

## Unit 1: Anti-Slavery and Abolitionism in New England

### Lesson 3: Voices from the Past

**Grade 5**

**Time: 45 minutes**

**Background:**

During the first half of the 19th century, enslavement was a crucial part of the overall economy of the United States, including in the North. In the early 19th century, abolitionist societies sprang up in an effort to change public opinion and put an end to this immoral practice. In spite of their efforts, enslavement existed in some form in parts of New England until the 1840s or later. Local businesses knowingly made and sold products to areas where the institution of enslavement flourished. Examples of these businesses that profited from enslavement of Black people elsewhere in the country exist in Old Sturbridge Village.

In this lesson, students will examine the wide range of mixed attitudes found in antebellum Central New England. They will learn about the lives of real people who persevered within the system of slavery and against racism, as well as those who acknowledged the wrongs of slavery and worked to abolish it.

**Lesson Objectives:**

1. Students will study biographies of, and material culture from, People of Color as well as White abolitionists from late 18th- and early 19th-century New England.
2. Students will construct a timeline that will allow them to better understand the sequence of events relating to enslavement and abolition in New England.
3. Through these activities, students will be primed for discussions and questions of how to make change and resist injustice.

**Essential Questions:**

1. To whom did the term *abolitionist* refer?
2. How did People of Color resist the institution of slavery and show resilience? How did they work to end such practices?

**Resources:**

- pencils
- timeline worksheet
- biographies
- images of primary sources

- biography worksheet

### Key words and Vocabulary:

- **Enslaved person:** A person who is legally considered the property of another person, and forced to obey him or her. Historical and many contemporary sources refer to such individuals as “slaves.”
- **Abolitionist:** A person who favors ending a practice or institution, especially enslavement.
- **Antebellum:** Existing before a war; in this unit’s case, the American Civil War.
- **Primary source:** A first-hand account of a topic, from someone who experienced it.
- **Material culture:** Tools, weapons, utensils, machines, ornaments, art, buildings, monuments, written records, religious images, clothing, and any other ponderable objects produced or used by humans.

### Procedure:

1. Print out copies of timeline and biography worksheets.
2. Print out biographies and divide so that each student will have one person to read about.
3. Print out images of primary sources.

### Activity 1: Voices from the Past (45 minutes)

Materials needed: copies of primary sources and accompanying biographies, timeline of enslavement and abolition in New England

Today, we are going to look at the lives of several people who lived during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of them were abolitionists, or people who worked to end the practice of slavery. Some of them were formerly enslaved, themselves.

Each of you will receive a biography of a real-life person from this time. You will read through the biography and examine an image of a primary source that relates to that person. At the end of class, we’ll add information about these individuals to our timeline. This will help to illuminate the personal stories behind enslavement and abolition.

#### Directions:

1. Give each student a one-paragraph biography of a real person from New England in the late 18th or early 19th century. Each biography is accompanied by an image of a primary source that was related to that person. Note: there are 19 people in all, so larger classes might have some duplicates.
2. Have students read the biography of their person quietly to themselves.
3. On the notecatcher, students should identify one important date from that person’s life. This date will be included on the class’s timeline of slavery and abolition.
4. Record two or three facts about their person’s life. What makes them important? What did they do during their lifetime?
5. Examine the image of the primary source. What is it? What can it tell us about our person? What doesn’t it tell us?

6. Once everyone has read through their biographies and examined the primary sources, students may present to the class and add to the class timeline.

As individuals are presented to the class and placed on the timeline, students should discuss what the source and the historical information about the associated individual can teach us about the past.

Encourage each student to find connections and associations between the primary source and individual they are presenting to the other primary sources and individuals presented. How were these people influenced by others? How did they influence others?

Conclusion questions:

1. How did Black and White people work against the institution of slavery in New England in the 1700 and 1800s?
2. How did they make change? How can you make change today?

## Voices from the Past Worksheet

1. My person's name is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. Two facts about my historical figure:
  - 1.
  
  - 2.
  
3. One important date in my historical figure's life:
  
4. This date is important because...
  
5. My primary source is: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. One thing it tells me about my historical figure:
  
7. One question I still have about my historical figure:

## **Lesson 3: Voices from the Past**

### **Activity Resource: Biographies and Primary Sources**

#### **Elizabeth Freeman**

Elizabeth Freeman, also known as MumBet was born enslaved in 1744. At age seven, MumBet was moved from her birthplace in Claverack, New York, to be with Hannah and John Ashley in Sheffield, Massachusetts. The house where she was enslaved still exists, as you can see below. We think she eventually got married, but her husband died during the American Revolutionary War. In 1781, she sued the Massachusetts government for her freedom. She argued that the new Constitution of Massachusetts guaranteed freedom for everyone, not just White people. The courts agreed and declared her enslavement illegal. She decided to work for the family of the lawyer that helped her, in the towns of Great Barrington and Stockbridge, MA.



*Photograph of Colonel John Ashley House, Sheffield, Massachusetts, USA. Taken by Wikimedia user Daderot. Dated July 2007.*



