

AIM: What role did White New Yorkers play in the battle over slavery as the nation approached Civil War?

BACKGROUND: Prominent New Yorkers both supported and opposed the institution of slavery in the United States and the Caribbean. The activity sheet (New Yorkers Debate Slavery and the Slave System in the United States) opens with the account from the memoir of Samuel May and then compares the views of Archbishop James Hughes and William Seward. A multiple-day lesson available on-line opens the same way but allows student teams to examine the ideas of a number of prominent New Yorkers, rewrite their positions as concise statements, and concludes with a staged debate between all of the participants. Opponents of slavery include William Cullen Bryant, William H. Seward, Lewis Tappan, Walt Whitman, Gerrit Smith, Henry Ward Beecher, Chester Arthur, Preston King and Horace Greeley. Apologists for slavery include Martin Van Buren, Archbishop Bishop John Hughes, New York City Mayor Fernando Wood and Samuel Morse. Separate lessons explore the role played by Black abolitionists in New York, John Brown and key members of the New York merchant and banking elite.

DO NOW: Examine Samuel J. May, “Some Recollections of Antislavery Conflict (1835),” and answer questions.

MOTIVATION: Discuss an issue that divides the nation today. Why do some issues lead to such impassioned debate? Why do some issues seem like they are beyond compromise? Do you think compromise was possible in the debate over slavery? Explain.

ACTIVITY: Compare and contrast the views about slavery of Bishop John Hughes and Senator William Seward.

KEY QUESTIONS: What is abolition? Who was in support of abolition? Who was against abolition? Why? Why would White New Yorkers join the fight to end slavery?

SUMMARY: Why was the debate over the abolition of slavery so divisive in New York and the nation?

HOMEWORK OPTIONS:

1. Write a dialogue poem (with at least 5 back and forth responses) between two New Yorkers, a White abolitionist and a White supporter of slavery, where they explain why they take their positions on slavery.
2. Write a dialogue poem (with at least 5 back and forth responses) between two New Yorkers, a free Black and a White supporter of slavery, where they explain why they take their positions on slavery.

APPLICATION: Should White New Yorkers who supported or tolerated slavery be forgiven because they were products of their times?

“Section 5: Abolition and Complicity” in the on-line version contains the following lessons:
What role did White New Yorkers play in the battle over slavery as the nation approached Civil War?

Why did the Fugitive Slave Law spur resistance to slavery in New York State?

How did African Americans in New York State struggle to end slavery in the United States?

Frederick Douglass: Should African Americans celebrate the Fourth of July?

Harriet Jacobs: How did one African American woman struggle to be free?

How did African American New Yorkers fight for civil rights in the 1850s?

What was New York State’s role on the Underground Railroad?

Was Dred Scott a human being or private property?

John Brown: Martyr or Religious Fanatic? Freedom fighter or traitor and terrorist?

What was New York City’s role in the illegal 19th century Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade?

How did New York City merchants and bankers profit from slavery in Cuba?

How did New York City’s economic and political elite respond to the threat of Southern Secession?

Why did New York’s African Americans demand the right to fight in the Civil War?

Why did Civil War draft resisters turn against New York City’s African American population?

Why did the end of slavery lead to divisions in the abolitionist movement?

New Yorkers Debate Slavery and the Slave System in the United States

1. Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Antislavery Conflict* (1835)

Source: Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Antislavery Conflict* (Boston, 1869), 127-28. Reprinted in Katz, W. *Eyewitness: A Living Documentary of the African American Contribution to American History*, 172.

At the annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society in May, 1835, I was sitting upon the platform of the Houston Street Presbyterian Church in New York, when I was surprised to see a gentleman enter and take his seat who, I knew, was a partner in one of the most prominent mercantile houses in the city. He had not been seated long before he beckoned me to meet him at the door. I did so. "Please walk out with me, sir" said he; "I have something of great importance to communicate." When we had reached the sidewalk he said, with considerable emotion and emphasis: "Mr. May, we are not such fools as not to know that slavery is a great evil, a great wrong. But it was consented to by the founders of our Republic. It was provided for in the Constitution of our Union. A great portion of the property of the Southerners is invested under its sanction; and the business of the North, as well as the South, has become adjusted to it. There are millions upon millions of dollars due from Southerners to the merchants and mechanics of this city alone, the payment of which would be jeopardized by any rupture between the North and the South. We cannot afford, sir, to let you and your associates succeed in your endeavor to overthrow slavery. It is not a matter of principle with us. It is a matter of business necessity. We cannot afford to let you succeed. And I have called you out to let you know, and to let your fellow-laborers know, that we do not mean to allow you to succeed. We mean, sir," said he, with increased emphasis- "we mean, sir, to put you Abolitionists down- by fair means if we can, by foul means if we must."

Questions

1. Where does this discussion take place?
2. Who is Samuel May talking to?
3. What position is expressed by the man speaking with May?
4. How does he defend this position?

2. 1854. Archbishop Hughes Defends Slavery and the Slave Trade

Sources: Singer, A. "In United States and New York City history, it is hard to tell the good guys from the bad guys," *The Amsterdam News*, 94(31), July 31 - August 6, 2003, p. 13; *The New York Times*, May 2, 1854, p. 2.

John Hughes, an immigrant from Ireland, became the acting head of New York Roman Catholic diocese in 1838. He was appointed its bishop in 1842 and an archbishop of the church in 1850. In 1853 and 1854, Archbishop Hughes traveled in Cuba and the American South where he was a guest on a number of plantations and witnessed the slave system first hand. In May, 1854, Hughes delivered a sermon at old St. Patrick's Cathedral, in what is now Soho, where he discussed his experiences during this trip.

