go Down Moses" was about her. The words of the song and the slow sad music help us understand why slaves wanted freedom.

Go Down Moses
When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!

CHORUS:
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharoah to let my people go!

Another spiritual, "Steal Away," was used as a signal to begin the journey on the Underground Railroad.

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus.
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here.

After starting on the journey to the North, another spiritual, "The Drinking Gourd," was used. This spiritual reminded the fugitive slaves to follow the Big Dipper to the North.

Follow the drinking gourd,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is a-waiting
For to carry you to freedom,
Follow the drinking gourd.

In 1850, a Fugitive Slave Law was passed. It provided for the capture and return of runaway slaves in the North as well as in the South. After passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Harriet Tubman feared that runaway slaves would not be safe in the United States. Therefore, she began taking them to Canada.

Other free black people also helped to run the Underground Railroad. Some of the better-known blacks were William Wells Brown, Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, James Forten, Henry Highland Garnet, Charles Remond, David Ruggles, William Still, Sojourner Truth, and David Walker.

Even when the runaway slaves reached free Northern states, many precautions were still necessary. Arrival in the North did not always mean safety from slavery. Slaveholders, traders, sheriffs, and even some blacks would chase the fugitives and try to capture and return them to their masters.

Despite the fact that slaveholders worked hard to keep their slaves, thousands escaped to freedom through the Underground Railroad. It is estimated that over two thousand slaves a year, from 1830 to 1860, reached freedom through the "railroad." The increased number of fugitive slaves weakened the institution of slavery.

Free Black People

BEFORE 1790, the count of free black people was mainly an estimate or a rough guess. According to the first United States census in 1790, there were 59,557 free black people in the country. Before that time, it had been difficult to distinguish between black indentured servants and slaves.

There were several ways that the number of free blacks could be increased. Most slaves who became free did so by running away. There were, however, some black people who were born free. They were descendants of indentured servants who had been freed when they had fulfilled the terms of their contracts. At times, slaves were freed as a reward for years of faithful service. Others were set free upon the death of a master whose will freed certain or all of his slaves.

During the colonial period, service in the army and navy brought freedom to many black men. Other slaves were able to buy their freedom.

In the North, slaves gradually gained their freedom through laws that abolished slavery. In all, there were about 488,070 free blacks by 1860. But there were still nearly 4,000,000 slaves.

Free black people were able to gain some rights. They could open

In the armed forces and in civilian life many blacks proved themselves to be outstanding sailors.

businesses and own property in nearly all the states. They could employ servants and own slaves. They formed self-help organizations. And they established churches, published newspapers, and opened schools.

Although free blacks had some rights similar to those of whites, there were many restrictions that gave them a lower status. Only a few states allowed black people to vote. In New York, a black person had to own at least two hundred and fifty dollars' worth of land in

order to vote. And most states did not allow black people to hold public office.

The courts also discriminated against black people. Decisions on cases usually favored white persons, and often testimony of blacks against whites was not accepted.

Public services such as transportation separated black and white people. And in some states, public schools were for whites only. In many Southern states, the teaching of black children was illegal.

Another restriction denied black people freedom of movement within a state. In some Southern states, blacks were required to carry "free papers" which were issued by the courts. The papers had to be renewed at fixed periods of time and a fee was charged for this service. The person found without free papers might be jailed, hired out, or sold.

Free movement from state to state was also denied to black people in the South. For example, a free black person who tried to enter the state of Maryland would not only be fined twenty dollars but also refused entry. If he made a second attempt to enter the state, he could be fined up to five hundred dollars. Inability to pay the fine meant that he would be sold into slavery.

As we have seen, many fugtive slaves lived with fear of being kidnapped and returned to slavery. Black people who were legally free had similar fears, as they too could be kidnapped and forced into slavery.

Free black people settled mostly in cities. In the North, Boston, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and New York had large black populations. Each of the Southern cities of Baltimore, Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, and Washington also had fairly large black populations.

