

# African American Culture and Literature

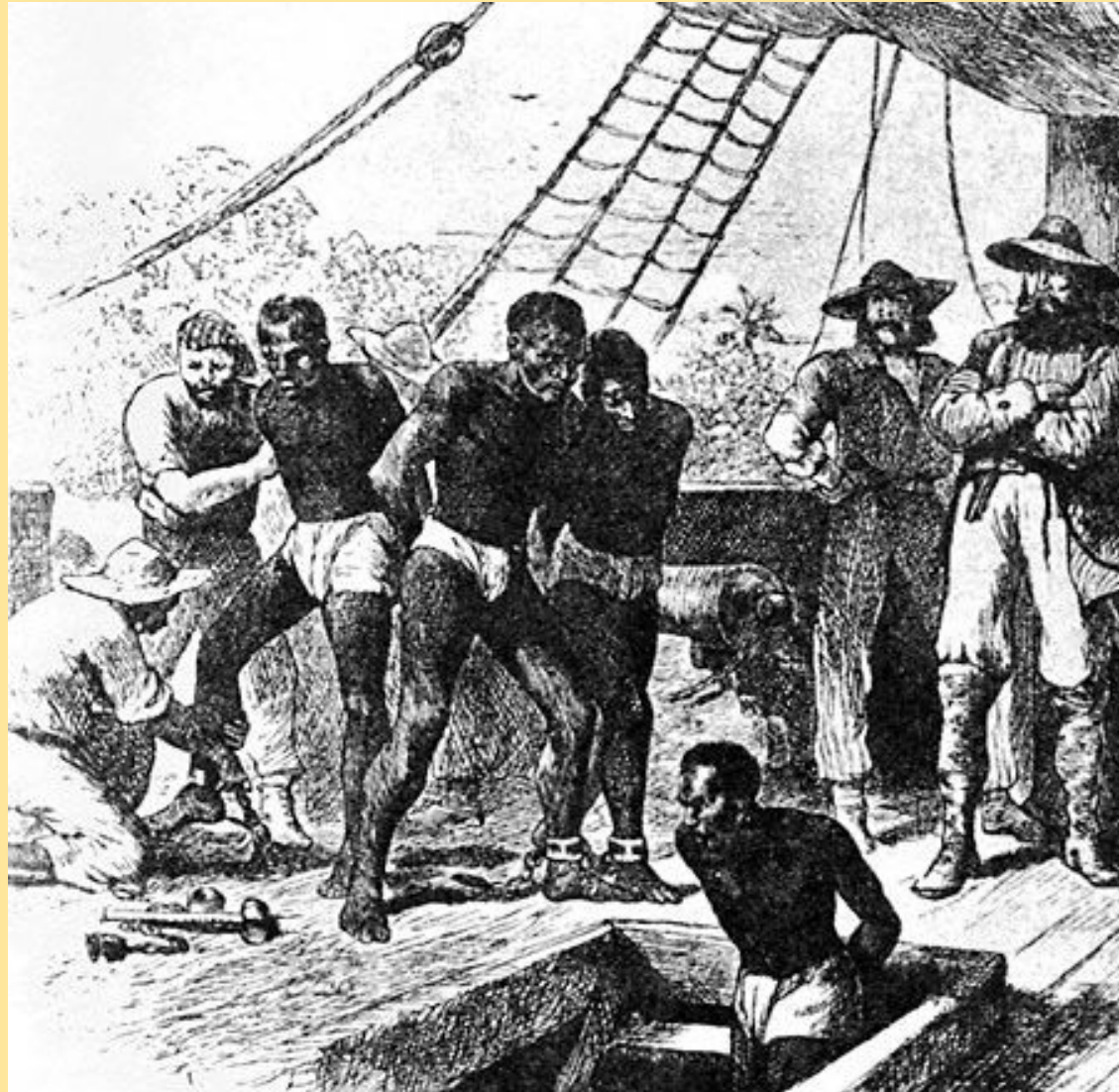


Jacob Lawrence, *The Library* (1943)

*The African slave who sailed to the New World did not sail alone. People brought their culture, no matter how adverse the circumstances. And therefore part of America is African.*

— Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

# First slaves brought to Jamestown in 1619



# Oral traditions

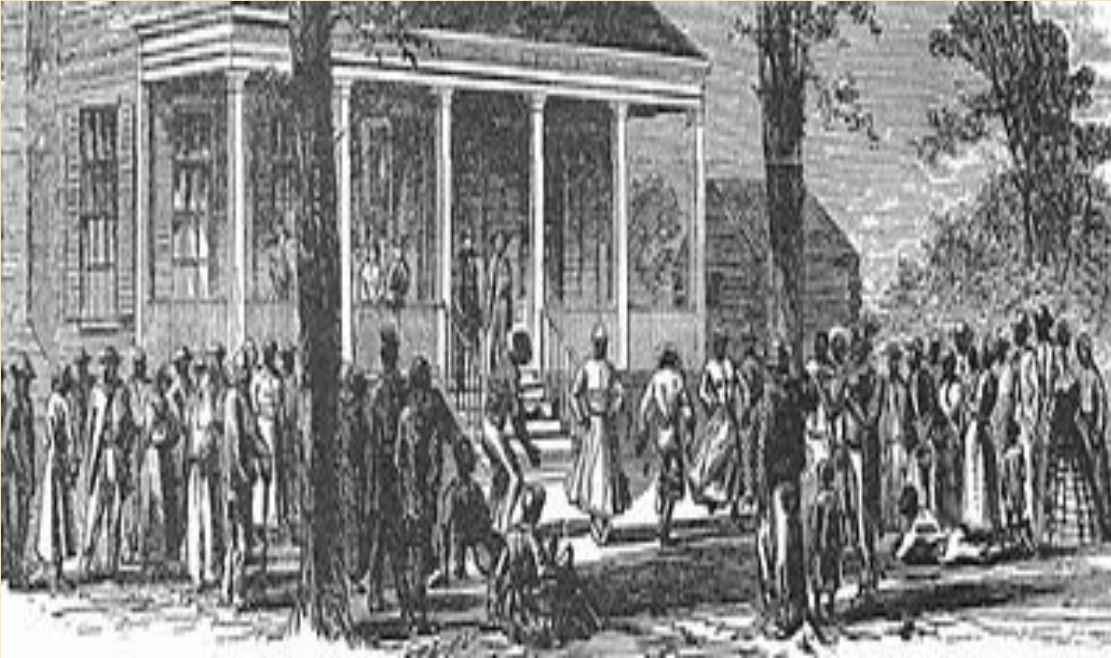
Work songs

Spirituals

Folktales



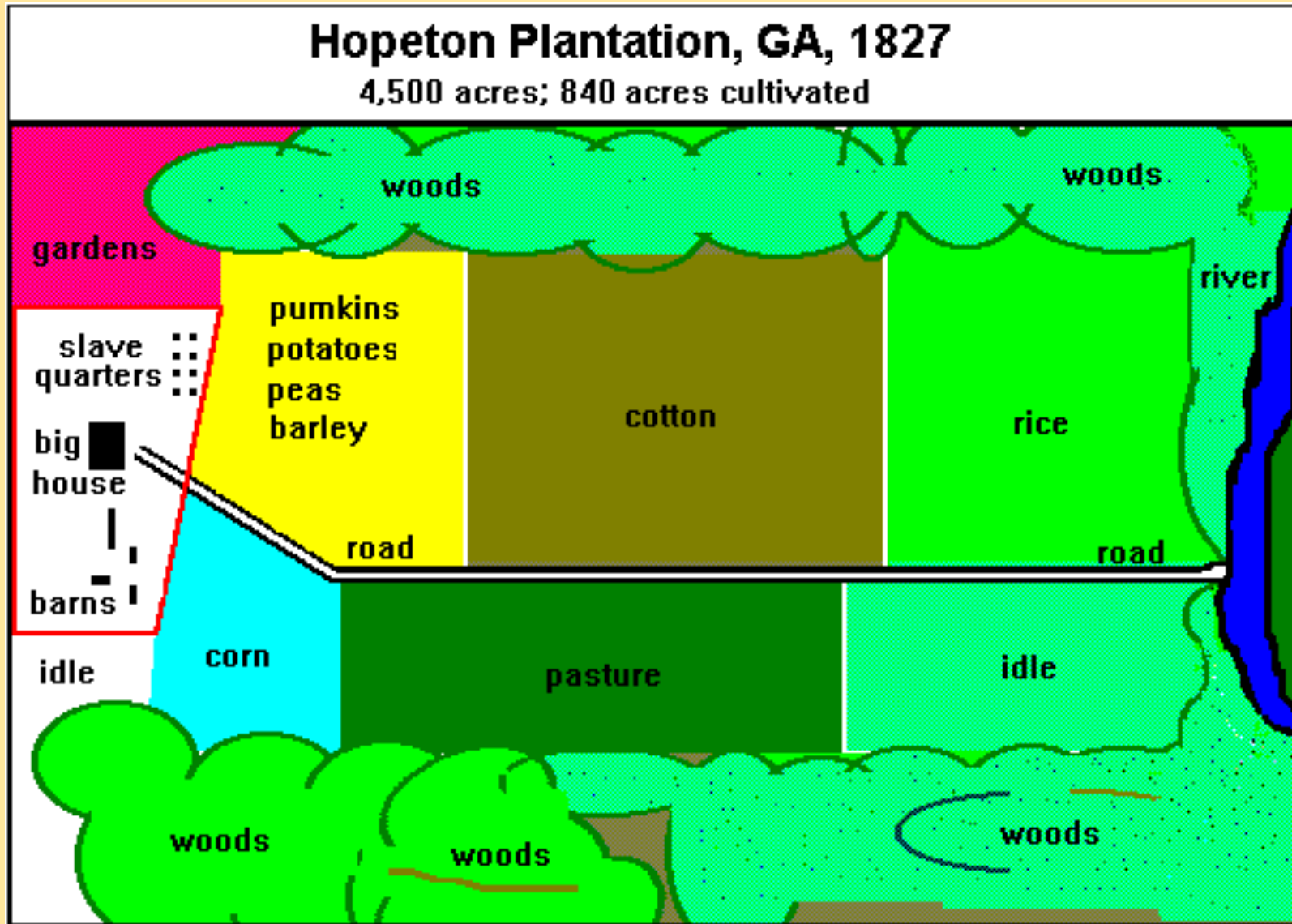
# The lives of slaves

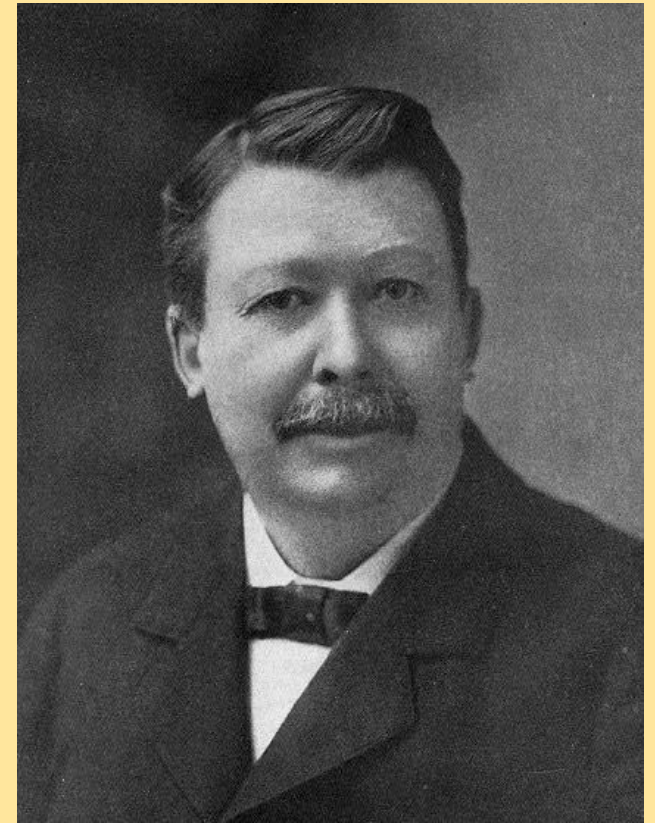


# Slave quarters



# Plantation organization





Joel Chandler Harris



# *The Sabbath among Slaves* Kentucky, 1830s



# *Plantation Dance* South Carolina, 1790s



# Dance, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1853



# Call-and-response work songs: “Hoe, Emma, Hoe”



**Caller:** Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

**Chorus:** Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

**Caller:** Emma, you from the country.

**Chorus:** Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

**Caller:** Emma help me to pull these weeds.

**Chorus:** Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

**Caller:** Emma work harder than two grown men.

**Chorus:** Hoe Emma Hoe, you turn around dig a hole in the ground, Hoe Emma Hoe.

(Repeat)

# Call-and-response work songs: “Black Betty”

Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Black Betty had a child (Bam-ba-lam)  
The damn thing gone wild (Bam-ba-lam)  
She said, "I'm worryin' outta mind"  
(Bam-ba-lam)  
The damn thing gone blind (Bam-ba-lam)  
I said oh, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
She really gets me high (Bam-ba-lam)  
You know that's no lie (Bam-ba-lam)  
She's so rock steady (Bam-ba-lam)  
And she's always ready (Bam-ba-lam)

Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Get it!  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
She's from Birmingham (Bam-ba-lam)  
Way down in Alabam' (Bam-ba-lam)  
Well, she's shakin' that thing (Bam-ba-lam)  
Boy, she makes me sing (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty (Bam-ba-lam)  
Whoa, Black Betty  
Bam-ba-laaam, yeah, yeah



# Conversion of slaves to Christianity



# Methodist prayer meeting (Pawel Svinin, 1811)

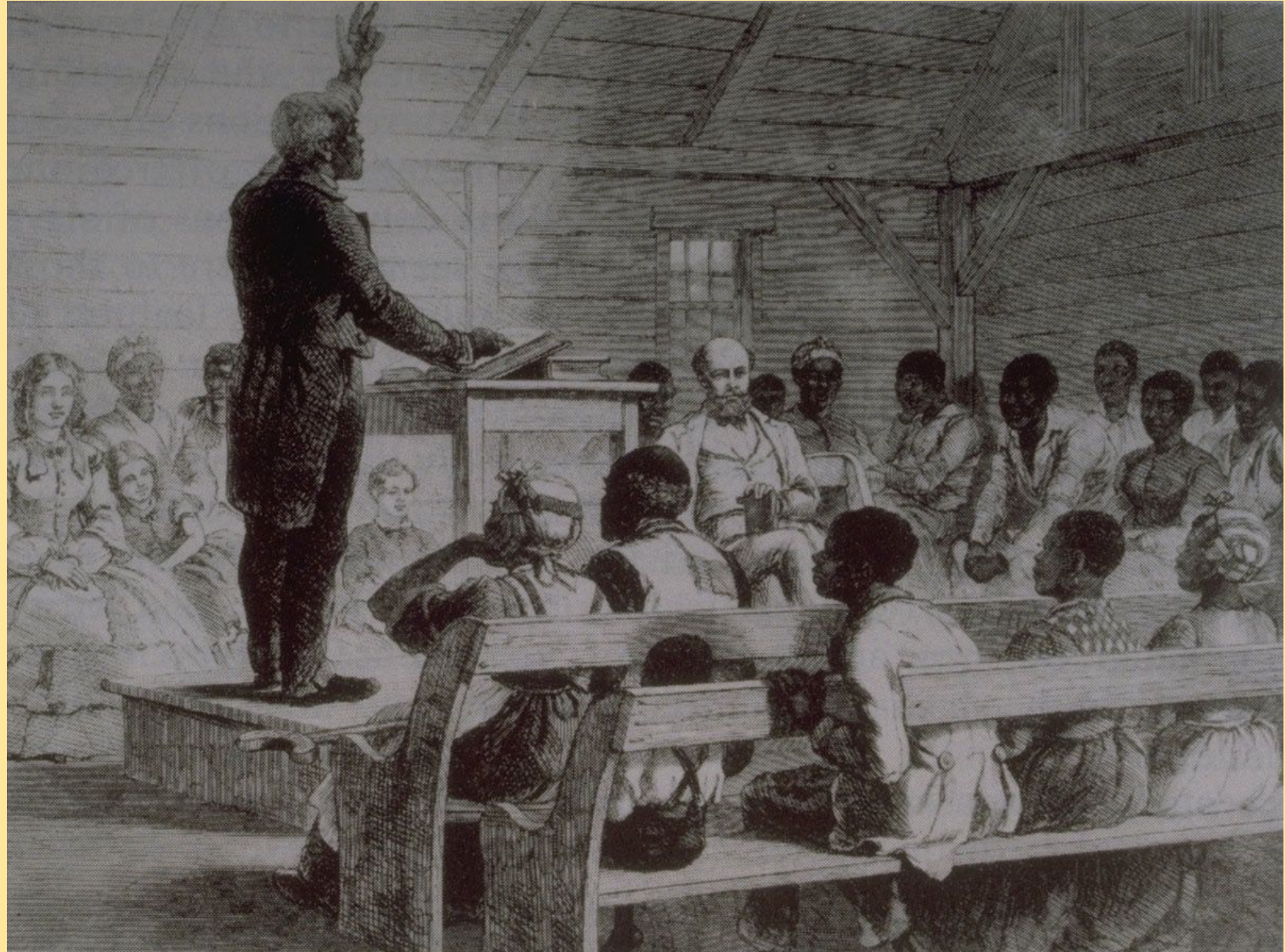


*Рис. съ Натуры П. Св...*

*Богослуженіе Африканскихъ.*

*Методистовъ.*

# Slave minister preaching to slaves and owner's family

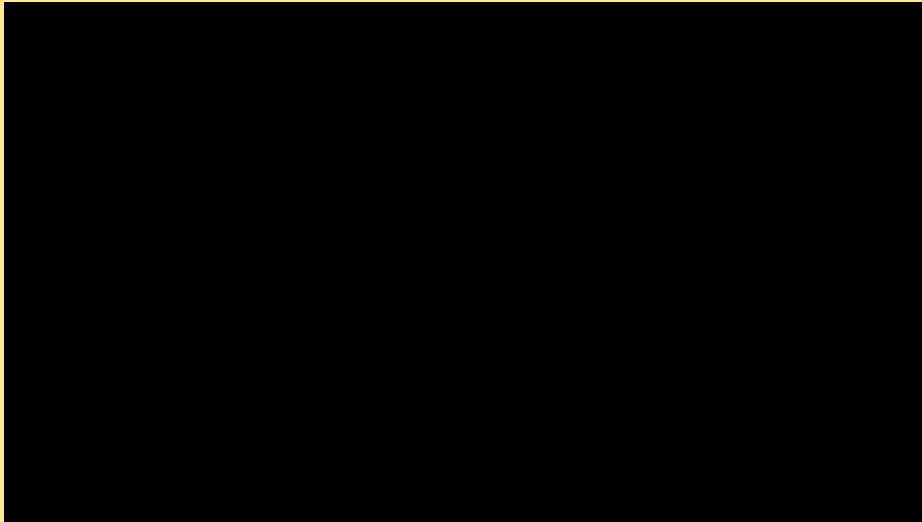




# Secret prayer meeting

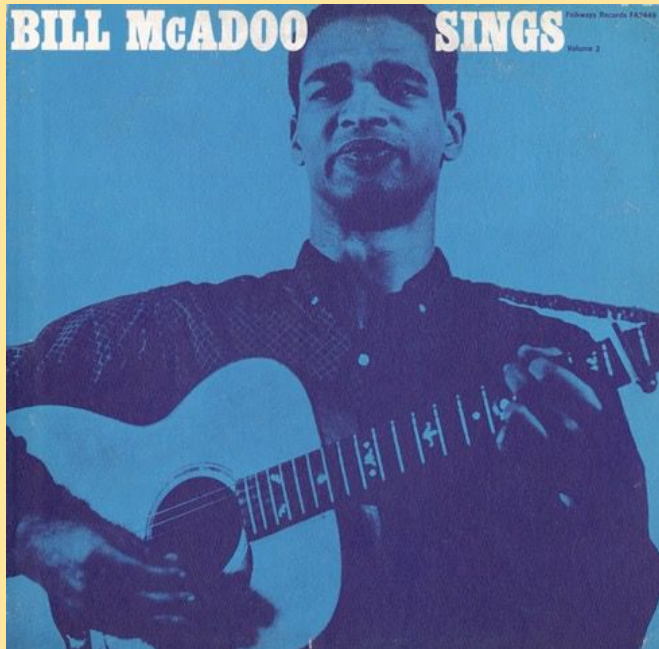


# Wade in the Water



Wade in the water  
Wade in the water, children  
Wade in the water  
God's gonna trouble the water  
Well, who are these children all  
dressed in red?  
God's a-gonna trouble the water  
Must be the children that Moses  
led  
God's a-gonna trouble the water  
Chorus

# Go Down Moses



When Israel was in Egypt's  
Land,  
Let my people go,  
Opressed so hard they could  
not stand,  
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt's Land.  
Tell ol' Pharoah,  
Let my people go.

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,  
Let my people go,  
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead,  
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt's Land.  
Tell ol' Pharoah,  
Let my people go.

No more shall they in bondage toil,  
Let my people go,  
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,  
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt's Land.  
Tell ol' Pharoah,  
Let my people go.



*Olaudah Equiano;*  
OR  
GUSTAVUS VASSA,  
*the African?*

*Printed March 1. 1799 by G. Knapton*

THE  
INTERESTING NARRATIVE  
OF  
THE LIFE  
OF  
OLAUDAH EQUIANO,  
OR  
GUSTAVUS VASSA,  
THE AFRICAN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

---

*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people. Isa. xii. 2. 4.*

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EIGHTH EDITION ENLARGED.

