



History Making Productions

# An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

## Student Materials

### ***-Learning Through Media-***

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## An Equal Chance: 1855-1871 Vocabulary List

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Outmoded – Out of date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

## An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

Fill this in as you watch.

### I. South Philadelphia

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

### II. Economic transformations

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

### III. Lincoln & Civil War

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

#### IV. Other Battles

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

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

#### V. Election Day, 1871

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

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

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

20. In coming years Caroline LeCount became the first black female \_\_\_\_\_ in Philadelphia public schools. Republicans abolished the city's 72 volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

	<b>Community Leader</b>	<b>Pioneer or Innovator</b>	<b>Member of an Oppressed Group</b>
<b>William McMullen</b>			
<b>Octavius Catto</b>			
<b>John Edgar Thompson</b>			
<b>William Still</b>			
<b>Anna Broomall</b>			
<b>Caroline LeCount</b>			

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.

## An Equal Chance: 1855-1871

### *The Underground Railroad: First-Hand Accounts of Courage and Creativity*

**Fill in the information below using the Underground Railroad story you were given in class. Not all information will be available for each story.**

Name:

Age:

Year:

Physical Description:

Name and location of previous owner:

Conditions/experiences while enslaved:

Impetus to escape:

Method/description of escape:

Any other interesting details:

# *The Great Underground Railroad Reunion*

<b>-Name -Age (if known) -Year of Escape</b>	<b>Conditions of and location of enslavement</b>	<b>Impetus for and method of escape; eventual destination if indicated</b>

# *The Great Underground Railroad Reunion*

<b>-Name -Age (if known) -Year of Escape</b>	<b>Conditions of and location of enslavement</b>	<b>Impetus for and method of escape; eventual destination if indicated</b>

## ARRIVAL FROM MARYLAND.

### CHRISTOPHER GREEN AND WIFE, ANN MARIA, AND SON NATHAN. 1857

Christopher had a heavy debt charged against Clayton Wright, a commission merchant, of Baltimore, who claimed him as his property, and was in the habit of hiring him out to farmers in the country, and of taking all his hire except a single dollar, which was allotted him every holiday.

The last item in his charge against Wright, suggested certain questions: "How have you been used?" was the first query. "Sometimes right smart, and then again bad enough for it," said Christopher. Again he was asked, "What kind of a man was your master?" "He was only tolerable, I can't say much good for him. I got tired of working and they getting my labor and I getting nothing for my labor." At the time of his escape, he was employed in the service of a man by the name of Cook. Christopher described him as "a dissatisfied man, who couldn't be pleased at nothing and his wife was like him."

This passenger was quite black, medium size, and in point of intellect, about on a par with ordinary field hands. His wife, Ann, in point of go-ahead-iveness, seemed in advance of him. Indeed, she first prompted her husband to escape.

Ann bore witness against one James Pippet, a farmer, whom she had served as a slave, and from whom she fled, saying that "he was as mean a man as ever walked—a dark-complected old man, with gray hair." With great emphasis she thus continued her testimony: "He tried to work me to death, and treated me as mean as he could, without killing me; he done so much I couldn't tell to save my life. I wish I had as many dollars as he has whipped me with sticks and other things. His wife will do tolerable." "I left because he was going to sell me and my son to Georgia; for years he had been threatening; since the boys ran away, last spring, he was harder than ever. One was my brother, Perry, and the other was a young man by the name of Jim." "David, my master, drank all he could get, poured it down, and when drunk, would cuss, and tear, and rip, and beat. He lives near the nine bridges, in Queen Ann county."

Ann was certainly a forcible narrator, and was in every way a wideawake woman, about thirty-seven years of age. Among other questions they were asked if they could read, etc. "Read," said Ann. "I would like to see anybody (slave) that could read our way; to see you with a book in your hand they would almost cut your throat."

Ann had one child only, a son, twenty years of age, who came in company with his parents. This son belonged to the said Pippet already described. When they started from the land of bondage they had large hopes, but not much knowledge of the way; however, they managed to get safely on the Underground Rail Road track, and by perseverance they reached the Committee and were aided in the usual manner.

**This passage is from *The Underground Rail Road: A Record Of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c., Narrating The Hardships, Hair-breadth Escapes, And Death Struggles Of The Slaves In Their Efforts for Freedom* by William Still, first published in Philadelphia by William Still in 1872.**

## ARRIVAL FROM RICHMOND, 1859.

### CORNELIUS HENRY JOHNSON. FACE CANADA- WARD FOR YEARS.

Quite an agreeable interview took place between Cornelius and the Committee. He gave his experience of Slavery pretty fully, and the Committee enlightened him as to the workings of the Underground Rail Road, the value of freedom, and the safety of Canada as a refuge.