In his sermon, Hughes cited passages from the Gospel according John to justify slavery, comparing the slave master to the father of a family, and telling his congregation, "Is not the father of the family invested with the power of God that he is sovereign, commanding and expecting to be obeyed as he should?" Hughes claimed to recognize that "slavery is an evil," but declared it was "not an absolute and unmitigated evil" because it brought Africans to Christianity. He believed that conditions for Africans were actually improved by enslavement and claimed that during his trip he had "taken pains to inquire of some who had been brought to Cuba as slaves from the Coast of Africa, whether they wished to return, and they invariably stated they did not; and the reason is that their conditions here, degraded as it is, is much better than it was at home, . . . it is really a mitigation of their lot to be sold into foreign bondage." In his column in the *Metropolitan Record*, he wrote: "We of course believe that no genuine Christian – no decent man – would be engaged in this kind of business: still, we cannot discover the crime, even of the slaver, in snatching them from the butcheries of their native land."

Archbishop Hughes continued his public support for slavery during the Civil War. He warned Europeans who questioned his position on slavery, "There are in the southern states four millions of slaves. Abolish slavery all at

once and what is to become of them? What is to become of their masters? What is to become of those articles which are the produce of their toil and which Europe so much needs?" In May, 1861, he declared that efforts to abolish slavery would violate the United States Constitution and demanded that Lincoln resign from the presidency if this was his goal.

Questions

1. Who is John Hughes?
2. What is Hughes' position on slavery in the American South and Cuba?
3. What evidence does Hughes offer to support his position?

3. William Seward Denounces the Slave System, Rochester, New York (October 25, 1858)

Source: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASseward.htm>

William H. Seward was born in Florida (Orange County), New York in 1801. Seward witnessed the injustice of slavery while teaching in the state of Georgia in 1819 and he became one of the most outspoken anti-slavery politicians of the period. An opponent of the Fugitive Slave Act, he defended runaway slaves in court. Seward and his wife Frances helped Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad by hiding fugitive slaves in their Auburn home. In 1838 and 1840 Seward was elected governor of New York State. In 1849 Seward was elected to the United States Senate where he built a reputation as an anti-slavery senator and opposed the Compromise of 1850 because of its concessions to the slave states. After Abraham Lincoln's election, Seward was appointed Secretary of State, a position he held until 1869. He died in Auburn, New York on October 10, 1872.

"The slave system is one of constant danger, distrust, suspicion, and watchfulness. It debases those whose toil alone can produce wealth and resources for defense to the lowest degree of which human nature is capable, to guard against mutiny and insurrection, and this wastes energies which otherwise might be employed in national development and aggrandizement. In states where the slave system prevails, the masters directly or indirectly secure all political power and constitute a ruling aristocracy. In states where the free-labor system prevails, universal suffrage necessarily obtains and the state inevitably becomes sooner or later a republic or democracy. The two systems are at once perceived to be incongruous - they are incompatible. They never have permanently existed together in one country, and they never can. Hitherto, the two systems have existed in different states, but side by side within the American Union. This has happened because the Union is a confederation of states. But in another aspect the United States constitute only one nation. Increase of population which is filling the states out to their very borders, together with a new and extended network of railroads and other avenues, and an internal commerce which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the states into a higher and more perfect social unity of consolidation."

Questions

1. Who is William H. Seward?
2. Why does Seward describe the slave system as "one of constant danger, distrust, suspicion, and watchfulness"?
3. In your opinion, is Seward correct when he says that slavery and democracy are "incompatible"? Explain.

AIM: Why did the Fugitive Slave Law spur resistance to slavery in New York State?

Lesson developed by Gaurav Passi, Farmingdale (NY) High School

BACKGROUND: The Fugitive Slave Act, passed by Congress in 1850, was a major rallying point in New York's opposition to slavery in the United States. The act mandated fines and jail sentences for people who refused to assist in the recapture of escaped slaves. In September, 1851, James Hamlet of New York City was arrested by a federal officer as an escaped slave and sent to Baltimore, Maryland. New York's Black community and their abolitionist supporters raised eight hundred dollars to purchase Hamlet's freedom. In October, Jerry McHenry, accused of being a fugitive slave, was rescued from a Syracuse courthouse by a large group that included Congressman Gerrit Smith and Reverend Samuel May. In 1860, Harriet Tubman led hundreds of protesters in Troy who demanded the release of an accused runaway who was threatened with being sent to the South.

DO NOW: Examine A. The Fugitive Slave Law.

MOTIVATION: During the history of the United States, some issues have directly affected individuals and enflamed the national passions. These included opposition to the draft law during the War in Vietnam, the battle over school desegregation and the right to reproductive freedom. In your opinion, why have these issues elicited such heated debate in the country? In the 1850s, people in the North reacted to the Fugitive Slave Law in a similar way. Why do you think this happened?

ACTIVITY: Activity sheets B-F examine resistance to slavery at a number of upstate New York sites. Teams can examine and report on different documents or examine the entire package as part of a History-Mystery.

KEY QUESTIONS:

What is the fugitive slave law?

How did the fugitive slave law influence the abolitionist movement?

SUMMARY QUESTION: In your opinion, why did the Fugitive Slave Law arouse such intense opposition in New York State?

