



The Fight Against Slavery

Objectives

1. Describe efforts in the North to end slavery.
2. Discuss the contributions of William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and other abolitionists.
3. Describe the purpose and risks of the Underground Railroad.
4. Explain why many people in the North and South defended slavery.

Main Idea

Soon after the American Revolution, northern states began to do away with slavery.

Vocabulary Builder

eliminate (ee LIHM ih nayt) *v.* to get rid of

Prepare to Read

Reading Skill

Form an Opinion Based on Evidence You can use details and evidence in primary and secondary sources to help you form opinions about history. Remember that primary sources come from people who saw or experienced events, whereas secondary sources (such as this textbook) build on many sources to recount historical information.

Vocabulary Builder

High-Use Words

eliminate, p. 422
via, p. 424

Key Terms and People

abolitionist, p. 423
William Lloyd Garrison, p. 423
Frederick Douglass, p. 424
Harriet Tubman, p. 424

Background Knowledge As early as colonial times, some Americans had opposed slavery. Most Quakers, in particular, condemned slavery on religious and moral grounds. In this section, you will see how the reforming impulse of the 1800s spurred a vigorous new effort to end slavery.

Roots of the Antislavery Movement

A number of prominent leaders of the early republic, such as Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin, opposed slavery. They believed that slavery violated the most basic principle of the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal."

Slavery Ends in the North In 1780, Pennsylvania became the first state to pass a law that gradually **eliminated** slavery. By 1804, every northern state had ended or pledged to end slavery. Congress also outlawed slavery in the Northwest Territory. As a result, when Ohio entered the Union in 1803, it became the first state to ban slavery in its state constitution.

The Colonization Movement The American Colonization Society, established in 1817, was an early antislavery organization. This society proposed that slaves be freed gradually and transported to Liberia, a colony founded in 1822 on the west coast of Africa.

The colonization movement did not work. Most enslaved people had grown up in the United States and did not desire to leave. By 1830 only about 1,400 African Americans had migrated to Liberia.

Checkpoint How did slavery end in the North?

Growing Opposition to Slavery

The Second Great Awakening inspired further opposition to slavery. Many people were influenced by the preaching of Charles Finney, who condemned slavery. By the mid-1800s, a small but growing number of people were abolitionists, reformers who wanted to abolish, or end, slavery. Rejecting gradual emancipation, abolitionists called for a complete and immediate end to slavery.

Garrison One of the most forceful voices for abolition was William Lloyd Garrison. A Quaker, he strongly opposed the use of violence to end slavery. Still, Garrison was more radical than many others, because he favored full political rights for all African Americans.

In 1831, Garrison launched an abolitionist newspaper, the *Liberator*. It became the nation's leading antislavery publication for 34 years, ending only when slavery itself ended.

Garrison cofounded the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which later became the American Anti-Slavery Society. Leaders of this group included Theodore Weld, a minister who had been a pupil of Charles Finney. Weld brought the zeal of a religious revival to anti-slavery rallies. Other members included Sarah and Angelina Grimke, daughters of a South Carolina slaveholder.

African American Abolitionists Prominent African Americans in the North took a leading role in the abolitionist movement. In 1829, David Walker published his *Appeal: to the Coloured Citizens of the World*. This strongly worded pamphlet urged enslaved people to rebel, if necessary, to gain their freedom.

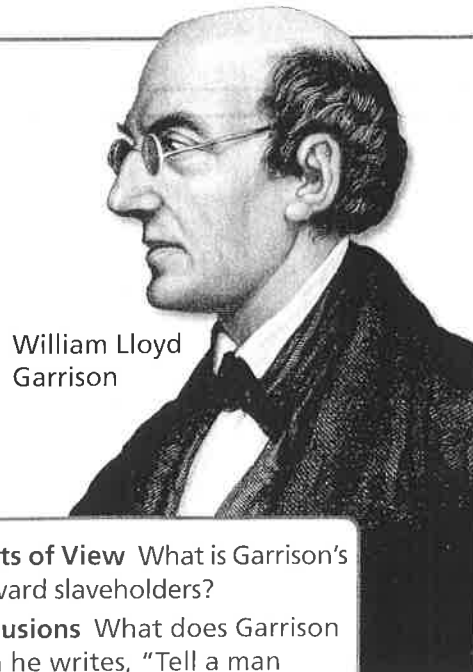
Main Idea

A growing number of people in the North began to call for an end to slavery.

The Liberator

“Let Southern oppressors tremble—let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble. . . . On this subject, I do not wish to think, or to speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm . . . but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD.”