NORWICH:

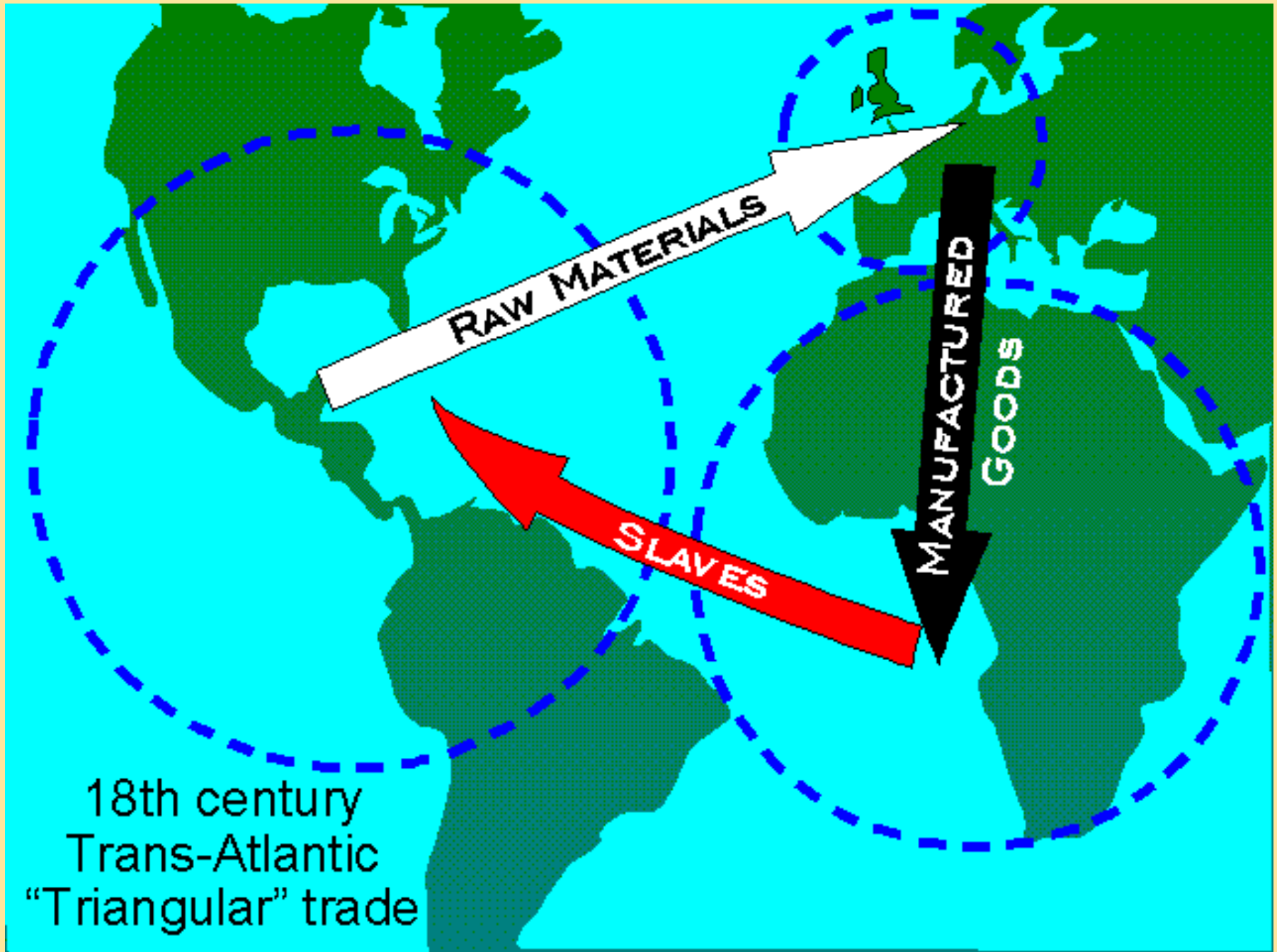
PRINTED FOR, AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR.

1794.