Probably, hopes of finding jobs and more social activities drew free black people to the cities. Although fewer job opportunities were

The tavern founded by Samuel Fraunces, a black man, still stands in New York City. The writing on the sides of the building says that it is the oldest landmark in the city.

available to free black people, they found ways to make a living. Black city dwellers were blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters, cabinetmakers, wheelwrights, bricklayers, tanners, shoemakers, tailors, barbers, or mechanics. Others worked in iron factories and foundries as forgemen, firemen, or helpers. Some were shopkeepers, salesmen, or clerks. Several were ministers or teachers. And a few became doctors or lawyers.

Some free black men and women were caterers or owned and ran restaurants. Samuel Fraunces owned a tavern in New York City in

which George Washington said farewell to his officers on December 4, 1783. Later, other well-known restaurants prospered in the cities of Newport and Providence, Rhode Island; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Even though most free black people were able to find jobs, there was still a need for black self-help organizations. Thus, fraternal and benevolent societies, churches, and educational institutions were founded by black people.

Fraternal organizations satisfied a need for bringing black men together in a brotherhood. Realizing this need, Prince Hall established the first Masonic Lodge for black men in 1787. Although it was the American army that Hall served in during the Revolution, he and fourteen other free black men were inducted into the Masonic Lodge by a group of British soldiers stationed in Boston. After the British left Boston, Hall established the African Grand Lodge. A few years later Hall issued licenses to blacks in Philadelphia and Rhode Island, where local lodges were founded. At the meetings, members discussed problems of black people and decided upon ways of helping their black brothers.

Since white insurance companies refused to serve the black population, the establishment of black societies became necessary. As early as 1821, benevolent societies were established to provide assistance for black people. There were societies such as the Friendship Benevolent Society for Social Relief, the Star in the East Association, and the Daughters of Jerusalem. These were well-known organizations with large savings accounts in Baltimore banks. The African Relief Society formed in 1786 in New York City gave members and their families financial help during sickness and upon death.

Recreational activities developed within the free black community. Black people spent their free time visiting relatives and friends; they

attended meetings, parties, and dances. In the Greenwich Village section of New York City an "African" theater was founded in 1821. An announcement of the first show appeared in the *New York National Advocate*. It read: "The gentlemen of color announce another play at their pantheon, corner of Bleecker and Mercer Streets, on Monday evening."

Some free blacks continued to live in rural areas. Although slaves did most of the work on plantations in the South, free blacks also were hired to do agricultural work. Some plantation owners in the western parts of Virginia and North Carolina employed only free blacks because they did not wish to own or use slaves. They believed that slavery was wrong.

Early in the 1800's some black men began traveling westward. Some went with explorers. York, the personal servant of the explorer William Clark, was probably the first black man to see the Pacific Ocean. Jacob Dodson rode with John Fremont on a famous ride from Los Angeles to Monterey to warn General Kearny of a Mexican uprising. James Beckwourth trapped animals for their fur and fought beside General Kearny in the Mexican War. He also discovered a pass

Frontiersman James Beckwourth.

over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Beckwourth Pass; Beckwourth, California; and Beckwourth Peak were all named after the fur trapper.

George Bush, a Missouri farmer and veteran of the War of 1812, moved to the Pacific Northwest. He and his family led a wagon train of seven white families to the Northwest. They settled there in 1845, on a site which is known today as Tumwater, Washington.

In all, free black people made a life for themselves within their own communities. They learned to help one another through organizations founded to meet their needs. They opened schools to educate children and churches to fulfill both spiritual and social needs. Businesses provided jobs and income for many black people. And those who liked open spaces became frontiersmen and moved westward.

The Question of Colonization

AS THE FREE black population grew, several attempts were made to send as many blacks as possible out of the country. Slaveholders became increasingly fearful that large numbers of free blacks would threaten slavery. They were sure that slaves would try to find ways of joining the free black community.

As early as 1714, a few Americans believed that blacks in America should be sent back to Africa. Later, Thomas Jefferson, who became the second President of the United States, expressed a similar idea. In 1777, Jefferson headed a committee that outlined a plan to gradually free the slaves to "be colonized to such places as the circumstances of the time should . . .[find] most proper. . . ." In 1826, shortly before his death, Jefferson stated that blacks should be sent to the West Indies, where the governments were black.