HOMEWORK: In many northern towns, the enactment of federal Fugitive Slave Laws strengthened the abolitionist movement. People in your town are so furious that they have decided to put together a coalition to protest against Fugitive Slave Laws. Design a political campaign to win support for your campaign against slavery and Fugitive Slave Laws.

APPLICATION: Activity Sheet "G. 19th Century Resistance to Slavery in Upstate New York" is a summary of upstate New York resistance to slavery. The class can use it as a starting point for an extended research project on the history of upstate New York and slavery.

A. The Fugitive Slave Law

Source: <http://www.nationalcenter.org/FugitiveSlaveAct.html>; <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/fugitive.htm>

The Fugitive Slave Act was part of the group of laws referred to as the “Compromise of 1850.” In this compromise, anti-slavery advocates gained the admission of California as a free state and the prohibition of slave-trading in the District of Columbia (Washington DC). The Fugitive Slave Act stated that federal marshals, and even bystanders, could be deputized to help in the recapture of Africans who had escaped from slavery. People suspected of being runaway slaves could be arrested without warrant and turned over to a claimant on nothing more than his sworn testimony of ownership. A suspected Black could not ask for a jury trial nor testify on his or her behalf. The law was so hated by abolitionists that it spurred increased Northern resistance to slavery.

Fugitive Slave Law: That it shall be the duty of all marshals and deputy marshals to obey and execute all warrants and precepts issued under the provisions of this act, when to them directed; and should any marshal or deputy marshal refuse to receive such warrant, . . . or to use all proper means diligently to execute the same, he shall, on conviction thereof, be fined in the sum of one thousand dollars. . . . [A]fter arrest of such fugitive, by such marshal or his deputy, . . . such marshal shall be liable, . . . for the full value of the service or labor of said fugitive. . . . [T]hey are hereby authorized and empowered, . . . to summon and call to their aid the bystanders, or posse comitatus of the proper county, when necessary to ensure a faithful observance of the clause of the Constitution referred to, in conformity with the provisions of this act; and all good citizens are hereby commanded to aid and assist in the prompt and efficient execution of this law, whenever their services may be required. . . . [M]ay pursue and reclaim such fugitive person, . . . under the laws of the State or Territory from which such person owing service or labor may have escaped. . . . In no trial or hearing under this act shall the testimony of such alleged fugitive be admitted in evidence. . . . That any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct, hinder, or prevent such claimant, his agent or attorney, or any person or persons lawfully assisting him, her, or them, from arresting such a fugitive from service or labor, . . . shall . . . be subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisonment not exceeding six months, by indictment and conviction. . . .

Questions

1. What were the major measures adopted in the “compromise of 1850”?
2. In your opinion, why did the Fugitive Slave Law increase Northern resistance to slavery?

B. Resistance to Fugitive Slave Laws in Upstate New York (1850)

Source: Sennett, M. *North Star Country: Upstate New York And The Crusade For African American Freedom*.

This leaflet was inserted into the Madison County *Whig* on October 23, 1850. It called for “noble men and women” to gather under the “banners of the good old Liberty Party” and reminded the public that William Chaplin, the general agent of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, was imprisoned on the charge of aiding runaways.

5000 Men & Women Wanted To Attend the Meeting in Canastota, Wednesday, Oct. 23d, Cazenovia, Friday, Oct. 25th, Hamilton, Wednesday, Oct. 30th, Peterboro, Friday, Nov. 1st

None but real Men and Women are wanted. The . . . Men and Women who can stick to the Whig and Democratic parties are not wanted. These parties made the accursed law, under which oppressors and kidnappers are now chasing down the poor among us, to make slaves of them. Hence, there is no hope of good from persons, who can stick to these Devil - prompted parties. We want such men and women to attend these meetings, as would rather suffer imprisonment and death than tolerate the execution of this man stealing law. We want such, as would be glad to see William L. Chaplin now lying in a Maryland prison on account of his merciful feelings to the enslaved made Governor of the State of New York. We want, in a word, such noble men and women as need to gather under the banners of the good old Liberty Party.

Questions

1. What is the “man-stealing” law?
2. What is the purpose of this flyer?

C. Rev. Loguen of Syracuse Denounces the Fugitive Slave Law (1850)

Sources: *The Rev. J.W. Loguen, As A Slave and As a freeman. A Narrative of Real Life* (Syracuse, 1859), 391-93; Aptheker, H. (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, v. 1, 306-308.

I was a slave; I knew the dangers I was exposed to. I had made up my mind as to the course I was to take. On that score I needed no counsel, nor did the colored citizens generally. They had taken their stand—they would not be taken back to slavery. If to shoot down their assailants should forfeit their lives, such result was the least of the evil. They will have their liberties or die in their defence. What is life to me if I am to be a slave in Tennessee? My neighbors! I have lived with you many years, and you know me. My home is here, and my children were born here. I am bound to Syracuse by pecuniary interests, and social and family bonds. And do you think I can be taken away from you and from my wife and children, and be a slave in Tennessee? . . .

I tell you people of Syracuse and the whole North must meet this tyranny and crush it by force, or be crushed by it. This hellish enactment has precipitated the conclusion that the white men must live in dishonorable submission, and colored men be slaves, or they must give their physical as well as intellectual powers to the defence of human rights. The time has come to change the tones of submission into tones of defiance. . . .