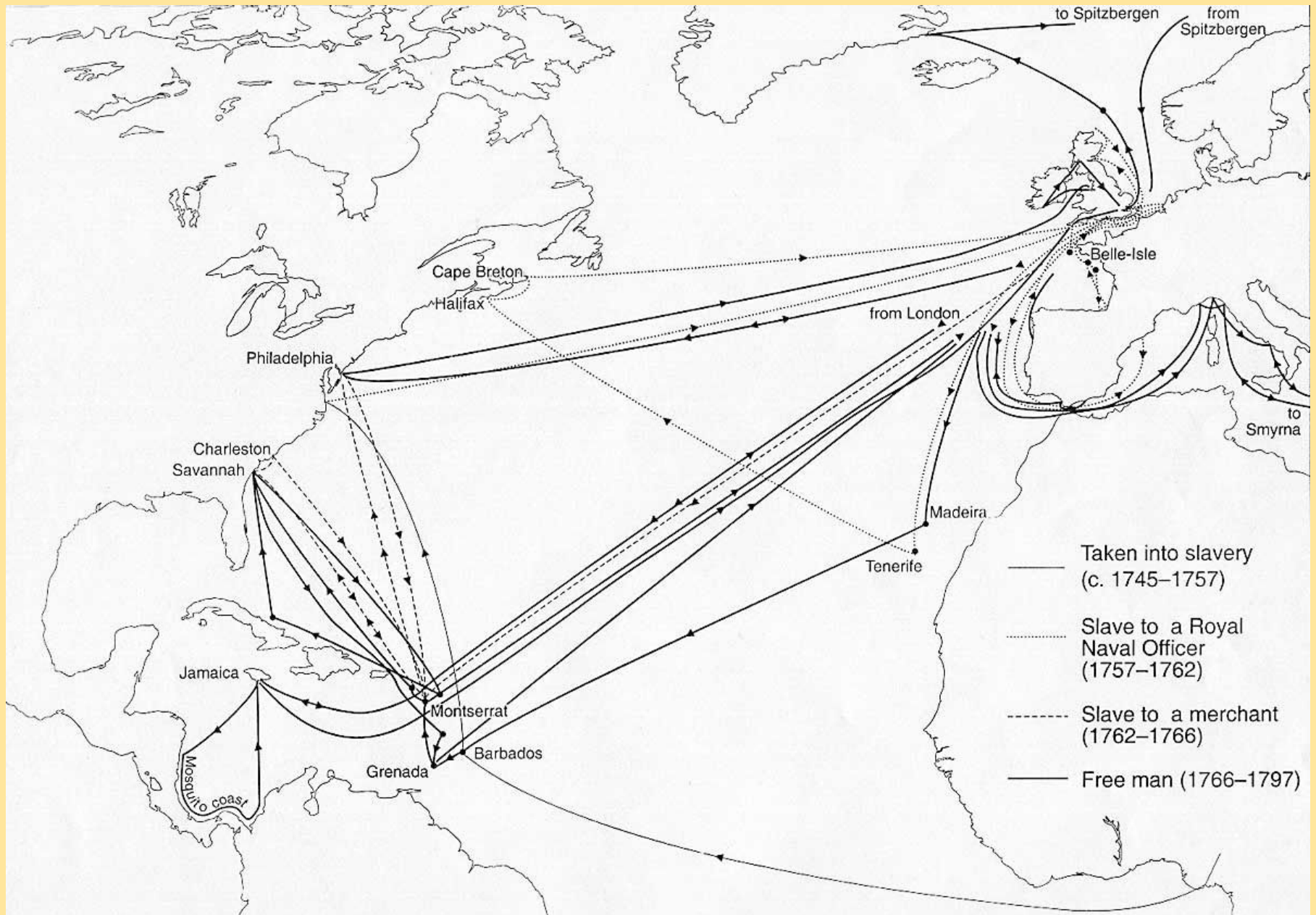
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*Formerly sold for 7s.*