Cornelius was a single man, thirty-six years of age, full black, medium size, and intelligent. He stated that he had had his face set toward Canada for a long while. Three times he had made an effort to get out of the prison-house. "Within the last four or five years, times have gone pretty hard with me. My mistress, Mrs. Mary F. Price, had lately put me in charge of her brother, Samuel M. Bailey, a tobacco merchant of Richmond. Both believed in nothing as they did in Slavery; they would sooner see a black man dead than free. They were about second class in society. He and his sister own well on to one hundred head, though within the last few years he has been thinning off the number by sale. I was allowed one dollar a week for my board; one dollar is the usual allowance for slaves in my situation. On Christmas week he allowed me no board money, but made me a present of seventy-five cents; my mistress added twenty-five cents, which was the extent of their liberality. I was well cared for. When the slaves got sick he doctored them himself, he was too stingy to employ a physician. If they did not get well as soon as he thought they should, he would order them to their work, and if they did not go he would beat them. My cousin was badly beat last year in the presence of his wife, and he was right sick. Mr. Bailey was a member of St. James' church, on Fifth street, and my mistress was a communicant of the First Baptist church on Broad Street. She let on to be very good."

"I am one of a family of sixteen; my mother and eleven sisters and brothers are now living; some have been sold to Alabama, and some to Tennessee, the rest are held in Richmond. My mother is now old, but is still in the service of Bailey. He promised to take care of her in her old age, and not compel her to labor, so she is only required to cook and wash for a dozen slaves. This they consider a great favor to the old 'grandmother.' It was only a year ago he cursed her and threatened her with a flogging. I left for nothing else but because I was dissatisfied with Slavery. The threats of my master caused me to reflect on the North and South. I had an idea that I was not to die in Slavery. I believed that God would assist me if I would try. I then made up my mind to put my case in the hands of God, and start for the Underground Rail Road. I bade good-bye to the old tobacco factory on Seventh street, and the First African Baptist church on Broad street (where he belonged), where I had so often heard the minister preach 'servants obey your masters;' also to the slave pens, chain-gangs, and a cruel master and mistress, all of which I hoped to leave forever. But to bid good-bye to my old mother in chains, was no easy job, and if my desire for freedom had not been as strong as my desire for life itself, I could never have stood it; but I felt that I could do her no good; could not help her if I staid. As I was often threatened by my master, with the auction-block, I felt I must give up all and escape for my life."

Such was substantially the story of Cornelius Henry Johnson. He talked for an hour as one inspired, and as none but fugitive slaves could talk.

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## ARRIVAL FROM MARYLAND, 1858.

### EDWARD CARROLL.

Edward, a youthful passenger about twenty-one years of age, slow of speech, with a stammering utterance, and apparently crushed in spirits, claimed succor and aid of the Committee. At first the Committee felt a little puzzled to understand, how one, apparently so deficient, could succeed in surmounting the usual difficulties consequent upon traveling, via the Underground Rail Road; but in conversing with him, they found him possessed of more intelligence than they had supposed; indeed, they perceived that he could read and write a little, and that what he lacked in aptness of speech, he supplied as a thinker, and although he was slow he was sure. He was owned by a man named John Lewis, who also owned about seventy head of slaves, whom he kept on farms near the mouth of the Sassafras River, in Sussex county.

Lewis had not only held Edward in bondage, but had actually sold him, with two of his brothers, only the Saturday before his escape, to a Georgia trader, named Durant, who was to start south with them on the subsequent Monday. Moved almost to desperation at their master's course in thus selling them, the three brothers, after reflection, determined to save themselves if possible, and without any definite knowledge of the journey, they turned their eyes towards the North Star, and under the cover of night they started for Pennsylvania, not knowing whether they would ever see the goodly land of freedom. After wandering for about two weeks, having been lost often and compelled to lie out in all weathers, a party of pursuers suddenly came upon them. Both parties were armed; the fugitives therefore resolved to give their enemies battle, before surrendering. Edward felt certain that one of the pursuers received a cut from his knife, but the extent of the injury was unknown to him. For a time the struggle was of a very serious character; by using his weapons skillfully, however, Edward managed to keep the hand-cuff off of himself, but was at this point separated from his two brothers. No further knowledge of them did he possess; nevertheless, he trusted that they succeeded in fighting their way through to freedom. How any were successful in making their escape under such discouraging circumstances is a marvel.

Edward took occasion to review his master's conduct, and said that he "could not recommend him," as he would "drink and gamble," both of which, were enough to condemn him, in Edward's estimation, even though he were passable in other respects. But he held him doubly guilty for the way that he acted in selling him and his brothers.

So privately had his master transacted business with the trader, that they were within a hair's breadth of being hand-cuffed, ere they knew that they were sold. Probably no outrage will be remembered with feelings of greater bitterness, than this proceeding on the part of the master; yet, when he reflected that he was thereby prompted to strike for freedom, Edward was disposed to rejoice at the good which had come out of the evil.

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## **AN IRISH GIRL'S DEVOTION TO FREEDOM. IN LOVE WITH A SLAVE—GETS HIM OFF TO CANADA— FOLLOWS HIM—MARRIAGE, &C.**

Having dwelt on the sad narratives of Samuel Green and his son in the preceding chapter, it is quite a relief to be able to introduce a traveler whose story contains incidents less painful to contemplate. From the record book the following brief account is taken: "April 27, 1855. John Hall arrived safely from Richmond, Va., per schooner, (Captain B). One hundred dollars were paid for his passage." In Richmond he was owned by James Dunlap, a merchant. John had been sold several times, in consequence of which, he had possessed very good opportunities of experiencing the effect of change of owners. Then, too, the personal examination made before sale, and the gratification afforded his master when he (John), brought a good price—left no very pleasing impressions on his mind.