Now, you are assembled here, the strength of this city is here to express their sense of this fugitive slave act, and to proclaim to the despots at Washington whether it shall be enforced here - whether you will permit the government to return me and other fugitives who have sought an asylum among you, to the Hell of slavery. The question is with you. If you will give us up, say so, and we will shake the dust from our feet and leave you. But we believe better things. . . .

I don't respect this law - I don't fear it - I won't obey it! It outlaws me, and I outlaw it, and the men who attempt to enforce it on me. . . . Your example only is needed to be the type of public action in Auburn, and Rochester, and Utica, and Buffalo, and all the West, and eventually in the Atlantic cities. Heaven knows that this act of noble daring will break out somewhere - and may God grant that Syracuse be the honored spot, whence it shall send an earthquake voice through the land!

Questions

1. How does Reverend Loguen plan to end the Fugitive Slave Law?
2. What does Loguen believe will happen if the Fugitive Slave Law is permitted to continue?
3. In your opinion, what are the most effective arguments made in this speech? Explain.

D1. The Jerry Rescue, Syracuse, NY (1851)

Sources: libwww.syr.edu/digital/exhibits/g/GerritSmith/jerry.htm
libwww.syr.edu/digital/exhibits/g/GerritSmith/index.htm

Leaders of the Syracuse area abolition movement organized a local committee to thwart enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. On October 1, 1851, federal marshals from Rochester, Auburn, Syracuse, and Canandaigua, accompanied by local police, arrested "Jerry," who was also known as William Henry. The suspect was originally told the charge against him was theft. Word of the arrest quickly reached the Liberty Party Convention at a nearby church. An immediate effort to free the prisoner was unsuccessful, and though he escaped to the street in irons, he was rapidly recaptured. Arraignment was put off until evening and relocated to a larger room. A large crowd, equipped for a more serious rescue attempt, gathered in the street. They broke the door with a battering ram and despite pistol shots out the window by one of the deputy marshals, it became clear that the crowd was too large and determined to be resisted. The prisoner was surrendered, and one deputy marshal broke his arm jumping from a window to escape the crowd. The former prisoner was hidden in the city for several days in the home of a local butcher known for his anti-abolitionist sentiments, and later taken in a wagon to Oswego, where he crossed Lake Ontario into Canada. Nineteen indictments were returned against the rescuers. Rev. (later Bishop) Loguen, himself a fugitive from slavery, was among those indicted. Taken to Auburn for arraignment, the suspects were bailed out by, among others, William H. Seward, the U.S. Senator and former Governor of New York. The proceedings dragged on for two years with one conviction. Gerrit Smith and others obtained an indictment against Marshal Allen for kidnapping, and used the occasion to argue against the Constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law.

D2. Fugitive Slave - His Rescue - Great Excitement - The Military called out,**Source:** Wednesday, October 1, 1851. *The New York Times*, 2

A colored man named W. Henry, who has resided in this city for some time past, was arrested this morning by U.S. Marshal Allen, as a fugitive slave. He is a cooper by trade, and was at work in his shop when he was arrested. The officer informed him that he was charged with some slight offence, and he allowed himself to be taken and handcuffed under that impression. He was taken before Commissioner Saline, and an examination gone into.

Considerable excitement was occasioned by the arrest, and a large crowd assembled in and about the office of the Commissioner. While the examination was progressing, the negro made his escape into the street and was closely followed by a crowd of persons, some of whom were desirous to assist in his escape, and others were equally anxious to assist in his recapture. A carriage was speedily procured by the negro's friends, but not in season to be made available for the object in view. He was recaptured by the officers before he got out of the limits of the city. He was taken to the police office followed by a large crowd composed mostly of his friends. Nothing further was done with the examination up to 7 o'clock but the military were ordered out, and all arrangements made to carry the law into effect. What will be the end no one can tell.

Questions

1. Why did the police claim they arrested William Henry?
2. In your opinion, why did they give a false reason?
3. How did New Yorkers respond to his arrest?
4. In the end, what happened to William Henry?

E. Harriet Jacobs, Letter From A Fugitive Slave (1853)**Source:** *New York Daily Tribune New York*, June 21, 1853, 6.

To the Editor of the N.Y. Tribune.

I was born a slave, reared in the Southern hot-bed until I was the mother of two children, sold at the early age of two and four years old. I have been hunted through all of the Northern States, but no, I will not tell you of my own suffering - no, it would harrow up my soul, and defeat the object that I wish to pursue. . . .

My mother was held as property by a maiden lady; . . . my younger sister was in her fourteenth year, . . . She was as gentle as she was beautiful. Innocent and guileless child, the light of our desolate hearth! But oh, my heart bleeds to tell you of the misery and degradation she was forced to suffer in slavery. The monster who owned her had no humanity in his soul. The most sincere affection that his heart was capable of, could not make him faithful to his beautiful and wealthy bride the short time of three months, but every stratagem was used to seduce my sister. Mortified and tormented beyond endurance, this child came and threw herself on her mother's bosom, the only place where she could seek refuge from her persecutor. . . . My poor mother, naturally high-spirited, smarting under what she considered as the wrongs and outrages which her child had to bear, sought her master, entreating him to spare her child. Nothing could exceed his rage at this what he called impertinence. My mother was dragged to jail, there remained twenty-five days, with Negro traders to come in as they liked to examine her, as she was offered for sale. My sister was told that she must yield, or never expect to see her mother again. . . . That child gave herself up to her master's bidding, to save one that was dearer to her than life itself. . . .

