



The game characters of Concord

The characters found on the main street of Concord in this game are purely fictional, though some are loosely based on real people from the town's history. As these fictional characters discuss issues of the day, however, they reference a number of historical figures and speeches that may be of interest to students and teachers as you discuss the game experience.

Cynthia, Helen, and Sophia Thoreau

Henry Thoreau's mother, Cynthia, and his two sisters, Helen and Sophia held strong anti-slavery views and belonged to the [Concord Ladies' Anti-slavery Society](#). They attended antislavery conventions and signed their names to a petitions calling for radical change, such as dissolution with the slave holding states. The Thoreau family provided lodging and aid to free Blacks and fugitive slaves, and prominent abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown visited at the family's home. You can find posters and other items belonging to the Thoreau women inside the depiction of their home in Concord.

Mary Brooks, Ellen Garrison, and Abba Prescott

The three fictionalized women depicted on the street in front of the Thoreau home are talking about an upcoming festival to be hosted by the Concord Ladies' Anti-slavery Society which is set to be held out at Henry Thoreau's cabin in the woods. This is based on an actual event hosted while Thoreau was living at Walden Pond. One of the women is based on Mary Merrick Brooks, president of the society. The other two women are loosely based on [Ellen Garrison, a Black abolitionist of Concord](#), and Abba Prescott, her white neighbor. Prescott and Garrison were famously walked arm in arm at an anti-slavery rally as children together, desegregating that event.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a leader of the women's rights movement mid- to late-19th century. She was the main force behind the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, the first convention to be called for the sole purpose of discussing women's rights, and was the primary author of its [Declaration of Sentiments](#). In the game, the fictionalized versions of Ellen Garrison, Abba Prescott, and Mary Merrick Brooks are discussing the connection between abolitionism and women's rights. Ellen quotes from the Declaration of Sentiments, stating her commitment to freedom for all people - Black and white, male and female.

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)

Frederick Douglass was a formerly enslaved Black abolitionist, social reformer, orator, and writer who became a national leader known for his incisive writings and speeches. His first autobiography, "[Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#)," was published in 1845 (the same year that Henry Thoreau went down to the woods to live in his cabin) and became an immediate best seller. Douglass's friends feared that the publicity brought to him by this book might attract the attention of his former enslaver, and encouraged him to leave the country for his own safety.

Mr. Freeman and Mrs. Robbins

In the game, we will find two free Black citizens of Concord on the street near the railroad station discussing the [Fugitive Slave Acts](#) and Frederick Douglass's speech "[What to the Slave is the Fourth of July](#)." These are both fictionalized characters, however,



they take their family names from two Black Revolutionary War veterans of Concord -- [Brister Freeman](#) and [Ceasar Robbins](#). At the time the game is set, the Fugitive Slave Acts were being enforced by slave catchers from the South who were empowered to capture fugitives. Very often, free Black people like these citizens were mistakenly, or ruthlessly, captured and transported to a life of enslavement in the South by these slave catchers.

Bronson Alcott (1799-1888)

Bronson Alcott was a teacher, writer, and reformer who lived in Concord and was a good friend of Henry Thoreau's. His family hosted a number of fugitive slaves at their home, [The Wayside](#), as part of the Underground Railroad. In the game, Alcott reaches out to Thoreau for his aid in securing and hiding supplies for these fugitives. Players have the option of choosing to help Alcott in this mission or not -- depending on their commitment to protesting unjust laws like the Fugitive Slave Acts.

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

William Lloyd Garrison was an abolitionist journalist who published "[The Liberator](#)," a newspaper dedicated to the immediate end of slavery. Garrison was also a supporter of women's rights and was driven by a moral imperative that all people should be truly free. His views were radical and his vitriolic criticism of all the people and institutions responsible for slavery brought many threats and attempts on his life. In the game, you can find a copy of [The Liberator](#) in the Post Office, and the conversation about women's rights refers to "Garrisonian abolitionists," a term used to describe those in favor of freedom for all people, Black, White, male, and female.

Mr. Hawke and Mr. Dove

In the middle of town, the game depicts two fictionalized white gentlemen discussing their views on the [Congressional debate about a potential declaration of war against Mexico](#), what we now call the Mexican-American War. Mr. Hawke is for the war, and stands behind President [James K. Polk who has made an argument to Congress](#) describing the transgressions of Mexico against the U.S. His claim is that Mexico is the aggressor, has already invaded the U.S. and that the nations are already at war. Mr. Dove has been convinced otherwise by the [speech of Congressman Joshua Giddings](#), and he quotes liberally from this speech in his argument. Many abolitionists, like Thoreau, were against war with Mexico because they feared that it would mean the expansion of slavery into those territories.

A note on segregation

It should be noted that our game, the town depicts free Black people talking and walking among the white community without fear on the streets of Concord. In truth, we would not likely see such integration at the time our game takes place. Even in the North, segregation between Black and white people was still strongly practiced. In our game, we decided to depict strong Black characters speaking their minds on the issues alongside their peers, even if in reality those discussions were more likely held in private.