

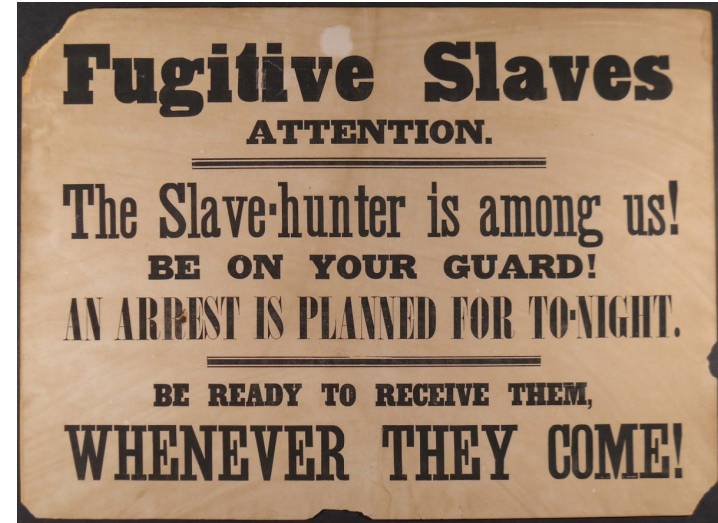
Abolitionists & more in the 19th century

Civil Disobedience
Walden, a game EDU

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850

- Authorized enslavers and their “agents” to capture and return runaway enslaved people, anywhere in the U.S. territory
 - This included within borders of “free” states
- Created harsher penalties on those who aided and abetted formerly enslaved people
- Some of the most violated pieces of federal legislation in American history
 - Most Northern states intentionally neglected to enforce the law, and passed laws to protect freedom chasers
- Nicknamed the “Bloodhound Bill” by abolitionists
- Especially after the passage of the second act in 1850, this was considered one of the causes of the Civil War



War with México (1846-48)

- The United States went to war with México to colonize more territory, as a result of American “manifest destiny” philosophy
- Stemmed from the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas
- After U.S. “victory”, México lost one-third of its territory
- National dispute in the U.S.: would slavery be permitted in the new Western territories?
 - Texas would be admitted as a “slave state”: one in which slavery was legal
 - Southern states threatened to secede
- Led to the Compromise of 1850



Compromise of 1850

- A compromise made up of 5 bills
- Meant to resolve the burning issue of slavery's legality in the new U.S. territories, after the Mexican-American war
- Main points:
 - Slavery permitted in Washington D.C.
 - Greater slave trade outlawed
 - California is a "free" state
 - Utah & New Mexico can decide via popular sovereignty if they would permit slavery
 - New boundaries for the state of Texas



PEOPLE, ACTIONS, & MOVEMENTS

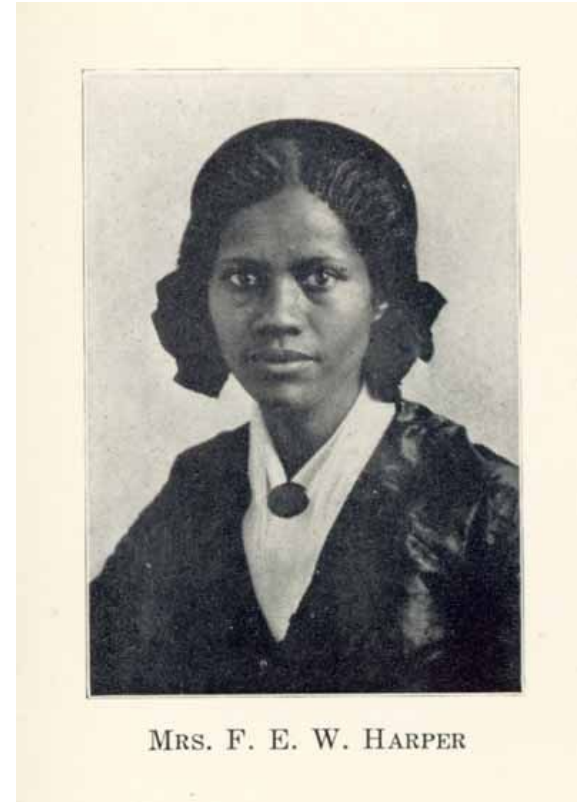
David Walker (1796-1830)

- Lived in Boston, Massachusetts
- *Writer & community activist*
 - Distributed pamphlets of his writing to his community
- Believed that Black Americans should take action to liberate themselves
- Believed in education as a tool to liberate Black people
- **Quote:** “They think because they hold us in their infernal chains of slavery, that we wish to be white, or of their color—but they are dreadfully deceived—we wish to be just as it pleased our Creator to have made us, and no avaricious and unmerciful wretches, have any business to make slaves of, or hold us in slavery . . .” -- from [*Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*](#), 1830



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

- Born in Maryland, active on the East Coast
- *Writer & Poet* → not all abolitionists were “on the ground” organizers
- One of the first Black women to be published in the U.S.
- **Quote:** Excerpt from the poem “The Slave Auction”
And mothers stood with streaming eyes
And saw their dear children sold
Unheeded rise their bitter cries,
While tyrants bartered them for gold.