*Portrait of Elizabeth Freeman, around the age of 67*

## Lucy Foster

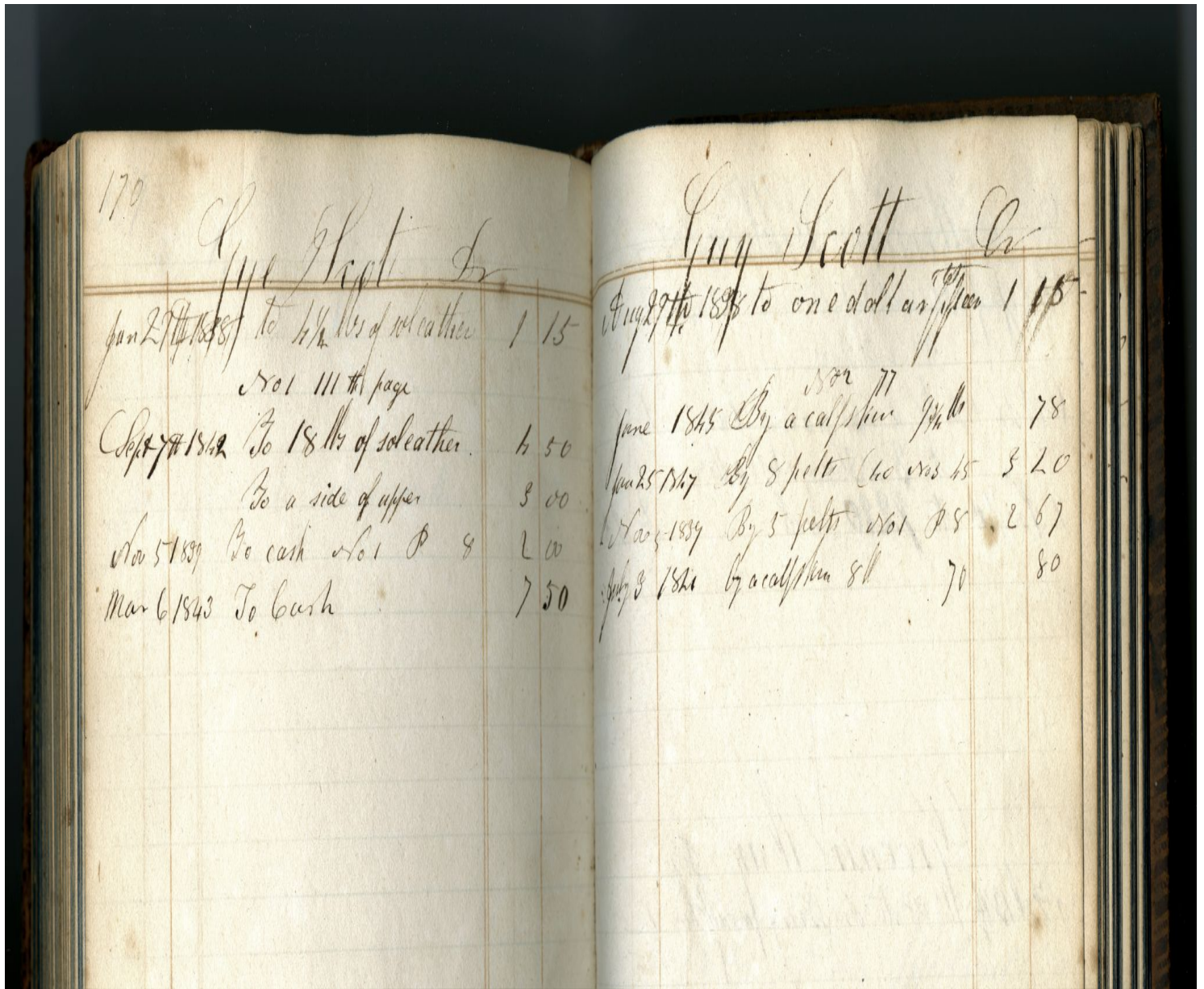
Lucy Foster was born enslaved in Massachusetts in 1767. In 1771, she was sent to Hannah Foster in Andover, Massachusetts. Because in 1783 the Supreme Court in Massachusetts declared enslavement to be illegal, we think her enslavement ended around 1783. Lucy continued to live with her former enslaver, Hannah, until she was 22. She eventually lived on her own. When Hannah died in 1812, Hannah's will gave Lucy 1 cow, 1 acre of land, and \$126.15 (which today is worth about \$2,000). By 1815, Lucy had her own house, which probably included a tavern where she sold food and lodging to guests. She also had a garden known as "Black Lucy's Garden." We have quite a bit of pottery from Lucy's House, of which you see an example. She died in 1845.



*A hand painted mug with a floral pattern. From the Lucy Foster Collection.*

# Guy Scott

Guy Scott was born in 1792 in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. We do not know a lot about his family background, but we know that his father was a Black man, who might have been born enslaved and later liberated, and his mother was either Black or Black and Indigenous. His father died when he was very young, and his mother brought the family to Palmer, Massachusetts, where she had grown up. By 1818, Guy was living back in Sturbridge, and he married Hannah Simmonds. Because the name "Simmonds" was common among members of the Nipmuc Nation in the nearby towns of Brimfield and Holland, we think Hannah was Nipmuc as well. For 10 years, Guy was a day laborer and farmer. In 1829, he started working at the Sturbridge graphite mine (called a "lead mine"). By 1840, he was a foreman at the mine, and he was earning enough that, combined with his wife Hannah's work, Guy and Hannah were able to improve their home and live comfortably. Hannah died in 1846 from tuberculosis. Guy married Laura Babcock in 1847, but then he died five months later. The documents you see here are a ledger with Guy's account at the store in Sturbridge, and Guy's name on a list of eligible voters in Sturbridge in 1843 for congressional elections.



The store ledger tracking Guy Scott's account. Old Sturbridge Village collections.

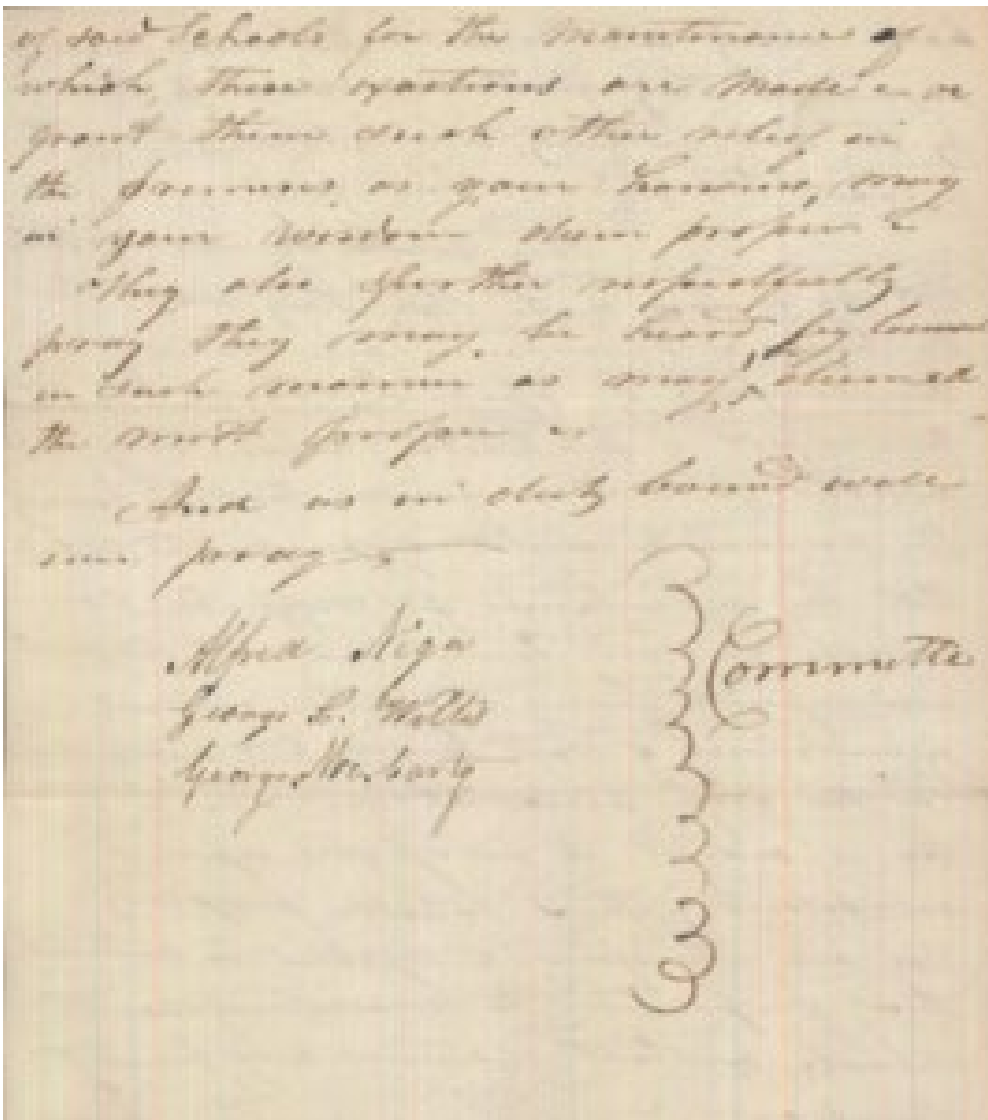


Sylvanus Stone  
Livi H Stone  
John Shaddon  
Chiny S Shaddon  
Abraham Stockwell  
Elias S Stephens  
Peter Saunders  
Wm S Saunders  
Guy Scott  
Samuel Shepherd  
Horatio Shepherd  
Simon M Striter  
Elisha Southwick  
Ezra F. Shaw  
Aar Sly  
Joel W. Tans  
Calvin Shepherd  
Milton Starkey

A list of eligible voters in Sturbridge for congressional elections, 1843. Old Sturbridge Village collections.

