

History Making Productions

An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

Teacher Materials

-Learning Through Media-

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An Equal Chance: 1855-1871 Lesson Plan For Teachers

BEFORE

(Preparing for and showing the episode should take approximately one 50-minute class period.)

To stimulate interest, ask the following questions.

- Have you ever heard about a prolonged protest led by African Americans to desegregate transportation in their city?
- Have you ever heard about a woman who was a key part of this protest that successfully challenged the segregation of transportation?
- Have you ever heard about one of the men who led these peaceful protests and was assassinated about a decade later?

Ask the students to write down or to share what they know about the people and events described above. Indicate that you were not describing Montgomery, Alabama in 1955; nor were describing Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King, Jr. Rather, you were describing a successful movement to desegregate streetcars in Philadelphia in the 1860s led by two African American teachers, Caroline Le Count and Octavius Catto. Indicate that the film they are about to watch will tell this and other often-forgotten stories in Philadelphia history.

Words before watching:

*These are terms that are used in the episode and/or on the note sheet. It will be helpful to review any unfamiliar terms with students or to distribute the **list** to students.*

Bible Riots of 1844 – A series of bloody confrontations between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants in Philadelphia that were sparked over disagreements about which version of the Bible would be used in public schools

Municipal – Related to a city

Classics – The history, literature, philosophy and language of ancient Greece and Rome

Outmoded – Out of date

Burgeoning – Growing quickly

Terminus – End point (often of a railroad)

Chronicle – (verb) to record or document

Fugitive – Runaway

Apprehensive – Frightened

Triage – The process of assigning degrees of medical urgency

Arsenal – Collection of weapons and other war materials

Wondering before watching

These are the essential questions that permeate the episode. You may choose to present them before and/or after watching.

- How did different groups in Philadelphia cooperate and conflict during the period covered in the film?

- How did African Americans strive to improve their own lives, build their community, and help outsiders during the period covered by the film?
- Why was Philadelphia a center for both the Underground and Pennsylvania Railroads?
- What are different ways that people obtained and used power and influence in mid-19th Century Philadelphia?

DURING

Work while watching:

Students will fill out a **note-taking sheet** that, once filled out, will provide an outline of the episode.

Pause while watching:

Pause at 15:25.

If you are not showing the entire film in one class period, this would be a good time to give additional background about William Still and to assign stories for the **Activity after watching: Primary Sources** on the Underground Railroad.

AFTER

Discussion after watching

These questions can be used for a class discussion or as a homework assignment and can be answered before or after going over the note-taking sheet.

- Compare Octavius Catto and William McMullen. Although superficially completely different, they did have some common traits.
- Compare the Underground Railroad to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Although superficially quite different, they did have some common traits.
- A memorial to Catto is expected to be erected on the sidewalk surrounding City Hall in late 2017. Why do you think he is worthy of this honor? Does anyone else in the film deserve similar recognition?
- The title of this film is *An Equal Chance*, taken from a speech given by President Lincoln at Independence Hall. Who in the film was seeking an “equal chance”? Were they successful in their quest? What might be another fitting title?
- Refer to **essential questions**

Activity after watching: Graphic Organizer

Have students fill in the **Graphic Organizer** using their note-taking sheets.

Activity after watching: Primary Sources

Explain that everyone involved in the Underground Railroad was taking a risk, this was particularly true for African Americans, and especially after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. William Still, though, was putting himself at even greater risk by chronicling the stories of the hundreds of runaways he met and helped. He decided to do so after encountering his own long lost brother, Peter Still, and realizing that documentation could help facilitate family reconciliation for others as well. In 1872, Still published his collection of stories, news clippings, and letters which provides us with a

wealth of information about the Underground Railroad that otherwise may well have been lost. It is still considered the single best source of information about the Underground Railroad.

Distribute an **Underground Railroad Story Sheet** and one of the fourteen **Underground Railroad stories** taken from William Still's book to each student. They should read the story carefully, taking the time to look up any unfamiliar words and recording what they find on the story sheet. You will need to explain that when stories refer to the Committee, this is a reference to the Vigilance Committee, a division of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society that worked on helping fugitive slaves.

Explain that the next day, students will be playing the role of the runaway they will read about. (Optional: require students to bring a small prop of some kind to help them tell the runaway's story.)