—William Lloyd Garrison, *Liberator*, January 1831



William Lloyd Garrison

Reading Primary Sources

Skills Activity

In the above excerpt from the first issue of the *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison vows to take a firm stand against slavery.

- Detect Points of View** What is Garrison's attitude toward slaveholders?
- Draw Conclusions** What does Garrison mean when he writes, "Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm"?

Perhaps the most powerful speaker for abolitionism was Frederick Douglass. Born into slavery, Douglass had broken the law by learning to read. He later escaped to freedom in the North. Garrison and other abolitionists encouraged Douglass to describe his experiences at antislavery rallies. Douglass told one crowd:

“I appear this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master, and ran off with them.”

—Frederick Douglass, speech, 1842

By appearing in public, Douglass risked being sent back into slavery. Yet, he continued to speak before larger and larger audiences. He also published his own antislavery newspaper, the *North Star*.

A Former President Takes a Stand Abolitionists won the support of a few powerful people. Former President John Quincy Adams, now a member of Congress, read antislavery petitions from the floor of the House of Representatives. In 1839, Adams proposed a constitutional amendment that would ban slavery in any new state joining the Union. However, the amendment was not passed.

Two years later, Adams made a dramatic stand against slavery. Captive Africans aboard the slave ship *Amistad* had rebelled, killing the captain and ordering the crew to sail back to Africa. Instead, the crew sailed the ship to America. The 73-year-old Adams spoke to the Supreme Court for nine hours and helped the captives regain their freedom.

Checkpoint What role did Frederick Douglass play in the abolitionist movement?

The Underground Railroad

Some courageous abolitionists dedicated themselves to helping people escape from slavery. They established a system known as the Underground Railroad. Despite its name, it was neither underground nor a railroad. It was a network of people—black and white, northerners and southerners—who secretly helped slaves reach freedom.

Working for the Underground Railroad was illegal and dangerous. “Conductors” led fugitive slaves from one “station” to the next. Stations were usually the homes of abolitionists, but might be churches or caves. Supporters helped by donating clothing, food, and money to pay for passage on trains and boats. Many people risked their lives to help runaway slaves. Levi Coffin, an Indiana Quaker, assisted more than 3,000 fugitives.

Harriet Tubman, who had herself escaped from slavery, escorted more than 300 people to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Tubman was nicknamed the Black Moses after the biblical leader who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. She proudly told Frederick Douglass that, in 19 trips to the South, she “never lost a single passenger.” Slave owners promised a \$40,000 reward for her capture.



Form an Opinion Based on Evidence

What is your opinion of Frederick Douglass’s speech? Do you think it was an effective statement against slavery? Use evidence to support your opinion.



Antislavery medallion

Main Idea

Some abolitionists secretly worked to help African Americans escape from slavery.