## Alfred Niger

Alfred Niger was born in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, probably in 1796. We do not know whether or not he or either of his parents were enslaved at that time since Connecticut was gradually abolishing enslavement. By 1820, Niger was living in Providence, Rhode Island. He worked as a barber, which, unlike heavy labor or service labor, allowed him to accumulate wealth. Still, as a Black man, he was discriminated against and not allowed to vote. So, in 1831, Alfred and two other Black men wrote and signed a petition to Rhode Island's Assembly, complaining that they were taxed without representation and that Providence refused to build a public school for their children. The Assembly did nothing. Alfred continued to fight: he was very active in abolition and joined efforts by the white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. In 1836 he helped create the Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Society (RIASS). In 1841, there was a movement to allow all men to vote, not just those with property. Alfred tried to vote and was not allowed to. This started protests and debate, and in 1842, the restriction was abolished and Black men were legally allowed to vote in Providence, Rhode Island. Alfred died on August 25, 1862.

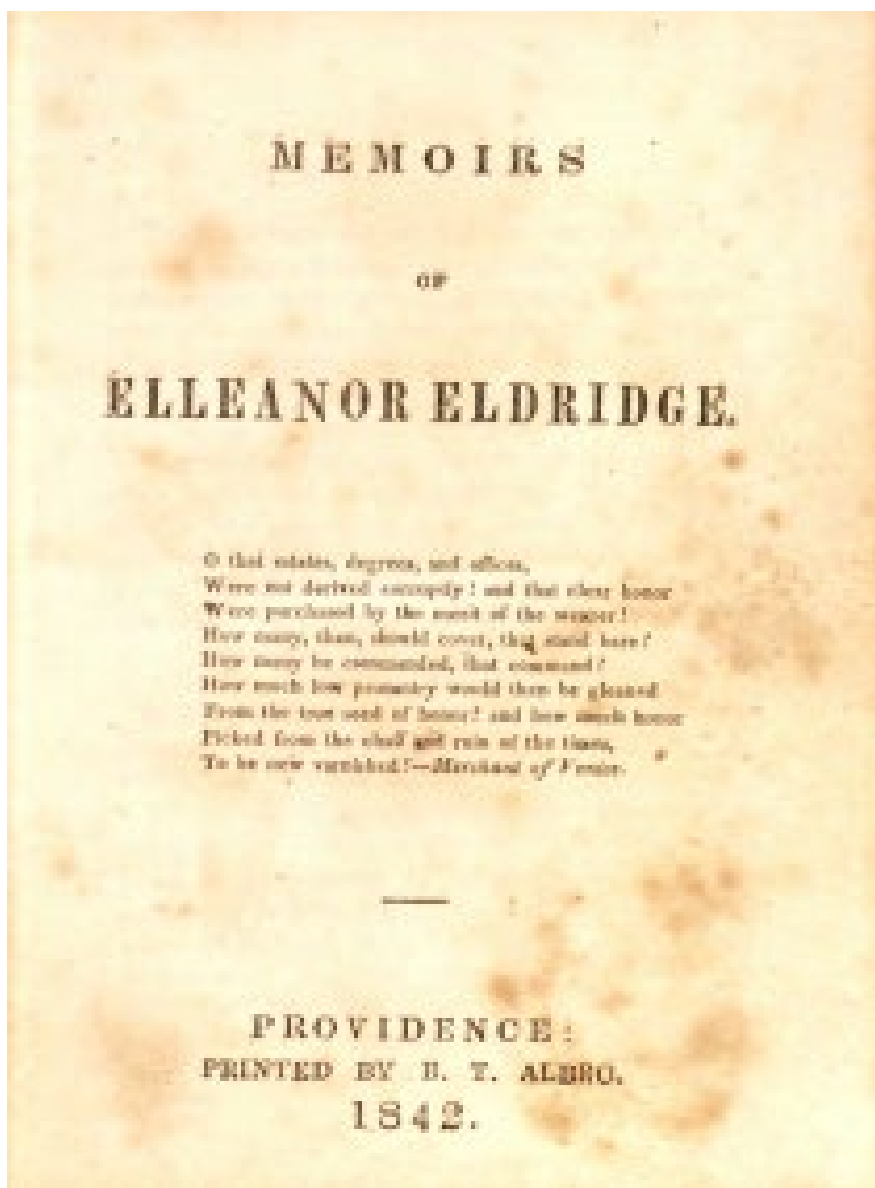


of said schools for the maintenance of  
which, these objections are made, or  
grant them such other relief in  
the premises as your Honor, may  
in your wisdom deem proper &  
They also further respectfully  
pray they may be heard by law  
in such manner as may be deemed  
the most proper &  
And as our duty bound we  
are yours  
Alfred Niger  
George L. Mills  
George W. Loring  
Committee

Signature of Alfred Niger on a petition to grant Black men the right to vote in Providence, Rhode Island. Rhode Island State Archives.

## Elleanor Elldridge

Elleanor Elldridge was born in Warwick, Rhode Island, in either 1784 or 1785. Her mother, Hannah, was Indigenous, probably from the Narragansett Nation. Her father, Robin, was Black. They were a wealthy and respected family. Elleanor worked hard and was careful with her money and eventually was able to buy a house and land in Providence. She never married. If she did, the law at the time said all her property then belonged to her husband. She eventually bought the estate next door, as well. Other Rhode Islanders wanted Elleanor's property and took advantage of the racism and discrimination against Black people to claim her property as her own. First, while she was away recovering from a sickness, a man who had loaned her money to buy some of her land died and left his estate to his brother. The brother sold both that estate and Elleanor's, then re-purchased them for himself. To help raise money for her legal fight, she wrote a memoir in 1847 called *Memoirs of Elleanor Eldridge*. It was a long fight in the courts, but eventually Elleanor was able to get her land back, after paying even more money for it. She died in 1862.