At fifteen, my sister held to her bosom an innocent offspring of her guilt and misery. In this way she dragged a miserable existence of two years, between the fires of her mistress's jealousy and her master's brutal passion. At seventeen, she gave birth to another helpless infant, heir to all the evils of slavery. Thus life and its sufferings was meted out to her until her twenty-first year. Sorrow and suffering has made its ravages upon her - she was less the object to be desired by the fiend who had crushed her to the earth; and as her children grew, they bore too strong a resemblance to him who desired to give them no other inheritance save Chains and Handcuffs, and in the dead hour of the night, . . . that broken-hearted mother was far on her way to the capitol of Virginia. That day should have refused her light to so disgraceful and inhuman an act in your boasted country of Liberty. Yet, reader, it is true, those two helpless children were the sons of one of your sainted Members in Congress; that agonized mother, his victim and slave. And where she now is God only knows, who has kept a record on high of all that she has suffered on earth. . . .

Could not the master have been more merciful to his children? God is merciful to all of his children, but it is seldom that a slaveholder has any mercy for his slave child. And you will believe it when I tell you that mother and her children were sold to make room for another sister, who was now the age of that mother when she entered the family. And this selling appeased the mistress's wrath, and satisfied her desire for revenge, and made the path more smooth for her young rival at first. For there is a strong rivalry between a handsome mulatto girl and a jealous and faded mistress, and her liege lord sadly neglects his wife or doubles his attentions, to save him being suspected by his wife. Would you not think that Southern Women had cause to despise that Slavery which forces them to bear so much deception practiced by their husbands? Yet all this is true, for a slaveholder seldom takes a white mistress, for she is an expensive commodity, not as submissive as he would like to have her, but more apt to be tyrannical; and when his passion seeks another object, he must leave her in quiet possession of all the gewgaws that she has sold herself for. But not so with his poor slave victim, that he has robbed of everything that can make life desirable; she must be torn from the little that is left to bind her to life, and sold by her seducer and master, caring not where, so that it puts him in possession of enough to purchase another victim. And such are the peculiar circumstances of American Slavery.

Questions

1. Who was Harriet Jacob's?
2. What happened to Harriet Jacob's sister?
3. What is Harriet Jacob's view of slavery and of slave masters?

F. Harriet Tubman's Troy, New York, Raid (1859)

Source: Bradford, S. (1886). *Harriet, the Moses of her people*, G.R. Lockwood & Son.

In the spring of 1860, Harriet Tubman . . . stopped at Troy to visit a cousin, and while there the colored people were one day startled with the intelligence that a fugitive slave, by the name of Charles Nalle, had been followed by his master (who was his younger brother, and not one grain whiter than he), and that he was already in the hands of the officers, and was to be taken back to the South. The instant Harriet heard the news, she started for the office of the United States Commissioner, scattering the tidings as she went. An excited crowd was gathered about the office, through which Harriet forced her way, and rushed up stairs to the door of the room where the fugitive was detained. A wagon was already waiting before the door to carry off the man, but the crowd was even then so great, and in such a state of excitement, that the officers did not dare to bring the man down.

On the opposite side of the street stood the colored people, watching the window where they could see Harriet's sunbonnet, and feeling assured that so long as she stood there, the fugitive was still in the office. Time passed on, and he did not appear. "They've taken him out another way, depend upon that," said some of the colored people. "No," replied others, "there stands Moses' yet, and as long as she is there, he is safe." Harriet, now seeing the necessity for a tremendous effort for his rescue, sent out some little boys to cry fire. The bells rang, the crowd increased, till the whole street was a dense mass of people. Again and again the officers came out to try and clear the stairs, and make a way to take their captive down; others were driven down, but Harriet stood her ground, her head bent and her arms folded. . . .

Offers were made to buy Charles from his master, who at first agreed to take twelve hundred dollars for him; but when this was subscribed, he immediately raised the price to fifteen hundred. The crowd grew more excited. A gentleman raised a window and called out, "Two hundred dollars for his rescue, but not one cent to his master!" This was responded to by a roar of satisfaction from the crowd below. At length the officers appeared, and announced to the crowd, that if they would open a lane to the wagon, they would promise to bring the man down the front way. The lane was opened, and the man was brought out -- a tall, handsome, intelligent white man, with his wrists manacled together, walking between the U. S. Marshal and another officer, and behind him his brother and his master, so like him that one could hardly be told from the other.

The moment they appeared, Harriet . . . cried to her friends: "Here he comes -- take him!" and then darted down the stairs like a wildcat. She seized one officer and pulled him down, then another, and tore him away from the man and keeping her arms about the slave, she cried to her friends: "Drag us out! Drag him to the river! Drown him! but don't let them have him!" . . . She tore off her sunbonnet and tied it on the head of the fugitive. When he rose, only his head could be seen, and amid the surging mass of people the slave was no longer recognized. . . . Again and

again they were knocked down, the poor slave utterly helpless, with his manacled wrists, streaming with blood. Harriet's outer clothes were torn from her, . . . yet she never relinquished her hold of the man, till she had dragged him to the river, where he was tumbled into a boat, Harriet following in a ferry-boat to the other side.

But the telegraph was ahead of them, and as soon as they landed he was seized and hurried from her sight. After a time, some school children came hurrying along, and to her anxious inquiries they answered, "He is up in that house, in the third story." Harriet rushed up to the place. Some men were attempting to make their way up the stairs. The officers were firing down, and two men were lying on the stairs, who had been shot. Over their bodies our heroine rushed, and with the help of others burst open the door of the room, and dragged out the fugitive, whom Harriet carried down stairs in her arms.