By one of his owners, named Burke, John alleged that he had been "cruelly used." When quite young, both he and his sister, together with their mother, were sold by Burke. From that time he had seen neither mother nor sister—they were sold separately. For three or four years the desire to seek liberty had been fondly cherished, and nothing but the want of a favorable opportunity had deterred him from carrying out his designs. He considered himself much "imposed upon" by his master, particularly as he was allowed "no choice about living" as he "desired." This was indeed ill-treatment as John viewed the matter. John may have wanted too much. He was about thirty-five years of age, light complexion—tall—rather handsome-looking, intelligent, and of good manners. But notwithstanding these prepossessing features, John's owner valued him at only \$1,000. If he had been a few shades darker and only about half as intelligent as he was, he would have been worth at least \$500 more. The idea of having had a white father, in many instances, depreciated the pecuniary value of male slaves, if not of the other sex. John emphatically was one of this injured class; he evidently had blood in his veins which decidedly warred against submitting to the yoke. In addition to the influence which such rebellious blood exerted over him, together with a considerable amount of intelligence, he was also under the influence and advice of a daughter of old Ireland. She was heart and soul with John in all his plans which looked Canada-ward. This it was that "sent him away."

It is very certain, that this Irish girl was not annoyed by the kinks in John's hair. Nor was she overly fastidious about the small percentage of colored blood visible in John's complexion. It was, however, a strange occurrence and very hard to understand. Not a stone was left unturned until John was safely on the Underground Rail Road. Doubtless she helped to earn the money which was paid for his passage. And when he was safe off, it is not too much to say, that John was not a whit more delighted than was his intended Irish lassie, Mary Weaver. John had no sooner reached Canada than Mary's heart was there too. Circumstances, however, required that she should remain in Richmond a number of months for the purpose of winding up some of her affairs. As soon as the way opened for her, she followed him. It was quite manifest, that she had not let a single opportunity slide, but seized the first chance and arrived partly by means of the Underground Rail Road and partly by the regular train. Many difficulties were surmounted before and after leaving Richmond, by which they earned their merited success. From Canada, where they anticipated entering upon the matrimonial career with mutual satisfaction, it seemed to afford them great pleasure to write back frequently, expressing their heartfelt gratitude for assistance, and their happiness in the prospect of being united under the favorable auspices of freedom!

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## **SHERIDAN FORD. SECRETED IN THE WOODS—ESCAPES IN A STEAMER.**

About the twenty-ninth of January, 1855, Sheridan arrived from the Old Dominion and a life of bondage, and was welcomed cordially by the Vigilance Committee. Miss Elizabeth Brown of Portsmouth, Va. claimed Sheridan as her property. He spoke rather kindly of her, and felt that he "had not been used very hard" as a general thing, although, he wisely added, "the best usage was bad enough." Sheridan had nearly reached his twenty-eighth year, was tall and well made, and possessed of a considerable share of intelligence.

Not a great while before making up his mind to escape, for some trifling offence he had been "stretched up with a rope by his hands," and "whipped unmercifully." In addition to this he had "got wind of the fact," that he was to be auctioneered off; soon these things brought serious reflections to Sheridan's mind, and among other questions, he began to ponder how he could get a ticket on the U.G.R.R., and get out of this "place of torment," to where he might have the benefit of his own labor. In this state of mind, about the fourteenth day of November, he took his first and daring step. He went not, however, to learned lawyers or able ministers of the Gospel in his distress and trouble, but wended his way "directly to the woods," where he felt that he would be safer with the wild animals and reptiles, in solitude, than with the barbarous civilization that existed in Portsmouth.

The first day in the woods he passed in prayer incessantly, all alone. In this particular place of seclusion he remained "four days and nights," "two days suffered severely from hunger, cold and thirst." However, one who was a "friend" to him, and knew of his whereabouts, managed to get some food to him and consoling words; but at the end of the four days this friend got into some difficulty and thus Sheridan was left to "wade through deep waters and head winds" in an almost hopeless state. There he could not consent to stay and starve to death. Accordingly he left and found another place of seclusion—with a friend in the town—for a pecuniary consideration. A secret passage was procured for him on one of the steamers running between Philadelphia and Richmond, Va. When he left his poor wife, Julia, she was then "lying in prison to be sold," on the simple charge of having been suspected of conniving at her husband's escape. As a woman she had known something of the "barbarism of slavery", from every-day experience, which the large scars about her head indicated—according to Sheridan's testimony. She was the mother of two children, but had never been allowed to have the care of either of them. The husband, utterly powerless to offer her the least sympathy in word or deed, left this dark habitation of cruelty, as above referred to, with no hope of ever seeing wife or child again in this world.

The Committee afforded him the usual aid and comfort, and passed him on to the next station, with his face set towards Boston. He had heard the slaveholders "curse" Boston so much, that he concluded it must be a pretty safe place for the fugitive.

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## CLARISSA DAVIS. ARRIVED DRESSED IN MALE ATTIRE.