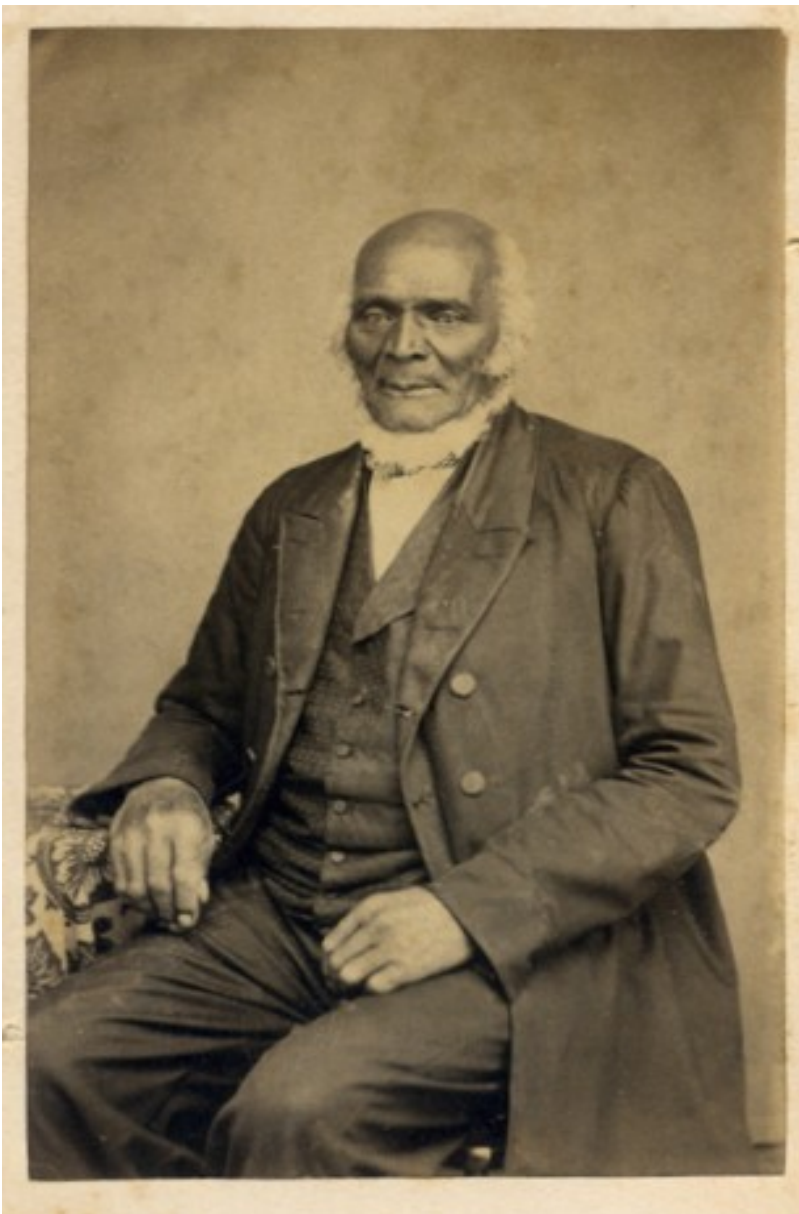
Title page of Elleanor Elldridge's memoirs, 1842



*Drawing of Eleanor Eldridge*

## James Mars

James Mars was born enslaved in Caanan, Connecticut, in 1790. At the time, enslavement was being slowly abolished. Children born to enslaved parents would be freed when they were considered fully adults: 25 years old for men, 21 years old for women. James' enslaver, a Congregationalist minister, wanted to move to Virginia, where enslavement was still fully legal. James' parents sought freedom in a nearby town, where some local White residents helped them hide from their enslaver. Eventually, James' parents and sister were freed, but James and his brother were sold to another man. James sought freedom through the courts, which ruled that he could purchase his own freedom. In the 1830s, James married, had two children, and moved to Hartford. He was a deacon at a local Congregationalist Church and helped another enslaved person, Nancy Jackson from Georgia, sue for her freedom. His family moved to Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1845, where he lived for almost twenty years. After the Civil War, Mars published a book about the brutalities he experienced as an enslaved man in the North. He died in 1880 in Ashley Falls, Massachusetts.



*Photograph of James Mars. By Thomas M. V. Doughty, ca 1870. Connecticut History Online, Connecticut Historical Society.*

L I F E  
O F  
J A M E S M A R S,  
A S L A V E  
B O R N A N D S O L D I N  
C O N N E C T I C U T .

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W R I T T E N B Y H I M S E L F .

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H A R T F O R D :  
P R E S S O F C A S E , L O C K W O O D & C O M P A N Y .  
1 8 6 8 .

P r i c e 2 5 C e n t s .

*Title page of James Mars' biography, 1868*

## James W.C. Pennington

James W.C. Pennington was born around the year 1807 in Maryland. Eventually James sought freedom and managed to get to New York. He was assisted by people in the Underground Railroad. After working and going to school in Brooklyn, he went to Yale University in Connecticut and became a minister for the Congregationalist Church. He first ministered in Long Island and then in Hartford, Connecticut, at Talcott Street Church, which you see in this photo. His home in Hartford was a place where enslaved people seeking freedom could rest and stay. In 1840, he became president of the Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1843 was a delegate to the World Anti-Slavery Convention. He preached at many churches against the evils of enslavement and discrimination. After the American Civil War, he moved down to Florida to work as a minister there.



*Faith Congregational Church, which James W.C. Pennington helped found*



*Portrait of James W.C. Pennington*



## Harriet E. Wilson

Harriet E. Wilson was born a legally free woman in Milford, New Hampshire. Her mother was of Irish ancestry, her father of Black and Indigenous ancestry. Her father died when she was young and her mother abandoned her. An orphan, she became an indentured servant of the Hayward family. Her indenture ended when she turned 18, and she found work as a household servant and seamstress in various southern New Hampshire houses. She married Thomas Wilson, but he soon abandoned her, and she had to live at a Poor Farm. Her son George was born after Thomas left. Thomas returned to get her and George out of the poor farm. He then went to work at sea and never came back. Wilson wrote a book to raise money for George when he was sick. You see the preface of the book here. Harriet later became a Spiritualist, and traveled around the country to speak, lecture, entertain, and communicate with the spirit world. She died in 1900 in Quincy, Massachusetts.

### P R E F A C E .

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IN offering to the public the following pages, the writer confesses her inability to minister to the refined and cultivated, the pleasure supplied by abler pens. It is not for such these crude narrations appear. Deserted by kindred, disabled by failing health, I am forced to some experiment which shall aid me in maintaining myself and child without extinguishing this feeble life. I would not from these motives even palliate slavery at the South, by disclosures of its appurtenances North. My mistress was wholly imbued with *southern* principles. I do not pretend to divulge every transaction in my own life, which the unprejudiced would declare unfavorable in comparison with treatment of legal bondmen; I have purposely omitted what would most provoke shame in our good anti-slavery friends at home.

My humble position and frank confession of errors will, I hope, shield me from severe criticism. Indeed, defects are so apparent it requires no skilful hand to expose them.

I sincerely appeal to my colored brethren universally for patronage, hoping they will not condemn this attempt of their sister to be erudite, but rally around me a faithful band of supporters and defenders.

H. E. W.

Image from the first page of Harriet Wilson's 1859 novel.