A gentleman who was riding by with a fine horse, stopped to ask what the disturbance meant; and on hearing the story, his sympathies seemed to be thoroughly aroused; he sprang from his wagon, calling out, "That is a blood-horse, drive him till he drops." The poor man was hurried in; some of his friends jumped in after him, and drove at the most rapid rate to Schenectady.

Questions

1. Who was Charles Nalle?
2. What role did Harriet Tubman plan in the freeing of Nalle?
3. In your opinion, what was the impact of a story like this one on the struggle against slavery?

G. 19th Century Resistance to Slavery in Upstate New York

Source: New York State Freedom Trail <http://www.occ.nysed.gov/freedom%20trail/fttourism2.htm>

Assignment: This activity sheet is a summary of upstate New York resistance to slavery. Use it as a starting point for an extended research project on the history of upstate New York and slavery. Your final goal is to create a class magazine with historical reports, maps, photographs and illustrations. It can also include fictional pieces (stories, poems or songs) about the resistance to slavery in upstate New York.

Buffalo: Joseph "Black Joe" Hodge escaped from slavery in the late 1700s and was the Buffalo region's first known American settler. He lived with local native Americans. William Wells Brown was a fugitive slave, abolitionist, author and Underground Railroad station master. Brown transported many runaways across Lake Erie. Following the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, a former New York City school teacher who feared the precariousness of her own free status, fled to Canada. While residing in Toronto, she founded *The Provincial Freeman*, a weekly newspaper which was distributed in Erie and Niagara Counties. In 1823, a fugitive known only as "slave Ellen" was captured in Rochester and sent to Buffalo for her eventual return to Virginia. Ellen slit her own throat rather than be returned to slavery and separated from her husband and daughter. The home of Sterling and L. Sheldon Ely on Como Park Blvd. served as an Underground Railroad station. E.M. Pettit, author of *Sketches*, detailing his life as a conductor on the Underground Railroad in southwestern New York State. Buffalo area abolitionists included John Wilkes, Elihu Rice, Alvin Orr, Benjamin Parker, and Abner H. Francis. In 1843, Buffalo hosted the annual National Convention of Colored Citizens. Black delegates from various states who met to discuss the problems facing the race. Henry Highland Garnet delivered his "Address to the Slaves of the United States of America," a call for rebellion.

Rochester: In 1795, free black, Asa Dunbar and his family were among the first pioneers in the Rochester region. Dunbar, who served the local community as city attorney, eventually resettled in Canada. Frederick Douglass arrived in Rochester in the 1840s. A noted orator, essayist and newspaper editor, he was one of the premier leaders of the campaign to abolish slavery. Thomas James was born enslaved in Montgomery County. When he was eight years old he witnessed the sale of his mother, sister, and brother. In 1830, he built a church on Favor Street in Rochester that served also as a school and an Underground Railroad station. Abolitionist Austin Steward was a fugitive slave and a successful Rochester businessman. He led the July 5, 1827 Emancipation day celebration in Rochester. Isaac and Amy Post were leaders of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society. Their

Rochester home served as an Underground Railroad Station during the 1840s and 1850s. Rochester area abolitionists included Gideon Pitts, Asa Anthony, Isaac Moore, Lindley Moore, Sara Fish, Samuel Porter, Edward Williams, Ashley Sampson, Thomas Warrant, William Clough Bloss, George Avery, William Falls, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Syracuse: In 1839, Harriet Powell arrived in Syracuse where she was held in slavery by an owner from Mississippi. Aided in her escape, she spent time at the home of Gerrit Smith where she met Smith's cousin, Elizabeth Cady (Stanton). A fugitive from Tennessee, the Rev. Jermain Loguen settled in Syracuse in 1840 and opened his home at 293 East Genessee Street as an Underground Railroad station and "Fugitive Aid Society." In 1845, the Rev. Samuel May became pastor of the Unitarian Church in Syracuse and opened his home as an Underground Railroad station. In October 1851, Black and White abolitionists help rescue fugitive slave William "Jerry" Henry from federal officers. Nineteen people were indicted for helping Henry, but only one was convicted. Enoch Reed, a black rescuer, died during appeals. Edmonia Highgate was a young Black woman who left Syracuse following the Emancipation Proclamation to teach the newly freed slaves in the South.

Albany and Troy: In 1794, two enslaved women and a man were hanged on the northwest corner of Pearl and State Street in Albany. Their executions were intended to serve as a deterrent to all slaves. Pinkster was an Afro-Dutch cultural and religious festival dating from the 17th century. In 1811, the celebration of Pinkster was outlawed by the Albany Common Council. Nathaniel Paul, the abolitionist minister of the First African Baptist Church in Albany was a strong advocate for the Wilberforce Colony, the free black colony in Canada. In the 1830s, Paul traveled abroad to raise money for anti-slavery activities, including aid to refugees. Stephen Myers, a former slave, was called the state's best Underground Railroad station master. In the 1840s, he published Albany's *Northern Star and Freeman's Advocate*. With Samuel Ringgold Ward, Myers later published the *Impartial Citizen*. He served also as a lobbyist for anti-slavery causes at the state capitol. In 1846, the Rev. Charles T. Torrey, an abolitionist and editor of the anti-slavery newspaper, *The Patriot*, died in prison while serving a six year sentence for aiding fugitives. He claimed to have helped nearly four hundred escaped slaves reach freedom. In 1850, Gen. William Chaplin, an editor of *The Patriot*, was arrested for aiding fugitives. Local abolitionists included E.C. Delavan, Dr. J. C. Jackson, and Lydia Mott.