Then, play the part of William Still and "host" an imaginary reunion of Underground Railroad escapees. (You may want to put the address 224 South 12th Street on your classroom door, as this is where Still lived.) Distribute an **Underground Railroad Reunion** sheet to each student. Students should circulate, getting stories from others while sharing their own. They should not fill out their own story on the grid. Once each student has gathered the stories of six other escapees, put students in groups of 3 to 5 to see if they can determine any generalizations about the runaways in terms of age, reasons for fleeing, mode of escape, etc.

For homework or as a wrap-up activity, have students write a **Thank You Note to William Still**.

You can find a concise summary of William Still's remarkable life here:

<http://explorepahistory.com/>

Activity after watching: Webisodes

For more about William McMullen and Philadelphia's volunteer fire companies, go to *Volunteer Firefighters: Protectors or Provokers* (8:27) and download the educational materials <http://www.historyofphilly.com>

For more about the early years of baseball during which Octavius Catto played, go to *Baseball: The Philadelphia Game* (8:58) and download the educational materials <http://www.historyofphilly.com>

For more about Octavius Catto, go to *Tasting Freedom: The Life of Octavius Catto* (9:36) <http://www.historyofphilly.com>

For more about Philadelphia during the Civil War, go to *Notes from a Colored Girl: The Civil War Pocket Diaries of Emilie Davis* (4:42). <http://www.historyofphilly.com> You can click to connect to a Unit Plan developed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

For more on Lincoln's funeral procession in Philadelphia *Abraham Lincoln's Funeral: Philadelphia Mourns a Fallen Hero* (6:52) <http://www.historyofphilly.com>

Additional Primary Source Activities

For a primary source activity about the Bible Riots in which William McMullen was involved, visit www.urbantrinityfilm.com

For a primary source activity about the desegregation of the street cars, download the materials that accompany *Floodgates: 1865-1876*. <http://www.historyofphilly.com>

Relevant Pennsylvania Common Core Standards

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 6-8

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions

Grade 9-10

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text

Grade 11-12

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationship among the key details and ideas

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 6-8

Integrate visual information (e.g. in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts}

Grade 11-12

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g. visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem

An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

Fill this in as you watch.

TEACHER KEY

I. South Philadelphia

1. The two main groups living in the web of alleys below South Street were **Irish** famine refugees and the descendants of escaped **slaves**.
2. William McMullen (aka the Squire), the most powerful person in the area, led the Moyamensing **Hose** Company which he used to expand & defend his **political** power.
3. Irish immigrants mattered to McMullen because they could **vote**.
4. Octavius Catto attended the Institute for Colored **Youth**. When the Pennsylvania governor visited the school, Jake White asked about the right to **vote**.

II. Railroads

5. By 1850, Philadelphia had lost trade to **New York** and had experienced many **riots**. To restore the city's prosperity, engineer John Edgar Thompson designed a **railroad** which cut travel from Philadelphia from 4 days to **14** hours.
6. The Pennsylvania Railroad system grew to become the most significant, most powerful and **wealthiest** company in Philadelphia
7. William Still was a clerk and **janitor** at the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and a conductor on the **Underground** Railroad. He also chronicled the **stories** of runaways

III. Lincoln & Civil War

8. According to a speech by President Lincoln, "All should have an **equal** chance."
9. Philadelphia's influential families were split on the question of the war's goal to **end slavery**.
10. The Union League launched a drive to recruit **black** troops; graduates of the ICY took the lead.
11. Octavius Catto excelled in **sports**, academics, and community **leadership**.
12. Philadelphia became the **Union** triage center.
13. Philadelphia **factories** fed the Union arsenal.
14. Lincoln's funeral procession was attended by as many as 500, 000 people. He had managed to unite William **Still**, J. Edgar Thompson, Octavius Catto, and **William** McMullen.

An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

Fill this in as you watch.

IV. Other Battles

15. Picking up a campaign spearheaded by **William** Still, Catto brought a bill to Harrisburg prohibiting discrimination on **streetcar** lines. With **Republican** support, the bill passed. Caroline LeCount risked her own safety to test the **law**. Acting on LeCount's information, the magistrate sent officers out to **arrest** the conductor.

16. Anna Broomall fought to let female students be admitted to a **surgery** clinic and later became a giant of women's **medical** history.