MRS. F. E. W. HARPER

Free Produce Movement

- An international boycott movement
- People refused to buy goods made with slave labor
- A nonviolent way for individuals to fight slavery
- Frances Ellen Watkins often mentioned the movement in her speeches
 - Said she would pay more for a “free labor” dress
- She called the movement “the harbinger of hope, the ensign of progress, and a means for proving the consistency of our principles and the earnestness of our zeal.”



Harriet Tubman (1822-1913)

- Political activist most famous for being one of the operators of the *Underground Railroad*
- Born into slavery in Maryland -- then after she escaped, she helped to liberate her friends & family as well
- After shepherding fugitives, she joined the Union Army in the Civil War
 - Was a scout and a spy
 - Famously led the raid at Combahee Ferry, which freed more than 700 people
- Continued her activism as a suffragist at the turn of the century
- **Quote:** “I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can’t say — I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.” -- Tubman at a suffrage convention in 1896



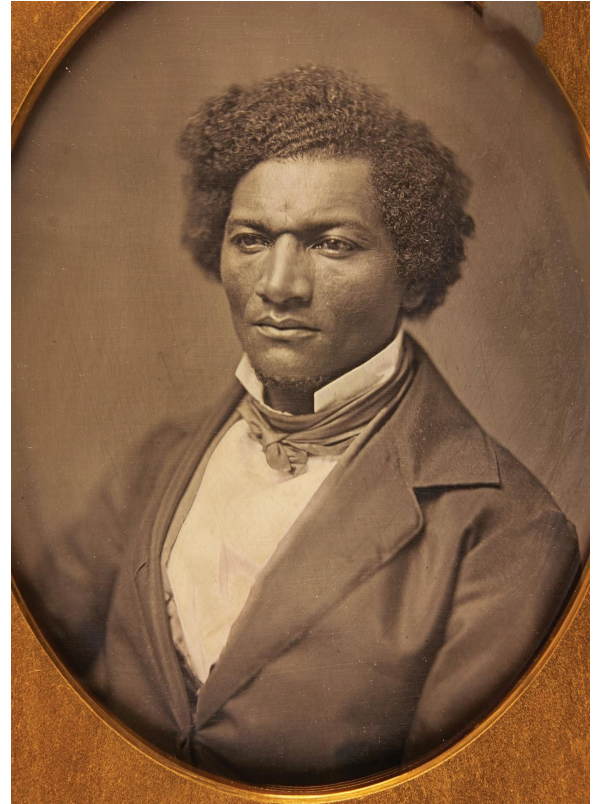
The Underground Railroad

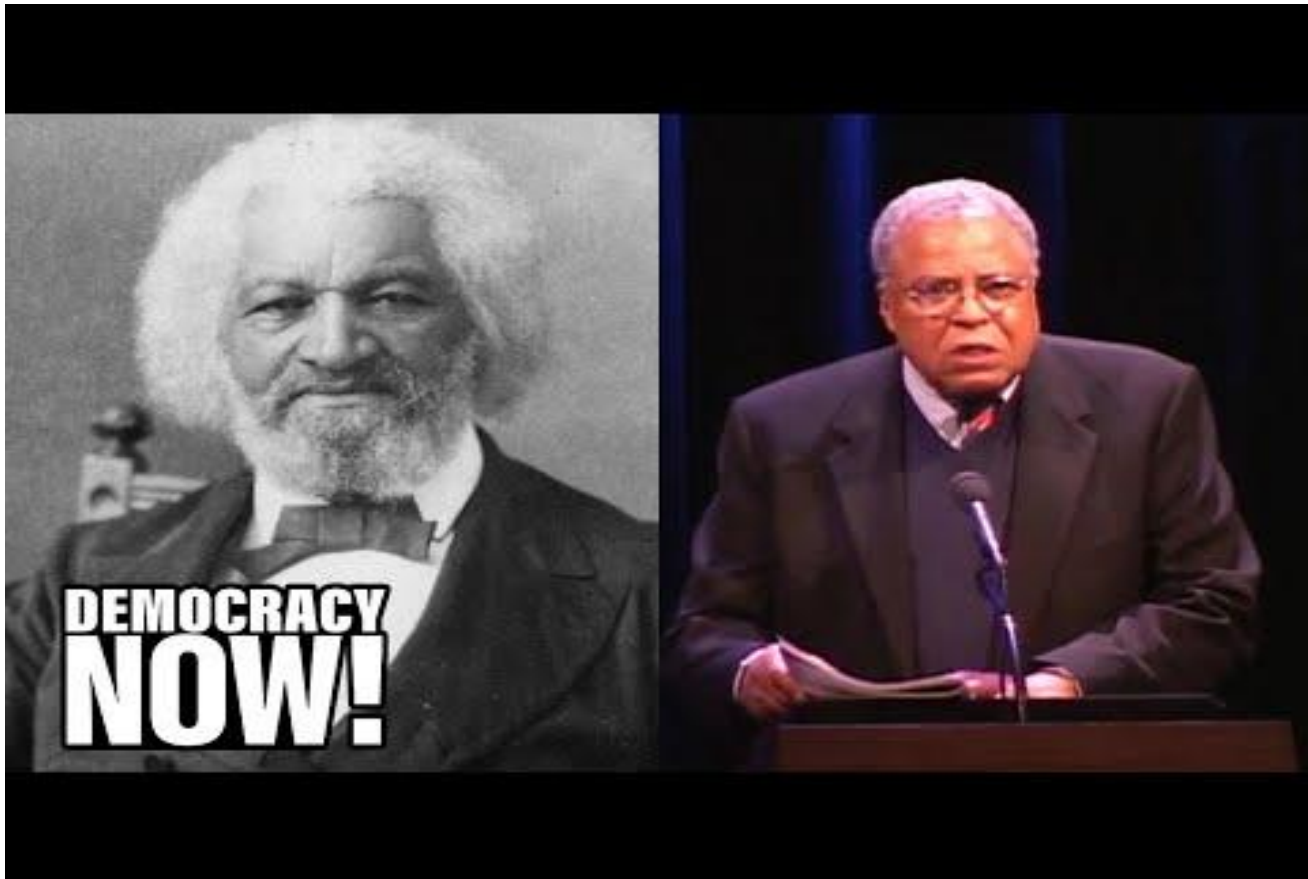
- A system of safe-houses and barns, churches, and businesses that protected freedom seekers (formerly enslaved people) away from enslavers
- Helped guide 100,000 people to freedom