Clarissa fled from Portsmouth, Va., in May, 1854, with two of her brothers. Two months and a half before she succeeded in getting off, Clarissa had made a desperate effort, but failed. The brothers succeeded, but she was left. She had not given up all hope of escape, however, and therefore sought "a safe hiding-place until an opportunity might offer," by which she could follow her brothers on the U.G.R.R. Clarissa was owned by Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Burkley, of Portsmouth, under whom she had always served.

Of them she spoke favorably, saying that she "had not been used as hard as many others were." At this period, Clarissa was about twenty-two years of age, of a bright brown complexion, with handsome features, exceedingly respectful and modest, and possessed all the characteristics of a well-bred young lady. For one so little acquainted with books as she was, the correctness of her speech was perfectly astonishing.

For Clarissa and her two brothers a "reward of one thousand dollars" was kept standing in the papers for a length of time, as these (articles) were considered very rare and valuable; the best that could be produced in Virginia.

In the meanwhile the brothers had passed safely on to New Bedford, but Clarissa remained secluded, "waiting for the storm to subside." Keeping up courage day by day, for seventy-five days, with the fear of being detected and severely punished, and then sold, after all her hopes and struggles, required the faith of a martyr. Time after time, when she hoped to succeed in making her escape, ill luck seemed to disappoint her, and nothing but intense suffering appeared to be in store. Like many others, under the crushing weight of oppression, she thought she "should have to die" ere she tasted liberty. In this state of mind, one day, word was conveyed to her that the steamship, City of Richmond, had arrived from Philadelphia, and that the steward on board (with whom she was acquainted), had consented to secrete her this trip, if she could manage to reach the ship safely, which was to start the next day. This news to Clarissa was both cheering and painful. She had been "praying all the time while waiting," but now she felt "that if it would only rain right hard the next morning about three o'clock, to drive the police officers off the street, then she could safely make her way to the boat." Therefore she prayed anxiously all that day that it would rain, "but no sign of rain appeared till towards midnight." The prospect looked horribly discouraging; but she prayed on, and at the appointed hour (three o'clock—before day), the rain descended in torrents. Dressed in male attire, Clarissa left the miserable coop where she had been almost without light or air for two and a half months, and unmolested, reached the boat safely, and was secreted in a box by Wm. Bagnal, a clever young man who sincerely sympathized with the slave, having a wife in slavery himself; and by him she was safely delivered into the hands of the Vigilance Committee.

Clarissa Davis here, by advice of the Committee, dropped her old name, and was straightway christened "Mary D. Armstead." Desiring to join her brothers and sister in New Bedford, she was duly furnished with her U.G.R.R. passport and directed thitherward. Her father, who was left behind when she got off, soon after made his way on North, and joined his children. He was too old and infirm probably to be worth anything, and had been allowed to go free, or to purchase himself for a mere nominal sum. Slaveholders would, on some such occasions, show wonderful liberality in letting their old slaves go free, when they could work no more. After reaching New Bedford, Clarissa manifested her gratitude in writing to her friends in Philadelphia repeatedly, and evinced a very lively interest in the U.G.R.R.

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## HARRIET SHEPHARD, AND HER FIVE CHILDREN, WITH FIVE OTHER PASSENGERS.

One morning about the first of November, in 1855, the sleepy, slave-holding neighborhood of Chestertown, Maryland, was doubtless deeply excited on learning that eleven head of slaves, four head of horses, and two carriages were missing. It is but reasonable to suppose that the first report must have produced a shock, scarcely less stunning than an earthquake. Abolitionists, emissaries, and incendiaries were farther below par than ever. It may be supposed that cursings and threatenings were breathed out by a deeply agitated community for days in succession. Harriet Shephard, the mother of five children, for whom she felt of course a mother's love, could not bear the thought of having her offspring compelled to wear the miserable yoke of Slavery, as she had been compelled to do. By her own personal experience, Harriet could very well judge what their fate would be when reaching man and womanhood. She declared that she had never received "kind treatment." It was not on this account, however, that she was prompted to escape. She was actuated by a more disinterested motive than this. She was chiefly induced to make the bold effort to save her children from having to drag the chains of Slavery as she herself had done.

Anna Maria, Edwin, Eliza Jane, Mary Ann, and John Henry were the names of the children for whom she was willing to make any sacrifice. They were young; and unable to walk, and she was penniless, and unable to hire a conveyance, even if she had known any one who would have been willing to risk the law in taking them a night's journey. So there was no hope in these directions. Her rude intellect being considered, she was entitled to a great deal of credit for seizing the horses and carriages belonging to her master, as she did it for the liberation of her children.

Knowing others at the same time, who were wanting to visit Canada, she consulted with five of this class, males and females, and they mutually decided to travel together. It is not likely that they knew much about the roads, nevertheless they reached Wilmington, Delaware, pretty direct, and ventured up into the heart of the town in carriages, looking as innocent as if they were going to meeting to hear an old-fashioned Southern sermon—"Servants, obey your masters." Of course, the distinguished travelers were immediately reported to the noted Thomas Garrett, who was accustomed to transact the affairs of the Underground Rail Road in a cool masterly way. But, on this occasion, there was but little time for deliberation, but much need of haste to meet the emergency. He at once decided, that they must immediately be separated from the horses and carriages, and got out of Wilmington as quickly as possible. With the courage and skill, so characteristic of Garrett, the fugitives, under escort, were soon on their way to Kennett Square (a hot-bed of abolitionists and stock-holders of the Underground Rail Road), which place they reached safely. It so happened, that they reached Long Wood meeting-house in the evening, at which place a fair circle had convened. Being invited, they stayed awhile in the meeting, then, after remaining all night with one of the Kennett friends, they were brought to Downingtown early in the morning and thence, by daylight, within a short distance of Kimberton, and found succor with friend Lewis, at the old headquarters of the fugitives.