*Photograph of Harriet Wilson, from the Spiritual Path Church website*

## Quock Walker

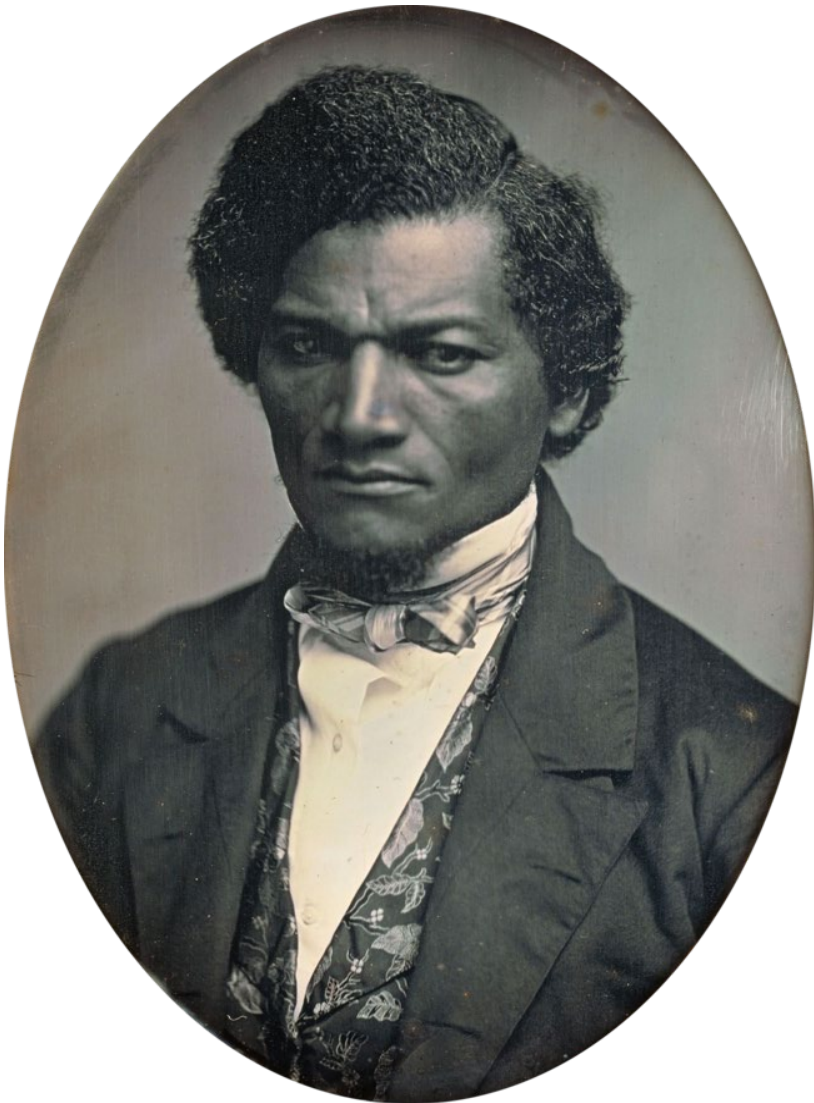
Quock Walker was from Barre, Massachusetts. We think that the name “Quock” is an English version of the name *Kwaku*, which is from the Akan language in Ghana and means “boy born on Wednesday” (the Akan people often name their children after the date that they were born). His parents were probably kidnapped in Ghana and enslaved. In 1781, Quock sought freedom from his enslavers and hid at a nearby farm belonging to the Caldwells (you can see the house and farm in this photo). His enslaver got him back and beat him. Quock sued him in court, and his enslaver sued the Caldwells for sheltering Quock. The cases eventually ended up at the Massachusetts Supreme Court, and the court ruled that enslavement was illegal under the Massachusetts Constitution. We don’t know much about Quock’s life after this. He married and raised a family in Barre, and died sometime between 1790 and 1810.



*Caldwell farm in Barre, Massachusetts, where Quock Walker took refuge. Barre Historical Society and Arthur C. Walworth, Jr.*

## Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was the most photographed American in the 19th century. Because he was born enslaved in Maryland, he never smiled in photos in order to remind people that enslaved people were not happy being enslaved. His ancestry was Black, Indigenous, and probably also White on his mother's side, and almost certainly White on his father's side. The wife of his enslaver started teaching him to read, and when his enslaver forbade that it only encouraged Douglass to read more. He became desperate for freedom from enslavement. In 1837, he fell in love with Anna Murray. Unlike Frederick, Anna was born a free woman. Inspired by Anna's freedom, Douglass managed to seek freedom himself by travelling to New York City in 24 hours. He then sent for Anna. For several years, he and Anna lived in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and then Lynn, Massachusetts. Frederick became an extremely influential activist against enslavement and discrimination. He believed that all people, including women, black people, indigenous people, and Chinese immigrants were created equal. Because Frederick did not earn a lot of money from his speeches, Anna worked doing laundry and making shoes to earn their family enough money to survive. She was part of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society and encouraged Frederick to train their sons to set type for Frederick's abolitionist newspaper, *North Star*.



*Portrait of Frederick Douglass. Between 1847 and 1852. By Samuel J. Miller. Art Institute of Chicago. Public Domain.*



Portrait of Anna Murray Douglass. Circa 1860. From Rosetta Douglass Sprague, "My Mother As I Recall Her", 1900. Library of Congress. Public Domain.



Nathan and Mary (Polly) Johnson properties, where Frederick Douglass lived after escaping slavery. April 19, 2008. Daniel Case.

## Anthony Burns

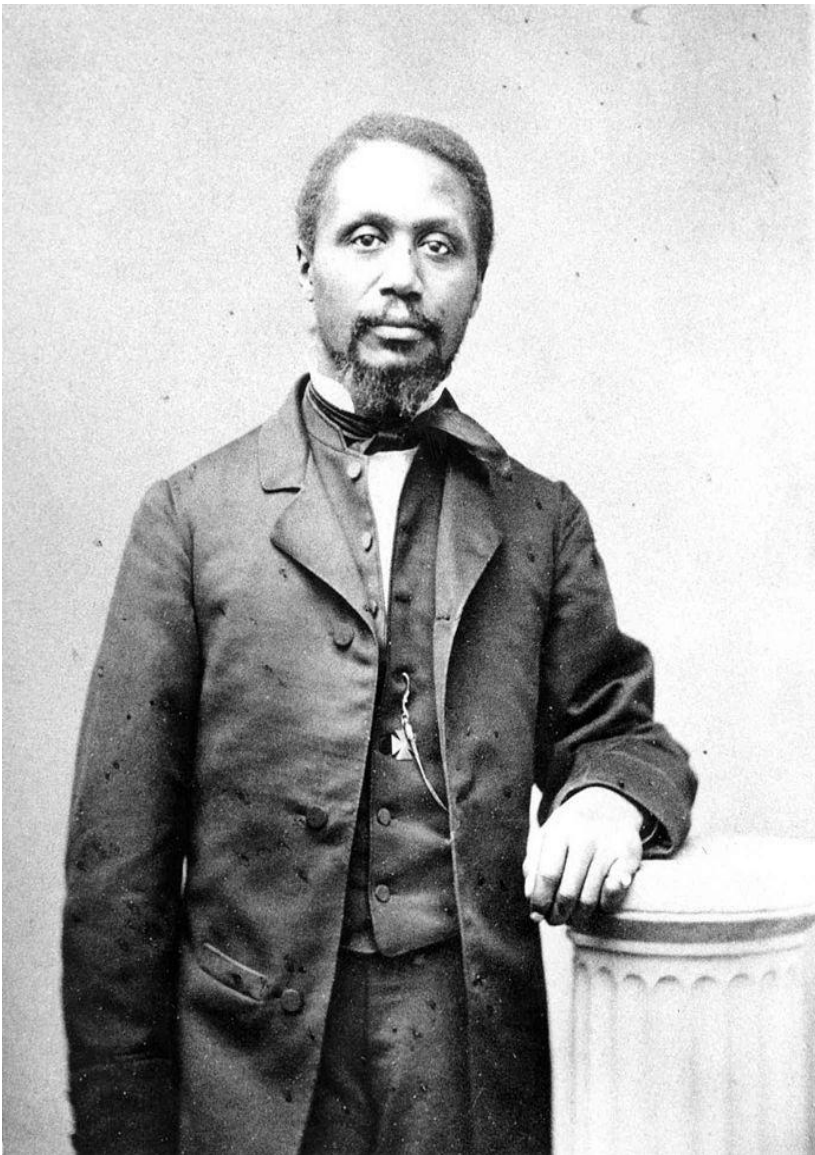
Anthony Burns was born enslaved in Virginia in 1834. At six years old, Anthony learned to read, and at age seven he started working various jobs, the payment for which went to his enslavers. For many years after that, he worked for different enslavers and became increasingly desperate for freedom. Eventually, some sailors and free workers encouraged him to seek freedom. In 1854, one of his friends, a sailor, helped him hide on a ship to Boston. When he reached Boston, Anthony started looking for work. After a month of freedom in Boston, he wrote a letter to his enslaved brother in Virginia in which he mentioned where he was living. The enslaver of his brother found the letter and had a warrant issued for Anthony's arrest under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. That same day, Anthony was found in Boston and arrested. During Anthony's trial, a group of Boston citizens, enraged that the law was trying to enslave Anthony, attacked the courthouse at night. A depiction of that attack is seen here. The attack was stopped and several people arrested, and Anthony's trial continued. The judge hearing the case hated the Fugitive Slave Law, but said that he had no choice but follow the law and send Anthony back into enslavement. To ensure that Anthony was successfully sent back to his enslaver, 2,000 soldiers and Marines were deployed to guard Anthony and prevent angry citizens from trying to free him. Anthony was sent back to enslavement in Virginia. Back in Boston, money was raised to purchase Anthony, and after the transaction Anthony was legally freed and he returned to Boston. He went on to study at Oberlin College in Ohio, one of the few colleges that accepted black students, and then went to Canada to be a minister.