V. Election Day, 1871

17. The 15th Amendment granted black men the right to **vote**. Catto registered hundreds of new voters who were **Republicans** unlike McMullen. Republicans threatened to close volunteer **fire** companies; McMullen knew this would abolish his political **power** base.

18. By noon on Election Day, after McMullen's Moya men and their allies in the **police** department had shot half a dozen black men, Catto went to the office of the **mayor** and begged for the city to intervene, but he refused.

19. After buying a gun, Catto became one of six black men **shot** dead on Election Day, 1871.

20. In coming years Caroline LeCount became the first black female principal in Philadelphia public schools. Republicans abolished the city's 72 volunteer **fire** companies, and William McMullen was elected to City Council.

An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

Use your note-taking sheet to fill in the graphic organizer below with specific examples of how the person named on the left fits the category at the top of the column. Some boxes may be left empty.

TEACHER KEY—Answers will vary

	Community Leader	Pioneer or Innovator	Member of an Oppressed Group
William McMullen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Head of Moyamensing Hose Company; base of his political power -Got people jobs and registered to vote -Elected to City Council 		-Irish Catholic
Octavius Catto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leader of fight for streetcar desegregation (brought bill to Harrisburg) -Registered hundreds of voters 	-Launched black baseball team	-African American
John Edgar Thompson		-Developed PA. RR which greatly reduced travel time across PA; became most significant company in Phila.	-None
William Still	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conductor on the UGRR -Leader of fight for streetcar desegregation 	-Documented & published UGRR stories	-African American
Anna Broomall		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Admitted to surgery clinic -Female medical "giant" 	-Female

The title of the film is *An Equal Chance*. Do you think each of the six people listed above were fighting for an equal chance? Why or why not? Answer on the back using full sentences. **Answers will vary.**

PHILADELPHIA

THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

Caroline LeCount		-Tested streetcar desegregation law -First black female principal in Phila.	-African American -Female

The Great Underground Railroad Reunion

-Name -Age (if known) -Year of Escape	Conditions and location of enslavement	Impetus for and method of escape; eventual destination if indicated
Sarah Jane Bell Maryland 25 1859	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by a cruel man named Massey and his wife in Kent County, Maryland • Subject to cruel punishments • Had been married for 3 years; baby boy Garrett was 8 months • 3 times was tied up, stripped, and whipped, once because a horse became unhooked from a plough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was supposed to be freed after 5 years, but instead heard Massey saying loudly that he might sell her and her son • Fled with son and another woman (Elizabeth Young) who also carried a child
Susan Brooks About 40 1854	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by Thomas Eckels, a wealthy man in Norfolk, VA. • For 16 years, paid \$5 a month to “hire her time” as cook and maid • A few times had “fits” out of grief for the death of her husband a year prior to her escape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her son had already escaped to Canada • Decided to leave on UGRR—in this case by boat • She may have used this method used by others: approached the ship with an ironed shirt on her arm dressed in her regular clothing so that it would appear she was bringing a clean shirt to a man on board. A man would then hide her on the ship • Left a sister behind who also wanted to escape
Robert Brown (aka Thomas Jones) About 38 1856	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by a Col. John Frannie of Martinsburg, VA, a cruel man with a cruel wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wife and 4 kids sold to a trader in Richmond 5 days prior to escape; wife had resisted “lustful designs” of their master • Swam across the Potomac River on horseback on Christmas night • After crossing river, clothing froze to him; he left his horse and continued on foot, cold and hungry • Arrived in Harrisburg and then to Philadelphia by New Year’s night, 1857 • Brought a daguerreotype of his wife and locks of hair from wife and children which he showed to member of the Committee