Vocabulary Builder

via (VEE ah) prep. by way of

THE Underground Railroad



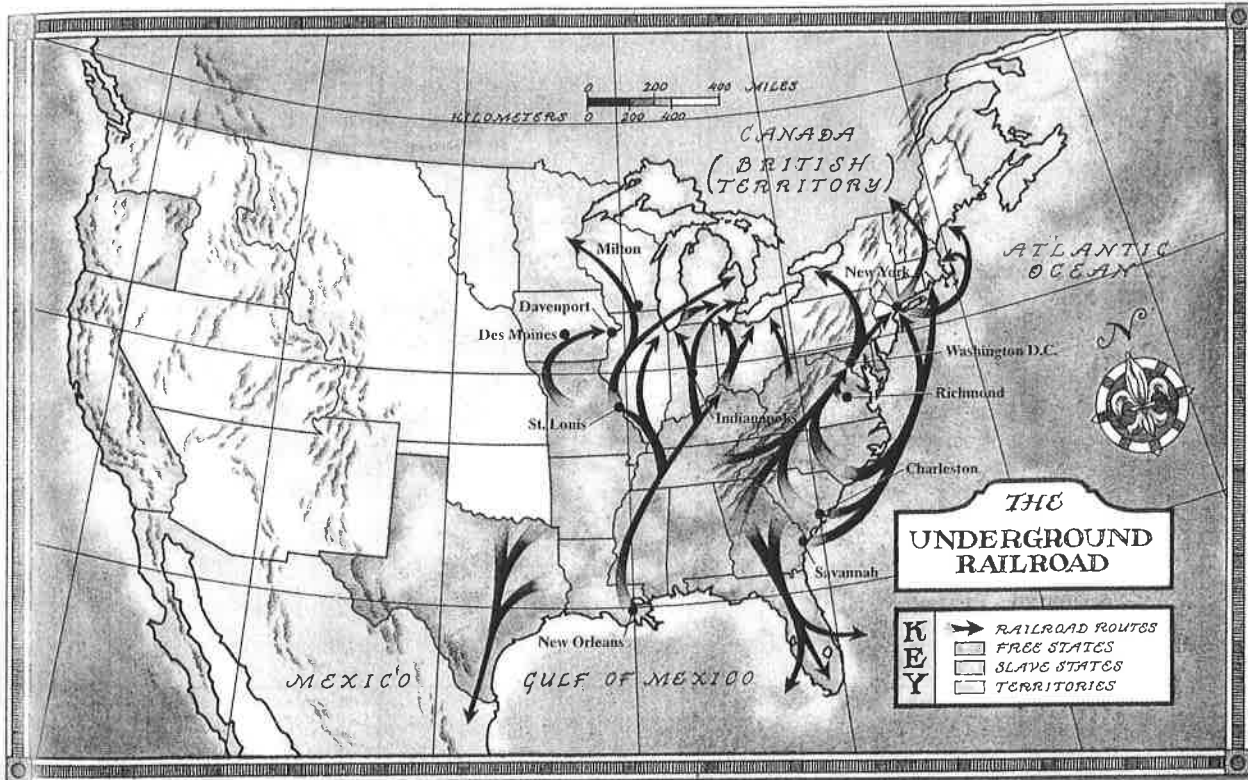
Explore More Video

To learn more about how African Americans escaped slavery, view the video.

As many as 50,000 African Americans escaped from slavery in the South to freedom in the North or in Canada via the Underground Railroad.

Critical Thinking: *Identify Costs and Benefits*

What were the risks of helping fugitive slaves escape? Why do you think conductors on the Underground Railroad chose to take those risks?



▼ This modern quilt honors Harriet Tubman, the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad.



▶ The homes of some conductors had secret rooms to hide runaway slaves. In this room, the bed would be moved to hide the doorway.



▶ This song contained directions for escaping slaves. The "drinking gourd" is the Big Dipper.

*"The riverbank makes a very good road.
The dead trees will show you the way.
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on,
If you follow the drinking gourd."*

Railroad to freedom in the North or in Canada. In total, perhaps as many as 50,000 gained their freedom in this way.

 **Checkpoint** How did the Underground Railroad work?

Main Idea

Many people in both the North and the South defended slavery.


Opposing Abolition

Abolitionists faced powerful obstacles in the North as well as in the South. Many northerners profited from the existence of slavery. Northern textile mill owners and merchants relied on the cotton produced by southern slave labor. Northern workers feared that freed slaves might come north and take their jobs.

Such fears sometimes prompted violence against abolitionists. Mobs attacked antislavery meetings. In 1835, William Lloyd Garrison was dragged through the streets of Boston with a rope around his neck.

As you have read, southerners had long defended slavery as a positive force. Now, as support for abolition grew louder, they went on the offensive. The state of Georgia offered a \$5,000 reward for the arrest and conviction for libel of William Lloyd Garrison. Southerners in Congress won passage of a “gag rule” that blocked discussion of antislavery petitions. John Quincy Adams unsuccessfully fought for repeal of the gag rule.

 **Checkpoint** Why did some northerners oppose abolition?

 **Looking Back and Ahead** By the 1840s, the North and the South were increasingly divided by the issue of slavery. Abolitionists succeeded in making converts in the North. Slavery was spreading along with the cotton boom in the South.

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Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) List** What solutions did the American Colonization Society propose to end slavery?

(b) Explain Problems Why did most African Americans reject the society's goals?
- (a) Identify** Which groups in the North were opposed to abolition? Why?

(b) Identify Alternatives How might the concerns of these groups have been calmed?

Reading Skill

- Form an Opinion Based on Evidence** Henry Brown mailed himself to freedom in a crate. What do you think was important to him? Use evidence quoted from his own narrative to form your opinion: “I was . . . placed on my head. . . . In this dreadful position, I remained the space of an hour and a half . . . my eyes were almost swollen out of their sockets, and the veins on my temples seemed ready to burst. I made no noise, however, determining to obtain *‘victory or death.’*”

Vocabulary Builder

- Write two definitions for the key term *abolitionist*. First, write a formal definition for your teacher. Second, write a definition in everyday English for a classmate.

Writing

- Choose three details from Section 2 that support the topic sentence that follows. Then, write a paragraph developing the topic based on these details.
Topic sentence: Abolitionists used a variety of tactics to oppose slavery.