*Night attack on the court house, Boston (ca.1854). Published date: 1856. From Anthony Burns, a history. By Charles Emery Stevens. Public Domain.*

## Robert Morris

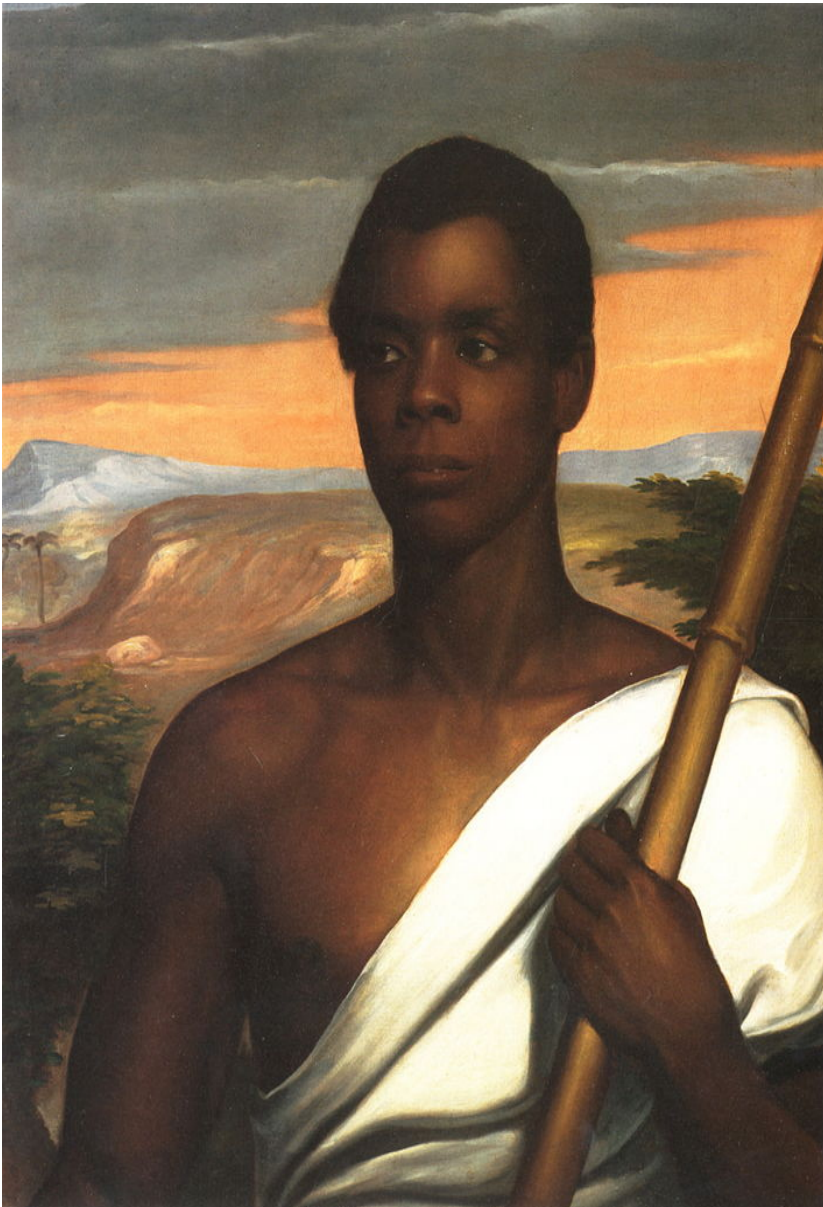
Robert Morris was born in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1823, and grew up among social activists. At the age of 15, he worked as a household servant for an abolitionist lawyer, Ellis Gray Loring. Loring encouraged Robert to become a lawyer, and Robert did so in 1847 when he was admitted to the Massachusetts bar. In law, a “bar” is the group of lawyers licensed to practice law. He became one of the first Black lawyers in the United States. He was the first Black lawyer to win a lawsuit. In the courtroom, he fought to free enslaved people who came to Massachusetts to seek freedom, and he fought to end racial discrimination. In 1849, he and the White abolitionist Charles Sumner represented Sarah Roberts and her father Benjamin in the first lawsuit against segregation in public schools in the United States, when Sarah was not allowed to attend schools near her home because she was black. When the lawsuit failed, Robert and Charles worked to get a law passed in Massachusetts, in 1855, which banned segregation in Massachusetts public schools. Robert tried to help free Shadrach Minkins in 1851 and Anthony Burns in 1854. He also tried to end housing segregation in Chelsea, Massachusetts, when he moved into a neighborhood where only White people were allowed. He died in 1882 in Boston.



*Photograph of Robert Morris. 1847. Social Law Library. Author unknown.*

## Sengbe Pieh

Sengbe Pieh, also known as Joseph Cinqué, was from Mendeland (today known as Sierra Leone). Sengbe along with over 100 others were illegally kidnapped in 1839 by enslavers and taken to Cuba. After two Spanish men purchased Sengbe and many others, Sengbe led his fellow Mende captives in taking over the ship, *La Amistad*, they were enslaved on. The Mende had demanded that their enslavers sail the ship back to West Africa, but the enslavers at night secretly sailed the ship north until it arrived near New York and New Jersey. The United States government confiscated the ship, and Sengbe and the other Mende were put in prison in New Haven, Connecticut, because they had killed the captain and cook of the ship. A fierce legal battle began for the freedom of the Mende. Several abolitionists from New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, as well as former president John Quincy Adams from Braintree, Massachusetts, defended the Mende, and eventually, in 1841, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Mende should be allowed to go home. Sengbe and his fellow Mende returned to Mendeland in 1842.