Some blacks also wished to settle in Africa. In 1811, Paul Cuffee, a black shipowner, established the Friends' Society of Sierra Leone. This organization was to encourage free blacks in America to settle in Sierra Leone.

Soon after Cuffee's organization was founded, the American Colonization Society was established. Members of this organization in-

Paul Cuffee was a black shipowner and founder of the Friends' Society of Sierra Leone. This monument to Cuffee stands on the property of the Friends Meeting House in Westport, Massachusetts. It says:

IN MEMORY OF
CAPT. PAUL CUFFEE
PATRIOT, NAVIGATOR, EDUCATOR,
PHILANTHROPIST, FRIEND
A NOBLE CHARACTER

cluded well-known whites, such as the Southerners John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and John Randolph. They made plans to establish a colony in Africa for black people from America. Land was bought on the west coast of Africa and the colony of Liberia was founded. Its capital was called Monrovia in honor of President James Monroe.

After establishing the colony, members of the society raised money to ship blacks from America to Liberia. The federal and state governments were asked to contribute money to buy and to hire ships. The general public also was asked to contribute. The society collected thousands of dollars for this purpose, but less than fifteen thousand blacks made the trip. Of this number, about twelve thousand went through the efforts of the American Colonization Society.

Some black people seemed to favor the colonization idea but others disagreed. James Forten, an inventor and businessman, could not accept the idea of sending black Americans to Africa. In a letter to Paul Cuffee, Forten told of his findings about black peoples' reactions to the colonization plan: "We had a large meeting of Males at the Rev.

R. Allens Church the other evening. Three thousand at least attended, and there was not one sole that was in favor of going to Africa . . . We . . . have agreed to remain silent, as the people here both the white & colour are decided against the measure."

Other groups of black people also disagreed with the idea of colonization. Delegates to every convention of black people refused to support any effort to work with the colonization society. Black people realized that the colonization plan was aimed at getting free black people out of America.

Black Churches Are Founded

THE CHURCH became very important to free blacks during the nineteenth century. Church activities provided opportunities for spiritual fulfillment, leadership training, and social pleasures. During the eighteenth century separate black churches were established in both the North and the South.

Sometimes black people left white churches because they did not feel welcome. An incident in 1787 at Saint George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia made many black people leave the white church to establish a church of their own. Two well-known black Philadelphians, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, attended services at St. George's. Allen frequently preached at the church, and large numbers of black people went to hear him. After a time, officials of the church suggested that black people be seated separately. Allen thought then that a church for black people might be necessary, but he continued to attend St. George's.

One Sunday, church officials told Allen and Jones that all blacks would have to sit near the wall of the church. Another time, they were told to sit in the gallery. During still another service, a few church officials tried to pull Allen, Jones, and a third black man to their feet

Richard Allen, one of the founders of what is now the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

during prayer. The men became indignant. After all, they too had contributed money to remodel the church and were faithful members. They should not be treated in such a rude manner.

When the prayer was over, all the black people attending the service walked out together. In this way they showed that they did not like the way they were treated by the church officials.

This incident at Saint George's Church inspired Richard Allen, with the help of Absalom Jones and their followers, to form the Free African Society, which was similar to a Quaker group.

However, in 1791, both Jones and Allen left the Free African Society. With them went many of their followers. And soon the first black Episcopal church in America was established, with Jones as the leader.

Allen, too, organized a church, which is now the African Methodist

Lemuel Haynes, left, was a black minister of a white congregation in New England. Samuel Ringgold Ward, right, preached to both blacks and whites.

Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church. A conference was called to tie together the many branches of the church. At that time Richard Allen became the first bishop of the A.M.E. Church.

In New York, black Methodists found that their white fellow church members had an attitude similar to that of white Philadelphians at Saint George's. As a result, black Methodists began to establish their own houses of worship.

Black Baptists also founded their own churches. Early in the 1800's, black Baptist churches were established in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. These Northern Baptist churches had the largest memberships of all.

