

# The Fight Against Slavery

As  
You  
Read

## Explore These Questions

- How did reformers try to end slavery?
- How did the underground railroad work?
- How did Americans react to the antislavery movement?

## Define

- abolitionist
- underground railroad

## Identify

- American Colonization Society
- David Walker
- Maria Stewart
- Frederick Douglass
- William Lloyd Garrison
- Angelina and Sarah Grimké
- Harriet Tubman

## SETTING the Scene

In 1848, a group of reformers met to listen to a minister named Henry Highland Garnet. Garnet had once escaped slavery himself. He told the crowd:

“America is my home, my country. . . I mourn because the accursed shade of slavery rest[s] upon it. I love my country’s flag, and I hope that soon it will be cleansed of its stains, and be hailed by all nations as the emblem of freedom and independence.”

A growing number of Americans—black and white—spoke out against slavery. Only by ending slavery, they believed, could the United States become truly democratic.

## Roots of the Antislavery Movement

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that “all men are created equal.” Yet, many white Americans, including Jefferson, did not think the statement applied to enslaved African Americans. In the 1800s, many reformers disagreed.

Religious beliefs led some Americans to speak out against slavery. Since colonial times, Quakers had said that it was a sin for one human being to own another. They preached that all men and women were equal



This medallion was a popular emblem of the antislavery movement.

in the eyes of God. Later, ministers like Charles Grandison Finney called on other Christians to join a crusade to stamp out slavery.

In the North, slavery came to an early end. By 1804, all states from Pennsylvania to New England had promised to free their slaves. Still, there were only 50,000 slaves in the North in 1800, compared to nearly one million in the South.

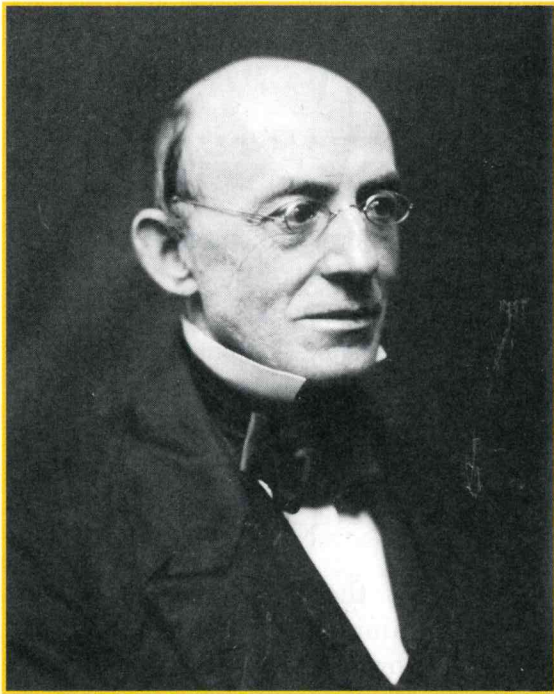
## A Colony in Africa

Some Americans proposed to end slavery by setting up an independent colony in Africa for freed slaves. Supporters of colonization founded the **American Colonization Society** in 1817. Five years later, President Monroe helped the society found the nation of Liberia in western Africa. The name Liberia comes from the Latin word for free.

Many white southerners supported the colonization movement because it did not call for an end to slavery. The society promised to pay slave owners who freed their slaves.

Some African Americans also favored colonization. They felt they would never have equal rights in the United States. Most African Americans, however, opposed the movement. Nearly all, enslaved or free, were born in the United States. They wanted to stay in their homeland. In the end, only a few thousand Americans settled in Liberia.

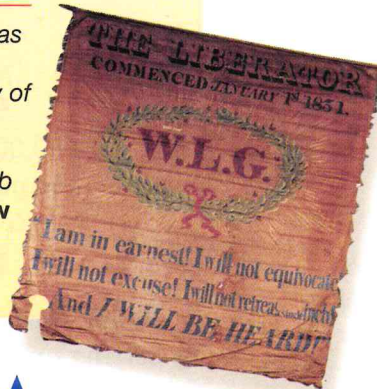




## Biography

### William Lloyd Garrison

To William Lloyd Garrison, slavery was a disease that threatened the whole nation. He once even burned a copy of the Constitution because the document permitted slavery. Garrison refused to back down even after a mob in Boston almost killed him. ★ How did Garrison spread his antislavery message?