- “Conductors”, such as Harriet Tubman, guided freedom seekers from place to place
 - Different safe-houses along the many routes were called “stations”, guided by “station-masters”
- Conductors often posed as enslaved people and went to plantations directly
- Due to the danger associated with capture, operations often occurred at night



Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)

- Born into slavery in Maryland, but liberated himself
- *Writer, preacher and orator*
- Spoke incisively on many social issues, first and foremost American slavery
 - Wrote 3 autobiographies
- Actively supported women's suffrage
- Became the first Black American nominated for Vice President, running on the Equal Rights Party ticket
- **Watch:** [“What, to the slave, is 4th of July?”](#)





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0baE_CtU08&ab_channel=DemocracyNow%21

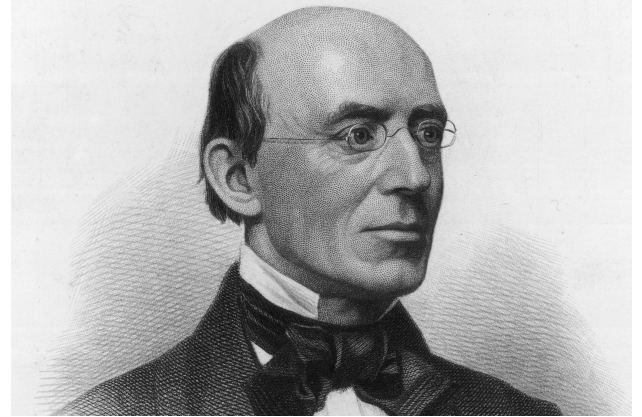
The Liberator Newspaper

- An abolitionist newspaper
- Ran from 1831 - 1865
- Printed and published in Boston by William Lloyd Garrison
- More religious than political
- Appealed to the moral conscience of its readers
- Demanded “immediatism”: the immediate freeing of all slaves
- Became a sort of community bulletin board for abolitionists, like Frederick Douglass and Henry David Thoreau
 - Douglass was inspired by the Liberator to write his own, Black-led abolitionist newspaper: *The North Star*