Before long there were churches for black people in most large Northern cities, as well as in some slave states: namely, Georgia,

Delaware, North Carolina, and Virginia. But in the South, free blacks had fewer opportunities to establish their own churches because white Southerners feared that religious activities might lead to plots or conspiracies to overthrow slavery. Instead, white Presbyterians and Episcopalians admitted free black people to their churches. Usually, however, there were separate sections for black worshipers.

There were also instances where black ministers had white congregations. Lemuel Haynes, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and Henry Highland Garnet served white Northern congregations. In the South, black ministers such as John Chavis preached to white congregations before the practice was banned by law.

The new all-black churches became very important in the lives of free black people. Church activities provided opportunities for spiritual fulfillment as well as social pleasures. The church also became a center for developing black leadership.

The establishment of churches for black people, however, meant that black and white people would be separated in the one place where some integration was being practiced.

Contributions to American Culture Increase

BLACK PEOPLE continued to enrich American culture with their ideas and talents. Many helped in the development of industry and commerce. Others became writers and lecturers. And many owned and operated businesses.

Free and enslaved blacks created inventions ranging from simple household items to complex machinery. Many of the inventions proved to be important to industry.

Records in the United States Patent Office from the 1830's show that Henry Blair, "a colored man," was granted patents for two corn-planting machines and for a similar machine used in planting cotton.

In 1846, Norbert Rillieux of New Orleans, Louisiana, invented a vacuum evaporating pan that was of great value to the sugar refining industry. Before his invention it took large numbers of workers using ladles to transfer boiling surgarcane juice from one kettle to another. This method was slow and dangerous. Rillieux's evaporating pan replaced the hand-ladling of the boiling juice. The invention produced a superior type of sugar and speeded up production.

The first Rillieux evaporator was used at the Myrtle Grove Plantation in Louisiana. Later, other factories in Louisiana, Cuba, and

Inventor Norbert Rillieux developed a sugar-refining system that is still in use.

Mexico began using the evaporator. Today the Rillieux system of refining sugar is used throughout the sugar industry as well as in soap, gelatin, and glue manufacturing.

The whaling industry grew and prospered as a result of an invention by another black man, named Lewis Temple. Temple was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1800. As a young man, he moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he found work as a metalsmith.

Temple developed an interest in the whaling industry. He learned that whales would often ecscape after being harpooned. Temple decided to try improving the harpoon. In the 1840's, he invented the toggle harpoon, which made it more difficult for the whale to escape.

The new harpoon proved so successful that it doubled the number of whales caught in the New Bedford area. As more whalers used the toggle harpoon the whaling industry prospered. Unfortunately, Temple's invention was never patented and he could not collect the rewards of his invention. In 1854, Temple died a poor man.

Action by the federal attorney general in 1858 ended the patenting of inventions of slaves. In time, all black people were affected. The attorney general held that slaves were not citizens, and therefore the government could not grant them patents. Soon afterward a slave named Benjamin Montgomery invented a boat propeller. His master was Jefferson Davis, future President of the Confederate States of America. Davis tried to have the invention patented but was refused because it was the work of a slave. In 1861, however, the Confederate Congress passed a law which would grant patents to slaves. But, it was necessary for their masters to take an oath stating that the slaves had actually made the inventions. After the Civil War, black people were able to obtain patents for their inventions without difficulty.

Although slavery kept most black people from entering the business world, several who were free became successful businessmen. One such man was Paul Cuffee, the black shipowner who had founded the Friends' Society of Sierra Leone. Cuffee was born in 1759 and lived in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He started his business with a small boat that he built himself. Eventually Cuffee became the owner of ships of various sizes. He sailed his 162-ton ship, the *Hero*, around the Cape of Good Hope early in the 1800's. It was also around that time that Cuffee sailed his largest ship, the 268-ton *Alpha*, to Delaware and Georgia and then across the Atlantic on to Sweden. Before his death in 1817, Cuffee had accumulated a fortune from his business.