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<p>Edward Carroll About 21 1858</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by John Lewis who also owned about 70 “head of slaves” • Owner drank and gambled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner had sold him and his 2 brothers to a Georgia trader; they were supposed to be leaving for the South • All 3 headed to PA. following North Star • Wandered for about two weeks, lost • Had a knife fight with people sent to pursue them; separated from his brothers • Because he escaped, realized that he was glad owner had decided to sell him
<p>Clarissa Davis About 22 1854</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by Mrs. Brown & Mrs. Burkley of Portsmouth, VA. of whom she spoke favorably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had tried to escape with her brothers 2.5 months earlier; brothers succeeded but she did not • A \$1,000 reward was offered for her and her brothers • She was hidden in a coop for 75 days awaiting the opportunity to again flee via UGRR • Under cover of torrential rain (for which she had prayed), was able to make it to the City of Richmond steamship dressed as a man at 3 a.m. • Hidden in a box by Wm. Bagnal, a man whose wife was still enslaved • Changed her name to Mary D. Armstead and joined her brothers and sister in New Bedford, MA. • Her father joined them soon after
<p>Sheridan Ford 27 1855</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by Elizabeth Brown of Portsmouth, VA • He spoke kindly of owner but, “the best usage was bad enough” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had been hung by a rope and “whipped unmercifully” for a “trifling offence” and also found out he was to be auctioned off • Fled into the woods; spent first day praying • For 4 days and nights was hungry, cold, and thirsty; a friend who had been bringing him some food was no longer able to help • Paid to stay with someone in town until a secret passage on a steamer to Philadelphia was secured • He found out that his wife was imprisoned and expected to be sold for suspicion that she had helped him escape. She had 2 kids but had not been allowed to raise them • He continued on to Boston

The Great Underground Railroad Reunion

<p>Robert Fisher About 30 1857</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by John Edward Jackson of Anne Arundel, MD—a “mean” and “very hard” man who worked his slaves hard and did not provide enough food/clothing; Robert’s body bore evidence of rough treatment • Refused to marry in order to “not add to the woes of slaves” and to be able to escape unencumbered • Was supposed to be freed at 25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decided he would flee if fellow slave Nathan Harris would join him • They left Christmas week and made it to Philadelphia where they were taken care of and then moved along by the Vigilance Committee
<p>Ann Maria Green About 37 1857</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her master, James Pipper, tried to “work her to death” and whipped her often. He was threatening to sell her and her son to Georgia after her brother and another enslaved person had run away • Her husband, Christopher had a heavy debt to Clayton Wright of Baltimore who claimed Green as his property • Wright hired him out to others and only gave him \$1 on holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Maria prompted Christopher and Nathan to runaway with her • Nathan was son of James Pipper • She told committee that she would have been killed if found with a book and thus could not read • <i>(NOTE: although she was more well-spoken and took the initiative to flee, William Still leads with her husband’s story)</i>
<p>James Griffin 31 1855</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by Joshua Hitch, 17 miles from Baltimore—a relatively kind master who lived with three enslaved women as his “wives,” two of whom Hitch was very fond of • His wife had been sold away to North Carolina 2 years earlier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent visits by the Sheriff indicated that Hitch was having financial problems; one of the “wives” was to be sold and Griffin was given a few days leave to find a new master in Baltimore • Instead of looking for a master, he sought out the UGRR to get to Canada; started walking north until he reached Columbia, PA. • He was directed to the Vigilance Committee in Phila. And helped along the way to Canada • He left 2 sons behind in Baltimore

The Great Underground Railroad Reunion

<p>John Hall About 35 1855</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by James Dunlap, a merchant in Richmond, VA—had been sold several times • Was sold separately from his mother and sister by a cruel master • His father was white which lowered his value <i>(NOTE: Still suggests that his white blood made it harder for him to submit)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had an Irish girlfriend (Mary Weaver) who helped him with a plan to go to Canada; she helped earn the money to pay a \$100 fare on the schooner on which he escaped • Mary Weaver eventually joined him in Canada • They planned to marry and wrote frequently to give thanks for the help received <i>(by the Vigilance Committee)</i>
<p>Hezekiah Hill About 30 1854</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had expected to buy his freedom even though he had already paid \$1900 which was \$600 more than the original agreement he had with his master 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When he was nearly done buying his freedom, a slave trader came to the shop where he worked; once it was clear that his owner meant to sell him, he fled • Although he was pursued, he made it to Richmond and was hidden under a floor by a friend • A large reward was offered for him, but he was not found in his hiding space. He several times missed out on getting a place on a northbound ship • After 13 months of hiding, he had a place on a P.A. bound steamship along with the 7 year old enslaved son of the man who had hidden him • He left his wife and two sons behind • After several days of rest, he continued on to Canada
<p>Cornelius Henry Johnson 36 1859</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had tried to escape several times because his owner, Mary Price, had put him in the charge of her brother, Samuel Bailey, a tobacco merchant—both were firm supporters of slavery • Price and Bailey owned about 100 slaves but were selling them off; both were outwardly religious • He was given \$1 per week • Bailey wouldn't pay for doctors so gave medical care himself; ordered slaves back to work when he thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I left for nothing else but because I was dissatisfied with Slavery.” • His master's threats made him think of the differences between North and South and to decide to not die in slavery • Put his fate in God and headed for UGRR; he mentions a Baptist minister who preached “servants obey your masters.” • It was hard for him to say goodbye to his elderly mother but felt under the threat of sale by his owner