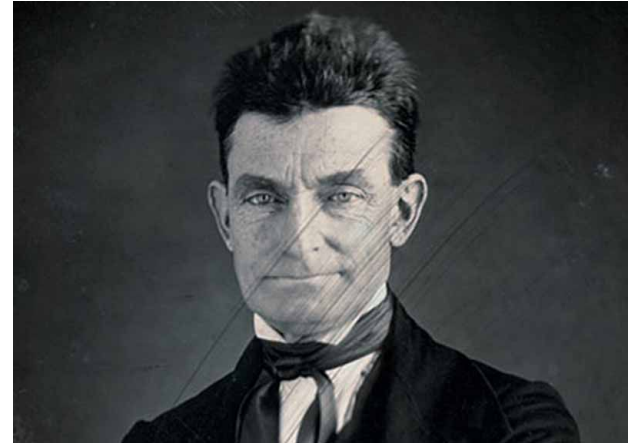
William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

- Writer and prominent Christian
- Best known for his anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*
- Rejected American government on the basis that its engagement in war, imperialism, and slavery made it corrupt and tyrannical
- Source of his beliefs and morality came from his ardent Christianity
- One of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society



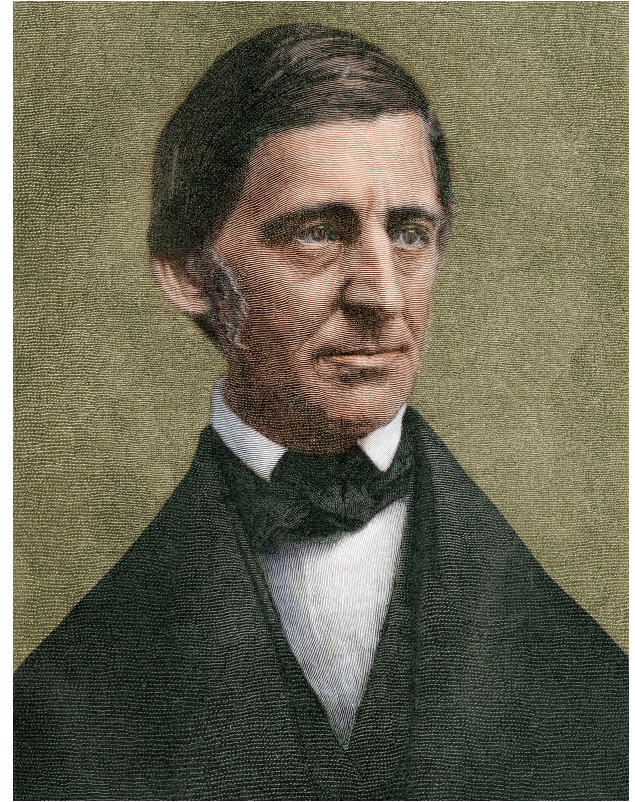
John Brown (1800-1859)

- Direct organizer and guerrilla fighter
- Known for fighting in Bleeding Kansas, a conflict between abolitionists and the U.S. government
- Believed he was “an instrument of God”, born to strike down the system of American slavery as a “sacred obligation”
- Incited and attempted slave uprising at Harper’s Ferry
- Was ultimately executed by the government for “treason”



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

- Essayist, poet, and philosopher
- Prominent leader in the transcendentalism movement
- One of the key figures in the American romantic movement
- Famous for essays such as “Nature” and “Self-Reliance”
- Known as a champion of “individualism” and the freedom of the individual
- Mentor and friend of Henry David Thoreau



CIVIC ACTION & ENGAGEMENT

How might you protest unjust laws in the mid-19th century?

- ★ Give a speech
- ★ Write poetry
- ★ Write an essay for a newspaper
- ★ Print and distribute pamphlets & newspapers
- ★ Purchase products made without slave labor
- ★ Attend a rally
- ★ Provide shelter to formerly enslaved people (mutual aid)
- ★ Refuse to pay taxes

How might you protest unjust laws today?

- ★ Provide mutual aid
- ★ Write an essay/speech
- ★ Click “like” on a cause you care about on social media
- ★ Read valid news
- ★ Talk with family members
- ★ Protest with a dedicated group
- ★ Community organizing
- ★ Vote
- ★ Campaign for an issue or candidate
- ★ Put up bumper stickers/lawn signs
- ★ Go to a march
- ★ Make a political meme
- ★ Refuse to pay taxes