After receiving friendly aid and advice while there, they were forwarded to the Committee in Philadelphia. Here further aid was afforded them, and as danger was quite obvious, they were completely divided and disguised, so that the Committee felt that they might safely be sent on to Canada in one of the regular trains considered most private. Considering the condition of the slave mother and her children and friends, all concerned rejoiced, that they had had the courage to use their master's horses and vehicles as they did.

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## **ROBERT FISHER. 1857.**

**THIS PASSENGER AVAILS HIMSELF OF HOLIDAY WEEK, BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S, TO MAKE HIS NORTHERN TRIP.**

Robert was about thirty years of age, dark color, quite tall, and in talking with him a little while, it was soon discovered that Slavery had not crushed all the brains out of his head by a good deal. Nor was he so much attached to his "kind-hearted master," John Edward Jackson, of Anne Arundel, Md., or his old fiddle, that he was contented and happy while in bondage. Far from it. The fact was, that he hated Slavery so decidedly and had such a clear common sense-like view of the evils and misery of the system, that he declared he had as a matter of principle refrained from marrying, in order that he might have no reason to grieve over having added to the woes of slaves. Nor did he wish to be encumbered, if the opportunity offered to escape. According to law he was entitled to his freedom at the age of twenty-five.

But what right had a negro, which white slave-holders were "bound to respect?" Many who had been willed free, were held just as firmly in Slavery, as if no will had ever been made. Robert had too much sense to suppose that he could gain anything by seeking legal redress. This method, therefore, was considered out of the question. But in the meantime he was growing very naturally in favor of the Underground Rail Road. From his experience Robert did not hesitate to say that his master was "mean," "a very hard man," who would work his servants early and late, without allowing them food and clothing sufficient to shield them from the cold and hunger. Robert certainly had unmistakable marks about him, of having been used roughly. He thought very well of Nathan Harris, a fellow-servant belonging to the same owner, and he made up his mind, if Nathan would join him, neither the length of the journey, the loneliness of night travel, the coldness of the weather, the fear of the slave-hunter, nor the scantiness of their means should deter him from making his way to freedom. Nathan listened to the proposal, and was suddenly converted to freedom, and the two united during Christmas week, 1854, and set out on the Underground Rail Road. It is needless to say that they had trying difficulties to encounter. These they expected, but all were overcome, and they reached the Vigilance Committee, in Philadelphia safely, and were cordially welcomed. During the interview, a full interchange of thought resulted, the fugitives were well cared for, and in due time both were forwarded on, free of cost.

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## THE ESCAPE OF HEZEKIAH HILL.

Impelled by the love of freedom Hezekiah resolved that he would work no longer for nothing; that he would never be sold on the auction block: that he no longer would obey the bidding of a master, and that he would die rather than be a slave. This decision, however, had only been entertained by him a short time prior to his escape. For a number of years Hezekiah had been laboring under the pleasing thought that he should succeed in obtaining freedom through purchase, having had an understanding with his owner with this object in view. At different times he had paid on account for himself nineteen hundred dollars, six hundred dollars more than he was to have paid according to the first agreement. Although so shamefully defrauded in the first instance, he concluded to bear the disappointment as patiently as possible and get out of the lion's mouth as best he could.

He continued to work on and save his money until he had actually come within one hundred dollars of paying two thousand. At this point instead of getting his free papers, as he firmly believed that he should, to his surprise one day he saw a notorious trader approaching the shop where he was at work. The errand of the trader was soon made known. Hezekiah simply requested time to go back to the other end of the shop to get his coat, which he seized and ran. He was pursued but not captured. This occurrence took place in Petersburg, Va., about the first of December, 1854. On the night of the same day of his escape from the trader, Hezekiah walked to Richmond and was there secreted under a floor by a friend. He was a tall man, of powerful muscular strength, about thirty years of age just in the prime of his manhood with enough pluck for two men.

A heavy reward was offered for him, but the hunters failed to find him in this hiding-place under the floor. He strongly hoped to get away soon; on several occasions he made efforts, but only to be disappointed. At different times at least two captains had consented to afford him a private passage to Philadelphia, but like the impotent man at the pool, some one always got ahead of him. Two or three times he even managed to reach the boat upon the river, but had to return to his horrible place under the floor. Some were under the impression that he was an exceedingly unlucky man, and for a time captains feared to bring him. But his courage sustained him unwaveringly.

Finally at the expiration of thirteen months, a private passage was procured for him on the steamship Pennsylvania, and with a little slave boy, seven years of age, (the son of the man who had secreted him) though placed in a very hard berth, he came safely to Philadelphia, greatly to the astonishment of the Vigilance Committee, who had waited for him so long that they had despaired of his ever coming.