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	<p>them ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badly beat Johnson’s cousin in front of the cousin’s wife • He’s from a family of 16; many have been sold to other states although his mother was still with Bailey—now allowed to just cook and wash for other enslaved people 	
<p>Pete Matthews 35 1855</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by William Matthews of Oak Hall, VA. • His owner was not a “hard” man, but George Matthews, the man to whom he was hired, was cruel • He was married but not allowed to visit his wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an ox broke into a vegetable (“truck”) garden, Pete was blamed and threatened with being shot or knifed; instead he was beaten which prompted him to decide to flee • He bought a gun for \$1 and fled, following the North Star • After traveling 200 miles, he encountered a former master and ran, soon finding that he was the subject of a “regular chase” • Once he reached Philadelphia, he left his pistol with a Committee member; his name was changed to Samuel Sparrows • He was given clean clothes, a ticket, letters of introduction, and sent to Canada
<p>Harriet Shephard 1855</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She never received “kind treatment” by her owner in Chestertown, MD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated by a desire to save her 5 children from slavery • Her children were too young to walk and she had no money, so she stole 4 horses, and 2 carriages from her owner to escape with her 5 children and 5 other people (men and women) who wanted to “visit Canada” • Although they didn’t know the way, they made it to Wilmington, DE. Where Thomas Garrett, an UGRR conductor acted quickly to separate them from the carriages and get them an escort to Kennett Square, PA (“a hotbed of abolitionists and stock-holders of the UGRR”) • They spent time at the Long Wood meeting-house and then passed the night with a “Kennett friend” ; from there they were brought to Downingtown and were eventually brought to the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia where they received further aid. They were separated and disguised and then sent on to Canada in regular train

An Equal Chance: 1855-1872
Thank You Note to William Still

Show Some Appreciation!

Yesterday, you attended a gathering at my home. Today, it's time for you gentlemen and gentlewomen to write me, William Still, a gracious thank you note in which you tell me how much you enjoyed my hospitality and, more importantly, let me know:

- ◆ *Who was the most interesting person you met? Why did you find their story so compelling?*
- ◆ *With whom did you find you had the most in common in terms of either background, means of escape, and/or life as a free person?*
- ◆ *What are some generalizations you can make about the other party guests. Describe at least two common themes, trends, or characteristics you noticed as you met your fellow beneficiaries of the Underground Railroad.*

An Equal Chance: 1855-1872 Quiz Questions (Based on Note Taking Sheet)

1. ____ Each of the following is true of William McMullen EXCEPT
 - a. He killed Octavius Catto.
 - b. He became a member of City Council.
 - c. He was a Democrat.
 - d. He was a leader of a volunteer fire company.

2. ____ The Pennsylvania Railroad
 - a. Cut the time from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in half.
 - b. Went bankrupt during the Civil War.
 - c. Became the wealthiest company in Philadelphia.
 - d. Was desegregated following a protest led by Octavius Catto.

3. ____ During the Civil War, Philadelphia
 - a. Was a Union triage center.
 - b. Unanimously supported the Union cause.
 - c. Forbade any recruitment of black soldiers.
 - d. Lacked the industrial power to contribute to the Union arsenal.

4. ____ Each of the following is true of William Still EXCEPT
 - a. He recorded stories about the Underground Railroad.
 - b. He was a clerk and janitor for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society.
 - c. He was involved in the campaign to prohibit discrimination on streetcars.
 - d. He became Philadelphia's first African American member of City Council.

5. ____ The assassination of Octavius Catto
 - a. Occurred during a presidential election.
 - b. Happened amidst widespread Election Day violence.
 - c. Was condemned by President Lincoln.
 - d. All of the above.

Answer Key:

1. a 2. c 3. a 4. d 5. b