▲ Garrison's vow

## A Call to End Slavery

Supporters of colonization did not attack slavery directly. Another group of Americans, known as **abolitionists**, wanted to end slavery in the United States completely.

Some abolitionists favored a gradual end to slavery. They expected slavery to die out if it were kept out of the western territories. Other abolitionists demanded that slavery end everywhere, at once.

### African American abolitionists

African Americans played an important part in the abolitionist movement. Some tried to end slavery through lawsuits and petitions. James Forten and other wealthy

African Americans gave generously to anti-slavery efforts. In the 1820s, Samuel Cornish and John R usswurm set up an abolitionist newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. They hoped to turn public opinion against slavery by printing stories about the brutal treatment of enslaved African Americans.

**David Walker** called for stronger measures. In 1829, he published *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. He encouraged enslaved African Americans to free themselves by any means necessary. Walker's friend **Maria Stewart** also spoke out against slavery. Stewart was the first American woman to make public political speeches.

### Douglass speaks out

The best known African American abolitionist was **Frederick Douglass**. Douglass was born into slavery in Maryland. As a child, he defied the slave codes and taught himself to read.

In 1838, Douglass escaped and made his way to Boston. One day at an antislavery meeting, he felt a powerful urge to speak. Rising to his feet, he talked about the sorrows of slavery and the meaning of freedom. The audience was moved to tears. Soon, Douglass was lecturing across the United States and Britain. In 1847, he began publishing an antislavery newspaper, the *North Star*.

### Garrison and *The Liberator*

The most outspoken white abolitionist was a fiery, young man named **William Lloyd Garrison**. Garrison launched his antislavery paper, *The Liberator*, in 1831. In it, he proclaimed that slavery was an evil to be ended immediately. On the very first page of the first issue, Garrison revealed his commitment:

“ I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice . . . I am in earnest . . . I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I WILL BE HEARD. ”



A year later, Garrison helped to found the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Members included Theodore Weld, a young minister connected with Charles Grandison Finney. Weld brought the energy of a religious revival to antislavery meetings.

### The Grimké sisters

Women also played an important role in the abolitionist cause. **Angelina and Sarah Grimké** were the daughters of a wealthy slaveholder in South Carolina. They came to hate slavery and moved to Philadelphia to work for abolition. Their lectures drew large crowds.

Some people, including other abolitionists, objected to women speaking out in public. Sarah Grimké replied that “whatsoever it is morally right for a man to do, it is morally right for a woman to do.” As you will see, this belief led the Grimkés and others to crusade for women’s rights.

## The Underground Railroad

Some abolitionists, black and white, risked prison and death to help African Americans escape slavery. These bold men and women formed the **underground railroad**. It was not a real railroad, but a network of abolitionists who secretly helped slaves reach freedom in the North or Canada.

“Conductors” guided runaways to “stations” where they could spend the night. Some stations were homes of abolitionists. Others were churches, or even caves. Conductors sometimes hid runaways under loads of hay in wagons with false bottoms.

One daring conductor, **Harriet Tubman**, had escaped slavery herself. Risking her freedom and her life, Tubman returned to the South 19 times. She led more than 300 slaves, including her parents, to freedom.

Admirers called Tubman the “Black Moses,” after the ancient Hebrew leader who

### Viewing HISTORY

#### Conductor on the Underground Railroad

*“There was one of two things I had a right to,” declared Harriet Tubman, “liberty or death. If I could not have the one, I would have the other.” After escaping slavery, Tubman became a fearless conductor on the underground railroad. Here, Tubman (left) poses with some of the hundreds of people she led to freedom.*

★ Why was Tubman called the “Black Moses”?