The joy that filled Hezekiah's bosom may be imagined but never described. None but one who had been in similar straits could enter into his feelings. He had left his wife Louisa, and two little boys, Henry and Manuel. His passage cost one hundred dollars.

Hezekiah being a noted character, a number of the true friends were invited to take him by the hand and to rejoice with him over his noble struggles and his triumph; needing rest and recruiting, he was made welcome to stay, at the expense of the committee, as long as he might feel disposed so to do. He remained several days, and then went on to Canada rejoicing.

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## SLAVE-HOLDER IN MARYLAND WITH THREE COLORED WIVES.

### JAMES GRIFFIN ALIAS THOMAS BROWN. 1855

James was a tiller of the soil under the yoke of Joshua Hitch, who lived on a farm about seventeen miles from Baltimore. James spoke rather favorably of him; indeed, it was through a direct act of kindness on the part of his master that he procured the opportunity to make good his escape. It appeared from his story, that his master's affairs had become particularly embarrassed, and the Sheriff was making frequent visits to his house. This sign was interpreted to mean that James, if not others, would have to be sold before long. The master was much puzzled to decide which way to turn. He owned but three other adult slaves besides James, and they were females. One of them was his chief housekeeper, and with them all his social relations were of such a nature as to lead James and others to think and say that they "were all his wives." Or to use James's own language, "he had three slave women; two were sisters, and he lived with them all as his wives; two of them he was very fond of," and desired to keep them from being sold if possible. The third, he concluded he could not save, she would have to be sold. In this dilemma, he was good enough to allow James a few days' holiday, for the purpose of finding him a good master. Expressing his satisfaction and gratification, James, armed with full authority from his master to select a choice specimen, started for Baltimore.

On reaching Baltimore, however, James carefully steered clear of all slave-holders, and shrewdly turned his attention to the matter of getting an Underground Rail Road ticket for Canada. After making as much inquiry as he felt was safe, he came to the conclusion to walk of nights for a long distance. He examined his feet and legs, found that they were in good order, and his faith and hope strong enough to remove a mountain. Besides several days still remained in which he was permitted to look for a new master, and these he decided could be profitably spent in making his way towards Canada. So off he started, at no doubt a very diligent pace, for at the end of the first night's journey, he had made much headway, but at the expense of his feet.

His faith was stronger than ever. So he rested next day in the woods, concealed, of course, and the next evening started with fresh courage and renewed perseverance. Finally, he reached Columbia, Pennsylvania, and there he had the happiness to learn, that the mountain which at first had tried his faith so severely, was removed, and friendly hands were reached out and a more speedy and comfortable mode of travel advised. He was directed to the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, from whom he received friendly aid, and all necessary information respecting Canada and how to get there.

James was thirty-one years of age, rather a fine-looking man, of a chestnut color, and quite intelligent. He had been a married man, but for two years before his escape, he had been a widower—that is, his wife had been sold away from him to North Carolina, and in that space of time he had received only three letters from her; he had given up all hope of ever seeing her again. He had two little boys living in Baltimore, whom he was obliged to leave. Their names were Edward and William. What became of them afterwards was never known at the Philadelphia station.

James's master was a man of about fifty years of age—who had never been lawfully married, yet had a number of children on his place who were of great concern to him in the midst of other pressing embarrassments. Of course, the Committee never learned how matters were settled after James left, but, in all probability, his wives, Nancy and Mary (sisters), and Lizzie, with all the children, had to be sold.

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## "PETE MATTHEWS," ALIAS SAMUEL SPARROWS. "I MIGHT AS WELL BE IN THE PENITENTIARY, &C."

Up to the age of thirty-five "Pete" had worn the yoke steadily, if not patiently under William S. Matthews, of Oak Hall, near Temperanceville, in the State of Virginia. Pete said that his "master was not a hard man," but the man to whom he "was hired, George Matthews, was a very cruel man." "I might as well be in the penitentiary as in his hands," was his declaration. One day, a short while before Pete "took out," an ox broke into the truck patch, and helped himself to choice delicacies, to the full extent of his capacious stomach, making sad havoc with the vegetables generally. Peter's attention being directed to the ox, he turned him out, and gave him what he considered proper chastisement, according to the mischief he had done. At this liberty taken by Pete, the master became furious. "He got his gun and threatened to shoot him," "Open your mouth if you dare, and I will pat the whole load into you," said the enraged master. "He took out a large dirk-knife, and attempted to stab me, but I kept out of his way," said Pete. Nevertheless the violence of the master did not abate until he had beaten Pete over the head and body till he was weary, inflicting severe injuries. A great change was at once wrought in Pete's mind. He was now ready to adopt any plan that might hold out the least encouragement to escape. Having capital to the amount of four dollars only, he felt that he could not do much towards employing a conductor, but he had a good pair of legs, and a heart stout enough to whip two or three slave-catchers, with the help of a pistol. Happening to know a man who had a pistol for sale, he went to him and told him that he wished to purchase it. For one dollar the pistol became Pete's property. He had but three dollars left, but he was determined to make that amount answer his purposes under the circumstances. The last cruel beating maddened him almost to desperation, especially when he remembered how he had been compelled to work hard night and day, under Matthews. Then, too, Peter had a wife, whom his master prevented him from visiting; this was not among the least offences with which Pete charged his master. Fully bent on leaving, the following Sunday was fixed by him on which to commence his journey. The time arrived and Pete bade farewell to Slavery, resolved to follow the North Star, with his pistol in hand ready for action. After traveling about two hundred miles from home he unexpectedly had an opportunity of using his pistol. To his astonishment he suddenly came face to face with a former master, whom he had not seen for a long time. Pete desired no friendly intercourse with him whatever; but he perceived that his old master recognized him and was bent upon stopping him. Pete held on to his pistol, but moved as fast as his wearied limbs would allow him, in an opposite direction. As he was running, Pete cautiously, cast his eye over his shoulder, to see what had become of his old master, when to his amazement, he found that a regular chase was being made after him. Need of redoubling his pace was quite obvious. In this hour of peril, Pete's legs saved him.