Some black men participated in the fur trade. Jean Baptiste Point DuSable ran a very successful fur-trading post near Lake Michigan. Jim Beckwourth was a trader for the American Fur Company. He became famous for discovering the lowest point extending across the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains which became known as Beckwourth Pass.

Another area of contribution to American culture was literature

In 1837, Phillip A. Bell helped publish The Colored American, *the second black newspaper in the United States.*

written by black people. Most black writers wrote antislavery literature. They wrote pamphlets, newspaper articles, poetry, autobiographies, and other books that described experiences under slavery.

In 1829, the same year that David Walker's abolitionist pamphlets were written, Robert A. Young published his *Ethiopian Manifesto.* George Moses Horton contributed the book of verse *Hope of Liberty.* Other well-known poets were James M. Whitfield and Frances E. W. Harper, whose largest commercial success was *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects.* Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm established their black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, in 1827. Several years later, Cornish became editor of another newspaper named the *Colored American.* Charles B. Ray and Phillip A. Bell helped Cornish publish this later newspaper.

William Wells Brown had many firsts in the field of black litera-

This photograph shows Frederick Douglass as an old man. Throughout his lifetime, Douglass fought for the rights of black people. He wrote a number of important books and also published a major antislavery newspaper.

ture. He was the first to publish a novel, the first to publish a drama, and the first to publish a travel book. The travel book, *Three Years in Europe*, and his novel, *Clotel, or the President's Daughter*, were first published in London, England, in 1852 and 1853 respectively. Brown's drama, *The Escape, or a Leap to Freedom*, appeared in 1858.

The most important black writers were former slaves who wrote about their experiences under slavery. Some slaves dictated their life stories to white abolitionists who wrote them down. Many of the autobiographies, however, were the works of slaves who had received some education and who wanted people to understand the harshness and cruelty of slavery in America.

One of the most outstanding of such authors was Frederick Doug-

lass. He wrote three autobiographical works, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845); *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855); and *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881). In 1847, Douglass began editing his popular antislavery newspaper, the *North Star*; three years later the name was changed to *Frederick Douglass' Paper.*

Some other former slaves who wrote narratives were Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, Lunsford Lane, J. W. Loguen, Solomon Northup, James W. C. Pennington, and Austin Steward. Their works, like those of Douglass, also help us to understand slavery. This understanding led many people, both black and white, to work together to seek freedom and justice for black people.

The Importance of Education

BLACK PEOPLE believed that knowledge would help solve some of their problems. In almost every community free black people would seek an education. At times they opened their own schools or received private instruction.

By the mid-nineteenth century an increasing number of black children were able to attend school. In the North, free black children attended schools opened by black people after being denied admittance to public schools. Eventually, some New England and Middle Atlantic states, such as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, opened separate schools for black children. Sometimes when public schools for black children were not available, a few whites, such as Prudence Crandell in Connecticut, admitted the children to their privately run schools.

In Massachusetts, a case against segregated education was argued before the Supreme Court. A five-year-old black girl named Sarah C. Roberts was not allowed to attend any of the white schools which she passed on her way to the school for black children. The child, with the help of her lawyer, Charles Sumner, sued the city of Boston for damages.

On December 4, 1849, Charles Sumner argued Sarah Robert's case before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. In presenting the case to the court, Sumner stated: "They have an equal right with white children to the Common Schools. A separate school . . . would not secure to them that . . . Equality which they would enjoy in the Common Schools."

The judges listened, but their decision was against Sarah Roberts. She was not allowed to attend the common schools. This decision which accepted the idea of "separate but equal" schools for children led to other regulations that separated blacks from whites in public places.

The Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin also opened separate schools as more black people settled within the area. But the schools were not large enough to serve all the children seeking an education.

In the South, whites generally paid little attention to public education. Wealthy landowners usually hired tutors for their children. Therefore education became a private rather than a public concern. The lack of interest in public education meant that most free black people would have little opportunity to receive any kind of education. Furthermore, white Southerners were very much against educating black people. Southern legislators passed laws that made the instruction of black people illegal. Although education for black Southerners was against the law, some more fortunate black children received private instruction from both black and white teachers. Many of the children were taught in secrecy.