Other Upstate New York Historic Sites in the struggle to end slavery: In Wyoming County, the Rev. Ralston W. Lyman, Horatio N. Waldo operator of a woolen mill, and Col. Charles O. Shepard and Samuel Tilden helped escaped slaves or served as conductors on the Underground Railroad. Katherine Harris, a free Black abolitionist, founded the AME Zion Church in Jamestown. She sometimes harbored as many as seventeen escaped slaves in the attic of her home. In the 1850s, the Women's Anti-Slavery Society of Ellington conducted sewing-circles in the Jamestown area to supply clothes, bedding and other necessities to fugitives. In 1844, John W. Jones escaped from slavery in Virginia. Jones became an Underground Railroad station master in Elmira and helped hundreds of escaped slaves reach freedom. He often used an actual railroad, the Northern Central Railroad, to get refugees into Canada. Beriah Green's Oneida Institute in Oneida County was a 19th Century school for Whites, Blacks and Native Americans. Graduates included Henry Highland Garnet, Alexander Crummell, and Jermain Loguen. In 1832, Green transformed the school into a center of abolitionism. In 1840s abolitionist Gerrit Smith sold over 140,000 acres of Adirondack Woodland near Petersboro in Essex County, in forty acre plots for one dollar each, to poor blacks and whites. Throughout the Adirondack range are small enclaves with names like Timbuktu and Blacksville. Towns like Witherbee, Northhampton, and North Elba (John Brown's burial site) had significant Black populations by the 19th century.

AIM: Frederick Douglass: Should African Americans celebrate the Fourth of July?

Lesson developed by Anne Marie Calitri, Lynbrook (NY) Middle School

BACKGROUND: Frederick Washington Bailey was born in Maryland in 1817. He was the son of a White man and an enslaved African woman. As a boy he was taught to read in violation of state law. In 1838, he escaped to New York City where he married and changed his name to Frederick Douglass. William Lloyd Garrison arranged for Douglass to become an agent and lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1845, the society helped him publish his autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. After the publication of his book, Douglass was afraid he might be recaptured by his former owner, so he traveled to Britain and Ireland where he lectured on slavery. He returned to New York after the purchase of his freedom and established an abolitionist newspaper in Rochester, New York. Frederick Douglass started out as a strong ally of William Lloyd Garrison and his newspaper *The Liberator*. However Douglass' views and those of Garrison diverged. Garrison rejected the United States Constitution as a pro-slavery document. Douglass came to oppose the dissolution of the union and believed that the constitution in its "letter and spirit" was "an anti-slavery instrument." Despite this position, Frederick Douglass delivered a Fourth of July speech in 1852 in Rochester where he demanded to know, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" During the Civil War, Frederick Douglass, a Radical Republican, tried to persuade President Abraham Lincoln that formerly enslaved Africans should be allowed to join the Union Army. After the war, he campaigned for full civil rights for former slaves and was a strong supporter of women's suffrage. He also held several government positions including marshal of the District of Columbia (1877-1881) and U.S. minister to Haiti (1889-1891). Frederick Douglass died in 1895 and was buried in Rochester, New York.

DO NOW: Read the biography of Frederick Douglass.

MOTIVATION: Every Fourth of July, we gather with our friends and families to have a party, watch fireworks, wave our flags and celebrate the fact that we are a free country. Imagine you were once enslaved and that many of your brethren were still enslaved. Would you be able to appreciate a day that celebrates freedom for all?

ACTIVITIES: Read and discuss the life and ideas of Frederick Douglass. This can be done either as a full class or with groups of students reading and reporting on different passages. The entire class should read the final passage on the Fourth of July and answer and discuss these questions.

1. What is the tone of Douglass' speech? Do you think he is festive? Explain.
2. Why does Douglass believe that he is excluded from July 4th celebrations?
3. Why does Frederick Douglass mourn on the Fourth of July?
4. Do you think this speech caused controversy? Explain.

SUMMARY QUESTION: Was Frederick Douglass justified in thinking that African Americans should not celebrate the Fourth of July?

A. Frederick Douglass, African American Freedom Fighter

Source: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASdouglass.htm>

Frederick Washington Bailey was born in Maryland in 1817. He was the son of a White man and an enslaved African woman. As a boy he was taught to read in violation of state law. In 1838, he escaped to New York City where he married and changed his name to Frederick Douglass. William Lloyd Garrison arranged for Douglass to become an agent and lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1845, the society helped him publish his autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. After the publication of his book, Douglass was afraid he might be recaptured by his former owner, so he traveled to Britain and Ireland where he lectured on slavery. He returned to New York after the purchase of his freedom and established an abolitionist newspaper in Rochester, New York. Frederick Douglass started out as a strong ally of William Lloyd Garrison and his newspaper *The Liberator*. However Douglass' views and those of Garrison diverged. Garrison rejected the United States Constitution as a pro-slavery document. Douglass came to oppose the dissolution of the union and believed that the constitution in its "letter and spirit" was "an anti-slavery instrument." Despite this position, Frederick Douglass delivered a Fourth of July speech in 1852 in Rochester where he demanded to know "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" During the Civil War, Frederick Douglass, a Radical Republican, tried to persuade President Abraham Lincoln that formerly slaves should be allowed to join the Union Army. After the war, he campaigned for full civil rights for former enslaved Africans and was a strong supporter of women's suffrage. He also held several government positions including marshal of the District of Columbia (1877-1881) and U.S. minister to Haiti (1889-1891). Frederick Douglass died in 1895 and was buried in Rochester, New York.