After this signal leg-victory, Pete had more confidence in his "understandings," than he had in his old pistol, although he held on to it until he reached Philadelphia, where he left it in the possession of the Secretary of the Committee. Considering it worth saving simply as a relic of the Underground Rail Road, it was carefully laid aside. Pete was now christened Samuel Sparrows. Mr. Sparrows had the rust of Slavery washed off as clean as possible and the Committee furnishing him with clean clothes, a ticket, and letters of introduction, started him on Canada-ward, looking quite respectable. And doubtless he felt even more so than he looked; free air had a powerful effect on such passengers as Samuel Sparrows.

The unpleasantness which grew out of the mischief done by the ox on George Matthews' farm took place the first of October, 1855. Pete may be described as a man of unmixed blood, well-made, and intelligent.

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# ROBERT BROWN, ALIAS THOMAS JONES. CROSSING THE RIVER ON HORSEBACK IN THE NIGHT.

In very desperate straits many new inventions were sought after by deep-thinking and resolute slaves, determined to be free at any cost. But it must here be admitted, that, in looking carefully over the more perilous methods resorted to, Robert Brown, alias Thomas Jones, stands second to none, with regard to deeds of bold daring. This hero escaped from Martinsburg, Va., in 1856. He was a man of medium size, mulatto, about thirty-eight years of age, could read and write, and was naturally sharp-witted. He had formerly been owned by Col. John F. Franie, whom Robert charged with various offences of a serious domestic character. Furthermore, he also alleged, that his "mistress was cruel to all the slaves," declaring that "they (the slaves), could not live with her," that "she had to hire servants," etc.

In order to effect his escape, Robert was obliged to swim the Potomac river on horseback, on Christmas night, while the cold, wind, storm, and darkness were indescribably dismal. This daring bondman, rather than submit to his oppressor any longer, perilled his life as above stated. Where he crossed the river was about a half a mile wide. Where could be found in history a more noble and daring struggle for Freedom?

The wife of his bosom and his four children, only five days before he fled, were sold to a trader in Richmond, Va., for no other offence than simply "because she had resisted" the lustful designs of her master, being "true to her own companion." After this poor slave mother and her children were cast into prison for sale, the husband and some of his friends tried hard to find a purchaser in the neighborhood; but the malicious and brutal master refused to sell her—wishing to gratify his malice to the utmost, and to punish his victims all that lay in his power, he sent them to the place above named.

In this trying hour, the severed and bleeding heart of the husband resolved to escape at all hazards, taking with him a daguerreotype likeness of his wife which he happened to have on hand, and a lock of hair from her head, and from each of the children, as mementoes of his unbounded (though sundered) affection for them.

After crossing the river, his wet clothing freezing to him, he rode all night, a distance of about forty miles. In the morning he left his faithful horse tied to a fence, quite broken down. He then commenced his dreary journey on foot—cold and hungry—in a strange place, where it was quite unsafe to make known his condition and wants. Thus for a day or two, without food or shelter, he traveled until his feet were literally worn out, and in this condition he arrived at Harrisburg, where he found friends. Passing over many of the interesting incidents on the road, suffice it to say, he arrived safely in this city, on New Year's night, 1857, about two hours before day break (the telegraph having announced his coming from Harrisburg), having been a week on the way. The night he arrived was very cold; besides, the Underground train, that morning, was about three hours behind time; in waiting for it, entirely out in the cold, a member of the Vigilance Committee thought he was frosted. But when he came to listen to the story of the Fugitive's sufferings, his mind changed.

Scarcely had Robert entered the house of one of the Committee, where he was kindly received, when he took from his pocket his wife's likeness, speaking very touchingly while gazing upon it and showing it. Subsequently, in speaking of his family, he showed the locks of hair referred to, which he had carefully rolled up in paper separately. Unrolling them, he said, "this is my wife's;" "this is from my oldest daughter, eleven years old;" "and this is from my next oldest;" "and this from the next," "and this from my infant, only eight weeks old." These mementoes he cherished with the utmost care as the last remains of his affectionate family. At the sight of these locks of hair so tenderly preserved, the member of the Committee could fully appreciate the resolution of the fugitive in plunging into the Potomac, on the back of a dumb beast, in order to flee from a place and people who had made such barbarous havoc in his household. His wife, as represented by the likeness, was of fair complexion, prepossessing, and good looking—perhaps not over thirty-three years of age.