*Portrait. 1840 by Nathaniel Jocelyn. New Haven Colony Historical Society.*



## Nkrumah Mireku

Nkrumah Mireku, also known as Newport Gardner, was born in Africa in 1746. He was kidnapped and enslaved by a merchant in Newport, Rhode Island. The wife of Nkrumah's enslaver arranged for him to take music lessons. He helped found the Free African Union Society, which fought enslavement and discrimination and tried to raise money for Black families. In 1791, he won money in a lottery pool that the Society had organized and now had enough money to buy freedom for him and his family. When Nkrumah was free, he set up a singing school and composed music. This is a modern-day performance and score of the song "Crooked Shanks" that he wrote in 1801. In 1824, he helped start the Colored Union Church, Newport's first Black church. Nkrumah's dream was to return to Africa, and he was finally able to do so in 1826. He died in Liberia that same year, finally at his true home.

**Crooked Shanks**

*aka Newport Gardner 1803  
orig Accramar Mareycoo – a freed slave*

chords and edit by G.Whaley

The image shows a musical score for the song "Crooked Shanks". It is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The score consists of five staves of music. Above the notes, the chords G, C, D, and G are indicated. The music is a simple melody with a repeating pattern of eighth and quarter notes. The score is attributed to Newport Gardner (1803) and is based on the original work by Accramar Mareycoo, a freed slave. The score was transcribed and edited by G. Whaley.

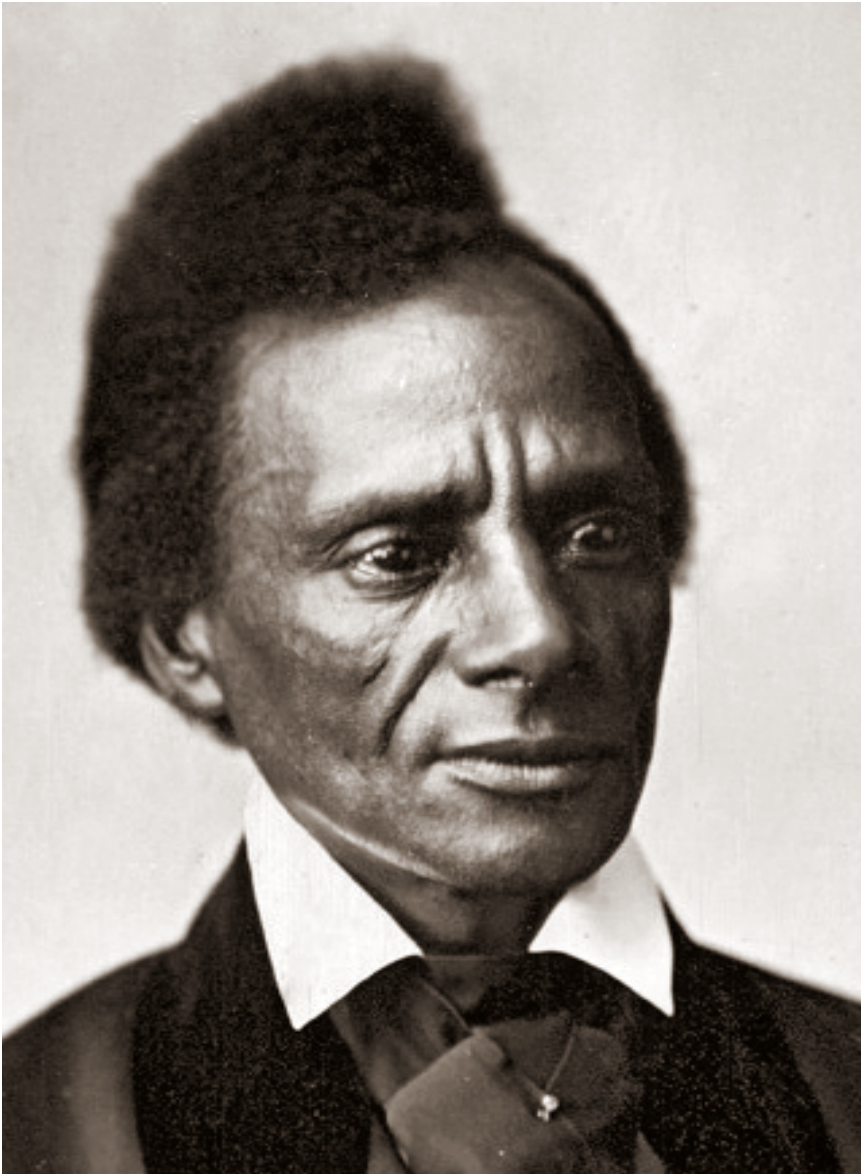
Transcription of "Crooked Shanks". Listen to this rendition here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzV - 6Bc 58&ab\\_channel=GaryWhaley](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzV - 6Bc 58&ab_channel=GaryWhaley) This is a contemporary arrangement and recording, but of the original work.

## **Sarah Parker and Charles Lenox Remond**

Sarah Parker and Charles Lenox Remond were from Salem, Massachusetts. They and their siblings were all born free. Charles was born in 1810, Sarah in 1826. When Sarah and her sisters were put in a high school that supposedly allowed Black children to attend, they were expelled because the school committee was planning to build a separate school for Black students. The family moved to Newport, Rhode Island, in hopes of finding a school that would accept Black children, but they couldn't find one there, either. Eventually a private school accepted them as students. This discrimination made Sarah determined to fight for equality and the abolition of enslavement. Her brother Charles had already joined the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1838. In 1842, Sarah, at only 16 years old, gave her first speech against enslavement, joined by her older brother Charles. Charles was also determined to give women equal rights. In 1840 he and William Lloyd Garrison protested that women were not allowed in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Charles and Sarah traveled all over the United States and in Europe in their activism for equal rights. Sarah eventually became a nurse in Italy. Charles helped recruit Black soldiers to fight for the Union during the Civil War.



*Portrait of Sarah Parker, c. 1865.*



*Portrait. Photograph by Samuel Broadbent, appx. 1851-1856. Boston Public Library.*

## Amos and Jehiel Beman

Amos and Jehiel Beman belonged to a family of influential Black activists in Colchester and Middletown, Connecticut. The new Beman Middle School is named after their family. Jehiel Beman's father was freed from enslavement after fighting in the American Revolution. At that time the family lived in Colchester, and Jehiel became a shoemaker and minister. In 1830, Jehiel moved to Middletown and pastored Cross Street AME Zion Church. He and his brother Leverett fought tirelessly for the abolition of enslavement and for equal rights, and helped liberate people through the Underground Railroad even after such help was made illegal by the United States government. Jehiel died in 1858. Jehiel's son Amos was born in Colchester in 1812. In 1830, Amos tried to enroll at Wesleyan University but was not allowed to. He instead studied at the Oneida Institute in New York. In 1841, he became pastor of Temple African American Church in New Haven. As a minister, he opposed enslavement, discrimination, and the use of alcohol. He was against the plan by the American Colonization Society to move Black people to Liberia in West Africa. "Why should we leave this land, so dearly brought by the blood, groans and tears of our fathers? Truly, this is our home, here let us live and here let us die." Beman died in 1872.



Portrait. From Amos Beman Scrapbooks I-IV. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the American Literature Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.