B. Frederick Douglass Discusses Slavery (1850)

Source: Aptheker, H. (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, I*, 309-313.

"More than twenty years of my life were consumed in a state of slavery. My childhood was environed by the baneful peculiarities of the slave system. I grew up to manhood in the presence of this hydra-headed monster-not as an idle spectator-not as the guest of the slaveholder; but as a slave, eating the bread and drinking the cup of slavery with the most degraded of my brother bondmen, and sharing with them all the painful conditions of their wretched lot. In consideration of these facts, I feel that I have a right to speak, and to speak *strongly*. . . . A master is one (to speak in the vocabulary of the Southern States) who claims and exercises 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 contingencies, *kill* him, with perfect impunity. The slave is a human being, divested of all rights-reduced to the level of a brute-a mere "chattel" in the eye of the law-placed beyond the circle of human brotherhood--cut off from his kind-his name, which the "recording angel" may have enrolled in heaven, among the blest, is impiously inserted in a *masters 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, but what must belong to another. To eat the fruit of his own toil, to clothe his person with the work of his own hands, is considered stealing. He toils that another may reap the fruit; he is industrious that another may live in idleness; he eats unbolted meal, that another may ride in ease and splendor abroad; he lives in ignorance, that another may be educated; he is abused, that another may be exalted; he rests his toil-worn limbs on the cold, damp ground, that another may repose on the softest pillow; he is clad in coarse and tattered raiment, that another may be arrayed in purple and fine linen; he is sheltered only by the wretched hovel, that a master may dwell in a magnificent mansion; and to this condition he is bound down as by an arm of iron."

C. Opening Editorial from Frederick Douglass's North Star (1847)

Source: Aptheker, H. (1973). *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States, I*, 265.

"We solemnly dedicate the 'North Star' to the cause of our long oppressed and plundered fellow countrymen. May God bless the undertaking to your good. It shall fearlessly assert your rights, faithfully proclaim your wrongs, and earnestly demand for you instant and even-handed justice. Giving no quarter to slavery at the South, it will hold no truce with oppressors at the North. While it shall boldly advocate emancipation for our enslaved brethren, it will omit no opportunity to gain for the nominally free complete enfranchisement. Every effort to injure or degrade you or your cause . . . shall find in it a constant, unswerving and inflexible foe. . . ."

D. Life and Work in Rochester, New York

Source: *Life And Times Of Frederick Douglass, Written By Himself.*

“[T]here were moral forces operating against me in Rochester, as well as material ones. There were those who regarded the publication of a “Negro paper” in that beautiful city as a blemish and a misfortune. The *New York Herald*, . . . counselled the people of the place to throw my printing press into Lake Ontario and to banish me to Canada, and while they were not quite prepared for this violence, it was plain that many of them did not well relish my presence amongst them. This feeling, however, wore away gradually, as the people knew more of me and my works. I lectured every Sunday evening during an entire winter in the beautiful Corinthian Hall, then owned by Wm. R. Reynolds, Esq., who though he was not an abolitionist, was a lover of fair-play and was willing to allow me to be heard. If in these lectures I did not make abolitionists I did succeed in making tolerant the moral atmosphere in Rochester. . . . I did not rely alone upon what I could do by the paper, but would write all day, then take a train to Victor, Farmington, Canandaigua, Geneva, Waterloo, Batavia, or Buffalo, or elsewhere, and speak in the evening, returning home afterwards or early in the morning, to be again at my desk writing or mailing papers.”

E. Station Master on the Underground Railroad

Source: *Life And Times Of Frederick Douglass, Written By Himself.*

“[A]s the editor of an anti-slavery paper, naturally made me the station master and conductor of the underground railroad passing through this goodly city. . . . I could take no step in it without exposing myself to fine and imprisonment, for these were the penalties imposed by the fugitive slave law, for feeding, harboring, or otherwise assisting a slave to escape from his master. . . . True as a means of destroying slavery, it was like an attempt to bail out the ocean with a teaspoon, but the thought that there was one less slave, and one more freeman,--having myself been a slave, and a fugitive slave - brought to my heart unspeakable joy. On one occasion I had eleven fugitives at the same time under my roof, and it was necessary for them to remain with me, until I could collect sufficient money to get them on to Canada. It was the largest number I ever had at any one time, and I had some difficulty in providing so many with food and shelter, but as may well be imagined, they were not very fastidious in either direction, and were well content with very plain food, and a strip of carpet on the floor for a bed, or a place on the straw in the barn loft.”

F. Frederick Douglass Discusses the Fourth of July (1852)

Source: Dunbar, A. ed., *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence* (N.Y., 1914, The Bookery Pub. Co.), pp. 42-47.

“What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? . . . Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you this day rejoice are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence [given] by your fathers is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth of July is *yours*, not *mine*. *You* may rejoice, *I* must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak today?

Fellow citizens, above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions, whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are today rendered more intolerable by the jubilant shouts that reach them. . . . To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then, fellow citizens, is ‘American Slavery.’ I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slave’s point of view. . . . conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this Fourth of July.

What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him more than all other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality. . . . There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of these United States at this very hour.”