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## ARRIVAL FROM MARYLAND. 1859.

### TWO YOUNG MOTHERS, EACH WITH BABES IN THEIR ARMS—ANNA ELIZABETH YOUNG AND SARAH JANE BELL—WHIPPED TILL THE BLOOD FLOWED.

The appearance of these young mothers at first produced a sudden degree of pleasure, but their story of suffering quite as suddenly caused the most painful reflections. It was hardly possible to listen to their tales of outrage and wrong with composure. Both came from Kent county, Maryland, and reported that they fled from a man by the name of Massey; a man of low stature, light-complexioned, with dark hair, dark eyes, and very quick temper; given to hard swearing as a common practice; also, that the said Massey had a wife, who was a very tall woman, with blue eyes, chestnut-colored hair, and a very bad temper; that, conjointly, Massey and his wife were in the habit of meting out cruel punishment to their slaves, without regard to age or sex, and that they themselves, (Anna Elizabeth and Sarah Jane), had received repeated scourgings at the hands of their master. Anna and Sarah were respectively twenty-four and twenty-five years of age; Anna was of a dark chestnut color, while Sarah was two shades lighter; both had good manners, and a fair share of intelligence, which afforded a hopeful future for them in freedom. Each had a babe in her arms.

Sarah had been a married woman for three years; her child, a boy, was eight months old, and was named Garrett Bell. Elizabeth's child was a girl, nineteen months old, and named Sarah Catharine Young. Elizabeth had never been married. They had lived with Massey five years up to the last March prior to their escape, having been bought out of the Baltimore slave-pen, with the understanding that they were to be free at the expiration of five years' service under him. The five years had more than expired, but no hope or sign of freedom appeared. On the other hand, Massey was talking loudly of selling them again. Threats and fears were so horrifying to them, that they could not stand it; this was what prompted them to flee. "As often as six or seven times," said Elizabeth, "I have been whipped by master, once with the carriage whip, and at other times with a raw hide trace. The last flogging I received from him, was about four weeks before last Christmas; he then tied me up to a locust tree standing before the door, and whipped me to his satisfaction."

Sarah had fared no better than Elizabeth, according to her testimony. "Three times," said she, "I have been tied up; the last time was in planting corn-time, this year. My clothing was all stripped off above my waist, and then he whipped me till the blood ran down to my heels." Her back was lacerated all over. She had been ploughing with two horses, and unfortunately had lost a hook out of her plough; this, she declared was the head and front of her offending, nothing more. Thus, after all their suffering, utterly penniless, they reached the Committee, and were in every respect, in a situation to call for the deepest commiseration. They were helped and were thankful.

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## SUSAN BROOKS.

Susan was also a passenger on the same ship that brought Wm. B. White. She was from Norfolk. Her toil, body and strength were claimed by Thomas Eckels, Esq., a man of wealth and likewise a man of intemperance. With those who regarded Slavery as a "divine institution," intemperance was scarcely a mote, in the eyes of such. For sixteen years, Susan had been in the habit of hiring her time, for which she was required to pay five dollars per month. As she had the reputation of being a good cook and chambermaid, she was employed steadily, sometimes on boats. This sum may therefore be considered reasonable.

Owing to the death of her husband, about a year previous to her escape, she had suffered greatly, so much so, that on two or three occasions, she had fallen into alarming fits,—a fact by no means agreeable to her owner, as he feared that the traders on learning her failing health would underrate her on this account. But Susan was rather thankful for these signs of weakness, as she was thereby enabled to mature her plans and thus to elude detection.

Her son having gone on ahead to Canada about six months in advance of her, she felt that she had strong ties in the goodly land. Every day she remained in bondage, the cords bound her more tightly, and "weeks seemed like months, and months like years," so abhorrent had the peculiar institution become to her in every particular. In this state of mind, she saw no other way, than by submitting to be secreted, until an opportunity should offer, via the Underground Rail Road.

So for four months, like a true and earnest woman, she endured a great "fight of affliction," in this horrible place. But the thought of freedom enabled her to keep her courage up, until the glad news was conveyed to her that all things were ready, providing that she could get safely to the boat, on which she was to be secreted. How she succeeded in so doing the record book fails to explain.

One of the methods, which used to succeed very well, in skillful and brave hands, was this: In order to avoid suspicion, the woman intending to be secreted, approached the boat with a clean ironed shirt on her arm, bare headed and in her usual working dress, looking good-natured of course, and as if she were simply conveying the shirt to one of the men on the boat. The attention of the officer on the watch would not for a moment be attracted by a custom so common as this. Thus safely on the boat, the man whose business it was to put this piece of property in the most safe Underground Rail Road place, if he saw that every thing looked favorable, would quickly arrange matters without being missed from his duties. In numerous instances, officers were outwitted in this way.

As to what Susan had seen in the way of hardships, whether in relation to herself or others, her story was most interesting; but it may here be passed in order to make room for others. She left one sister, named Mary Ann Tharagood, who was wanting to come away very much. Susan was a woman of dark color, round built, medium height, and about forty years of age when she escaped in 1854.

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