Some black men attended and graduated from well-known colleges, such as Bowdoin, Oberlin, and Harvard Medical School. In 1826 at Bowdoin College, John Russwurm became the first black man to graduate from a college in the United States.

John Russwurm, the first black man to graduate from an American college.

Several schools that were opened for black students during the first part of the nineteenth century later became colleges. Some of these schools are still open today. Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Wilberforce University in Ohio are examples of such schools.

Slavery and the West

THE DISCOVERY of gold in California in 1848 and the settlement of areas in the Mexican cession brought about new debates in Congress. These debates were also about the expansion of slavery.

The area of the cession included what became the states of California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, and parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. Many Northerners did not want slavery in the area. A congressman from Pennsylvania named David Wilmot suggested that slavery be banned there. Other Northerners felt that the people who lived in the new territories should decide whether or not they wanted slavery. Southerners felt that slavery could not be stopped anywhere.

The bitter debate continued for nine months. Finally, the Northerners and the Southerners agreed to a compromise. They agreed on several points. Four of the points had to do with slavery: first, to admit California as a free state; second to open the Utah and New Mexico territories to slavery if the people wished to own slaves; third, to end the slave trade in the District of Columbia; and fourth, to protect the slave holders by passing a strict fugitive law.

The Compromise of 1850, as the agreement is called, however, was

Americans fought over slavery with words, with their fists, and with weapons.

by no means satisfactory to all the states. Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina considered seceding from, or leaving, the Union. Some Northerners felt that the Compromise of 1850 was a victory for the South because it opened up a large new area which had banned slavery — north of the 36° 30′ line. Northerners were also angry about the new Fugitive Slave Law, which made escape from slavery even more difficult. Federal officials were to be used to find and return fugitive slaves to the South.

The discussion over the expansion of slavery into the new lands went on for several years. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854, the Missouri Compromise was repealed, or set aside. The new act provided for the formation of separate territories. One was to be known as Kansas, the other as Nebraska. It also allowed the people of the Kansas and Nebraska territories to decide if they wanted slavery.

Since Kansas bordered the slave state of Missouri, slaveholders from Missouri worked hard to get Kansas admitted to the Union as a slave state. In Kansas, some men in favor of slavery passed a slave code stating that anyone found helping fugitive slaves would be put to death. In addition, people who held that slavery was not legal in Kansas would be jailed. Some men who were against slavery set up their own government. They tried to get Congress to recognize their government and admit them to the Union. As tensions developed, fighting broke out between the two groups. When it was all over, about two hundred people were dead in Kansas.

In 1857, the Supreme Court made a decision that helped to open all territories to slavery. Dred Scott was a slave from Missouri. His master took him to live in the free state of Illinois and later to the

The Dred Scott decision was a blow to the struggle against slavery. The Supreme Court ruled that Dred Scott, who is shown here, was still a slave even after he lived in free territory.

free northern part of the Louisiana Purchase. When he returned to Missouri, Scott sued for his freedom. He stated that living in two free regions made him a free man. The majority of the judges held that "Scott was not a citizen of Missouri . . . and not entitled . . . to sue in its courts. . . ." Chief Justice Roger Taney added that masters could take their slaves anywhere in the territories and still keep them enslaved. The Dred Scott decision left little hope that slavery would come to an end in America. In fact, abolitionists were alarmed — they knew that slaveholders had won a victory.

Black people protested the Dred Scott decision. On April 3, 1857, at a church meeting in Philadelphia, Robert Purvis and Charles L. Remond reviewed its meaning to black people. Purvis stated: "this . . . decision furnishes final confirmation of the already well-known fact that, under the Constitution and government of the United States, the colored people are nothing and can be nothing but an alien, disfranchised, and degraded class." Remond reminded the audience that "the power to oppress us lurked all the time in the Constitution, only waiting to be developed."

The protests from both black and white people could not change the decision. And black people were again denied rights which were enjoyed by whites.