# Skills FOR LIFE

Critical  
Thinking

Managing  
Information

Communication

Maps, Charts,  
and Graphs

## Analyzing Visual Evidence

### How Will I Use This Skill?

Today, newspapers and television present us with a world full of images. A photograph of a bombing victim or a sketch of a courtroom can have a powerful impact. Still, artists and photographers can be influenced by their own viewpoints. We must analyze visual evidence to determine the reliability of what we see.

### LEARN the Skill

- 1 Identify the subject matter of the drawing, painting, or photograph.
- 2 Note the details of the picture. Pay attention to facial expressions, actions, objects, and clothing.
- 3 What is the artist's point of view? How does the artist use details to stir sympathy or anger?
- 4 Determine the reliability of the visual evidence. Is it an accurate picture of what is shown? What may have been left out?

- 3 Do you think the artist was sympathetic toward the underground railroad? How can you tell?
- 4 Based on your reading, do you think this picture is reliable? Explain.

### APPLY the Skill

Analyze a news photograph that had an emotional impact on you. List the details of the photograph that added to the emotional effect.

### PRACTICE the Skill

The painting at right depicts a scene of the underground railroad. Look at the picture and answer the following questions.

- 1 (a) Where do you think this scene is taking place? (b) Who are the two people in the center of the picture? (c) Describe what is happening in this scene.
- 2 (a) What is the man holding in his right hand? What does this tell you about him? (b) What does the expression on the woman's face tell you about her? (c) Why is there a hay wagon in the background?





led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Slave owners offered a \$40,000 reward for Tubman's capture.

## Reaction in the North

Abolitionists like Douglass and Garrison made enemies in both the North and the South. Northern mill owners, bankers, and merchants depended on cotton from the South. They saw attacks on slavery as a threat to their livelihood. Some northern workers also opposed abolition. They feared that African Americans might come north and take their jobs by working for low pay.

In New York and other northern cities, mobs sometimes broke up antislavery meetings or attacked homes of abolitionists. At times, the attacks backfired and won support for the abolitionists. One night, a Boston mob dragged William Lloyd Garrison through the streets at the end of a rope. A witness wrote, "I am an abolitionist from this very moment."

## Reaction in the South

Not all white southerners favored slavery. Some bravely spoke out against it. Others,

such as the Grimké sisters, moved north rather than live in a slaveholding state.

Most white southerners, however, were disturbed by the growing abolitionist movement. They accused abolitionists of preaching violence. Many southerners blamed Nat Turner's revolt on William Lloyd Garrison. (See page 393.) Garrison had founded *The Liberator* in 1831, only a few months before Turner's rebellion. David Walker's call for a slave revolt seemed to confirm the worst fears of southerners.

Many slave owners reacted to the abolitionist crusade by defending slavery even more. One slave owner wrote that if slaves were treated well, they would "love their master and serve him . . . faithfully." Other owners argued that slaves were better off than northern workers who labored long hours in dusty, airless factories.

Even some southerners who owned no slaves defended slavery. To them, slavery was essential to the southern economy. Many southerners believed northern support for the antislavery movement was greater than it really was. They began to fear that northerners wanted to destroy their way of life.

## ★ Section 2 Review ★

### Recall

1. **Locate** Liberia.
2. **Identify** (a) American Colonization Society, (b) David Walker, (c) Maria Stewart, (d) Frederick Douglass, (e) William Lloyd Garrison, (f) Angelina and Sarah Grimké, (g) Harriet Tubman.
3. **Define** (a) abolitionist, (b) underground railroad.

### Comprehension

4. Choose two abolitionists. Describe how each contributed to the antislavery movement.

5. (a) Why did some northerners oppose abolition?  
(b) Describe two effects of the abolitionist movement in the South.

### Critical Thinking and Writing

6. **Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think slavery ended more easily in the North than in the South?
7. **Defending a Position** (a) Why do you think some abolitionists favored a gradual end to slavery? (b) How do you think William Lloyd Garrison or Frederick Douglass would have replied?



**Activity Writing a Letter** You are a conductor on the underground railroad. You have a cousin in New Jersey whom you need to hide runaway slaves. Write a letter to the cousin describing who will be coming, what signals they will use to gain entry, and how they can be helped. (You might want to disguise your message in case it gets into the wrong hands.)