*Portrait of Jehiel Beman. c. 1840. Wesleyan University Special Collections & Archives.*

## Angelina and Sarah Grimké

Angelina and Sarah Grimké were abolitionists, political activists, women's rights advocates, and supporters of the women's suffrage movement. They were born in Charleston, South Carolina (Sarah in 1792, Angelina in 1805). Drawing their views from natural rights theory (as set forth in the Declaration of Independence), the United States Constitution, Christian beliefs in the Bible, and their own childhood memories of the cruel enslavement and racism in the South, the Grimkés proclaimed the injustice of denying freedom to any man or woman. Angelina's greatest fame was between 1835, when William Lloyd Garrison published a letter of hers in his anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*. In 1838, she gave a speech to abolitionists with a hostile, noisy, stone-throwing crowd outside Pennsylvania Hall. In their activism, the Grimkes frequently visited towns and cities in Massachusetts. Read the following quotes from a pamphlet written by Angelina in 1836 and a speech she gave in 1863:

"If it is a self-evident truth that all men, everywhere and of every color are born equal, and have an inalienable right to Liberty, then it is equally true that no man can be born a slave, and no man can ever rightfully be reduced to involuntary bondage and held as a slave, however fair may be the claim of his master or mistress through wills and title deeds... ..If a law commands me to sin I will break it; if it calls me to suffer, I will let it take its course unresistingly... ..Slavery always has, and always will, produce insurrections wherever it exists, because it is a violation of the natural order of things..." (1836, "An Appeal to Christian Women of the South")

"Abolitionists never sought place or power. All they asked was freedom; all they wanted was that the white man should take his foot off the negro's neck... ..My friends, it is a fact that the South has incorporated slavery into her religion; that is the most fearful thing in this rebellion. They are fighting, verily believing that they are doing God service." (May 1863, speech at the Woman's Loyal National League convention)



*Wood engravings of Angelina and Sarah Grimké. Unknown authors or date. Library of Congress.*

## Abby Kelley

Abby Kelley was born in Pelham, Massachusetts. Over the course of her life she lived in the towns of Worcester, Millbury, and Lynn. A white woman, the Quaker teachings of her parents and friends inspired her to be a fierce activist for abolishing enslavement and ensuring rights for women. In 1836, she joined the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Lynn. While many abolitionists simply wanted to end enslavement, Abby wanted Black people to have full and equal civil rights to White people. In 1837, Abby was a delegate to the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. In 1838, she moved back to Millbury, where she founded the Millbury Anti-Slavery Society and started giving lectures for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1854, Abby was made the chief fundraiser for the American Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1857 had become the general agent for it. Abby also wanted equal rights for women and encouraged the feminists Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone to be active in politics. In 1850, she helped organize the National Women's Rights Convention in Massachusetts and in 1868 helped start the New England Woman Suffrage Association. Her husband, Stephen Symonds Foster, was also an activist against enslavement and discrimination and for equal rights for all. Abby and Stephen's farm in Worcester, now known as Liberty Farm, was part of the Underground Railroad. She died in 1887.



*A. K. Foster*

*Portrait of Abby Kelley with her signature, from A life for liberty by Sallie Holley, John White Chadwick, 1899, work created c. 1879. Public Domain.*

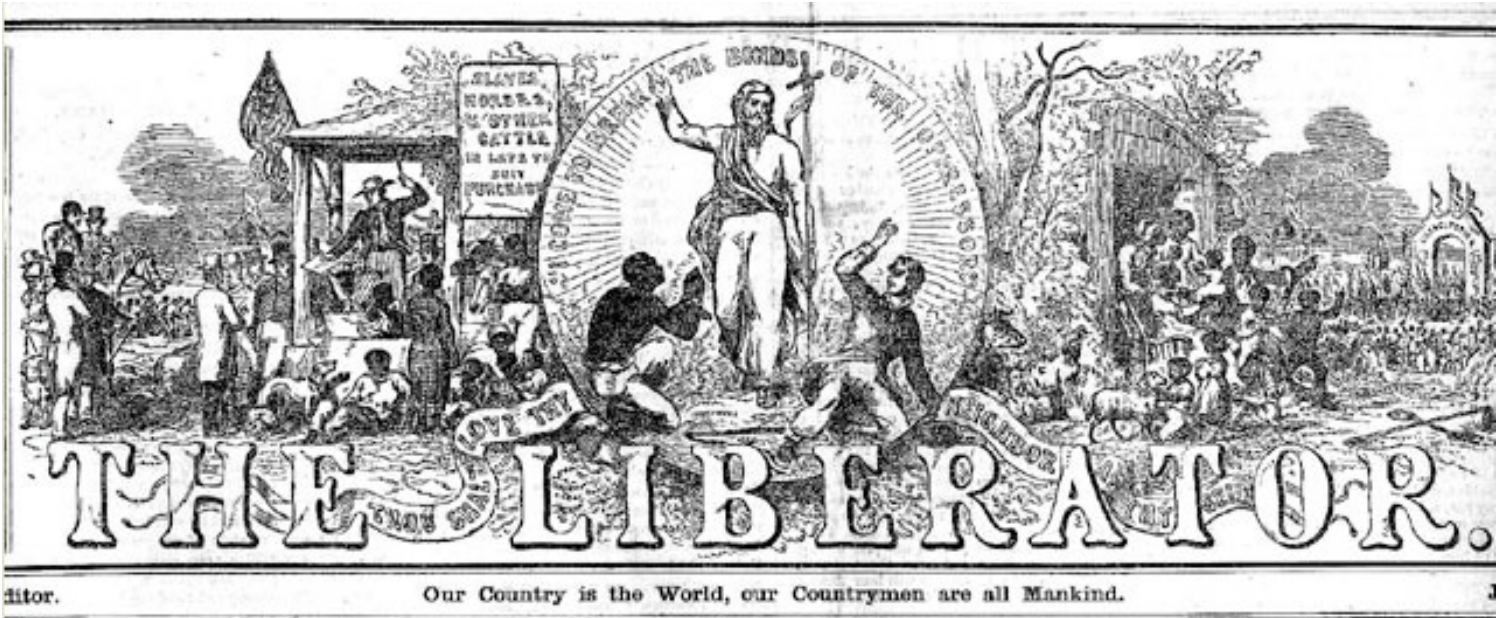


## William Lloyd Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison was born in 1805 in Newburyport, Massachusetts. He was an extremely influential white activist for abolishing enslavement and for equal treatment and civil rights for black people and women. He became an activist at the age of 25, inspired by the white Presbyterian minister John Rankin. William at first supported the idea of raising funds so that Black people could colonize Liberia in Africa, but then, through the influence of the Black Methodist minister William J. Watkins, he realized that this movement was preserving enslavement and discrimination and so he became a firm opponent of it. In 1831 in Boston, he and Isaac Knapp started the abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*. The editorials in *The Liberator* were very religious: They appealed to conscience and faith rather than political philosophies. In 1832 he founded what would become the American Anti-Slavery Society. For his views and vigorous activism, Garrison received death threats and at one point went to England for a year to protect his life. His support for equal rights for women was also controversial. After enslavement other than as a penalty for crime was abolished by the 13th Amendment in 1865, Garrison continued to fight for equal rights for black people and women. He died in 1879.



William Lloyd Garrison, 1870. Library of Congress. From the Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs.



Masthead from The Liberator, Garrison's abolitionist newspaper