Events Lead to War

In 1852, the publication of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe had forcefully presented slavery as cruel and very wrong. Mrs. Stowe did not live in the South, but her home in Cincinnati, Ohio, was a station on the Underground Railroad.

In the novel, Mrs. Stowe described the sufferings of slaves and the harshness of masters and overseers. She pointed out that black people not only wanted freedom but that they were willing to fight and die for it.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Abolitionist John Brown, leader of a raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

The novel became a best seller and 300,000 copies were sold during the first year of its publication. Later, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was performed as a play in theaters throughout the North. Many people who read the novel or saw the play became sympathetic toward the slaves. Thousands even joined the abolitionists in spreading the idea that slavery must end. White Southerners refused to accept Mrs. Stowe's story, but too many people realized now that slavery in America would have to die.

While the North and the South continued to disagree about slavery, a white abolitionist named John Brown was planning to attack slaveholders in Virginia and free their slaves. For several years Brown had worked in the antislavery movement in the Kansas territory. He had lost a son in the struggle to keep Kansas free of slavery. This loss,

however, did not keep Brown from becoming even more determined to end slavery. Some people called him a fanatic.

Brown's plan was to capture the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. He expected to get enough guns and ammunition to arm the slaves and help them rebel against their masters. Brown thought that his capture of the arsenal would encourage large numbers of slaves to join him. He even hoped that slaves in other states would be encouraged to rebel against their masters. In fact, he hoped there would be rebellion all through the nation.

On October 16, 1859, Brown and a small group of followers, including five blacks, made their move. Brown, however, had done a poor job plotting the attack. It is probably for this reason that the plan failed.

The state militia blocked all routes of escape and federal marines

Some Southern planters were so frightened by abolitionist John Brown that they armed their slaves to fight off invasion.

When Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860, the United States was already being torn apart over the issue of slavery.

captured Brown and his men in the fire-engine house. But this attempt to start a slave uprising had great effect upon slaveholders. Again, fear of new slave rebellions spread. Added to the fear was the knowledge that Northern abolitionists were encouraging Brown. Southerners felt that these Northerners would resort to using force, even bloodshed, to end slavery.

As we have seen, many events during the 1850's created greater disagreement between the North and the South. The election in 1860 of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States caused even more hard feelings between Northerners and Southerners. Lincoln belonged to the Republican party, which had been organized in 1854. Republican party members were against the expansion of slavery into the territories. Lincoln believed in his party's position on slavery but denied that he intended to free the slaves. He promised that he was prepared to see that the Fugitive Slave Law was enforced. He also approved the right of the states to continue slavery where it existed.

But Southerners were not satisfied. Again there was talk of the South seceding from the Union. Generally, Southerners believed that any state could leave the Union if the people so wished. Finally, South Carolina took the lead and did so.

Before Lincoln's inauguration, six other states seceded. Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas joined South Carolina. These states formed a new government known as the Confederate States of America. They had a constitution similar to that of the United States and elected Jefferson Davis as their President.

Few Southerners believed that the Northerners would try to force the seceded states back into the Union. Fewer still realized that a bitter war was to develop between the North and the South.

In 1858, while still a senator, Lincoln said, "We cannot separate." He had stated that "a house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." But, on March 4, 1861, when Lincoln took his oath of office as President of the United States, he promised not to interfere with slavery.

All attention was now on Fort Sumter, South Carolina. The Union still had control of the fort, but supplies had run short. The day after

On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces fired on Union-held Fort Sumter in South Carolina. The Civil War had begun.

his inauguration, Lincoln learned that the food at Fort Sumter was running low. To supply food to the men at Fort Sumter would be an act of war against the South. Furthermore, the remaining slave states were sure to secede and join the Confederate States.

The situation at Fort Sumter was tense. Finally Lincoln decided to send food supplies to the fort. President Davis sent an order to the fort stating that the Northerners must leave or be fired upon. On April 12, the South opened fire at Fort Sumter and the Civil War had begun. The unanswered question about slavery had led the nation into war.

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THE BLACK MAN IN AMERICA 1791-1861

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