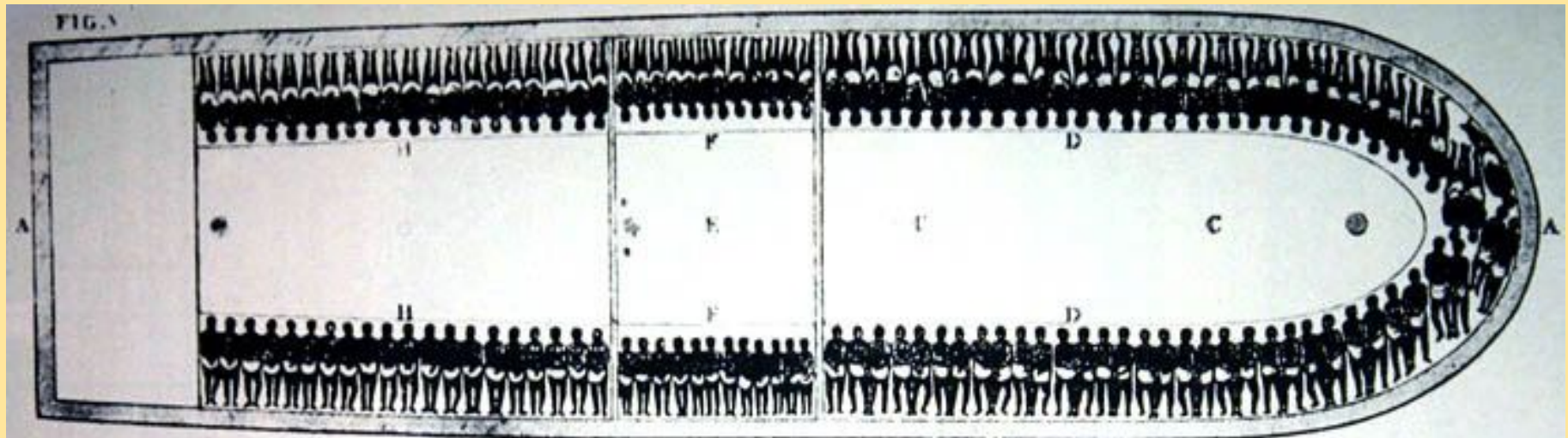
[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]



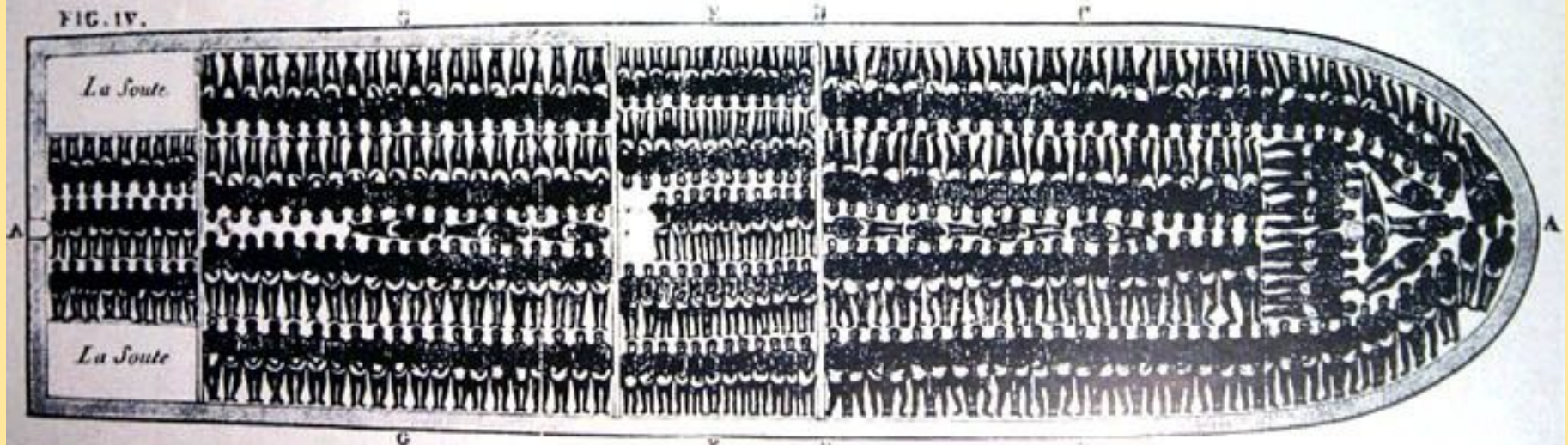
# Map of Equiano's travels



# Layout of a slave ship



*Coupe horizontale des plateformes du Bâtiment Négrier.*



*Coupe horizontale du Bâtiment Négrier.*



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# Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*

I had but a very small capital to begin with; for one single half bit, which is equal to three pence in England, made up my whole stock. However I trusted to the Lord to be with me; and at one of our trips to St. Eustatia, a Dutch island, I bought a glass tumbler with my half bit, and when I came to Montserrat I sold it for a bit, or sixpence. Luckily we made several successive trips to St. Eustatia (which was a general mart for the West Indies, about twenty leagues from Montserrat); and in our next, finding my tumbler so profitable, with this one bit I bought two tumblers more...

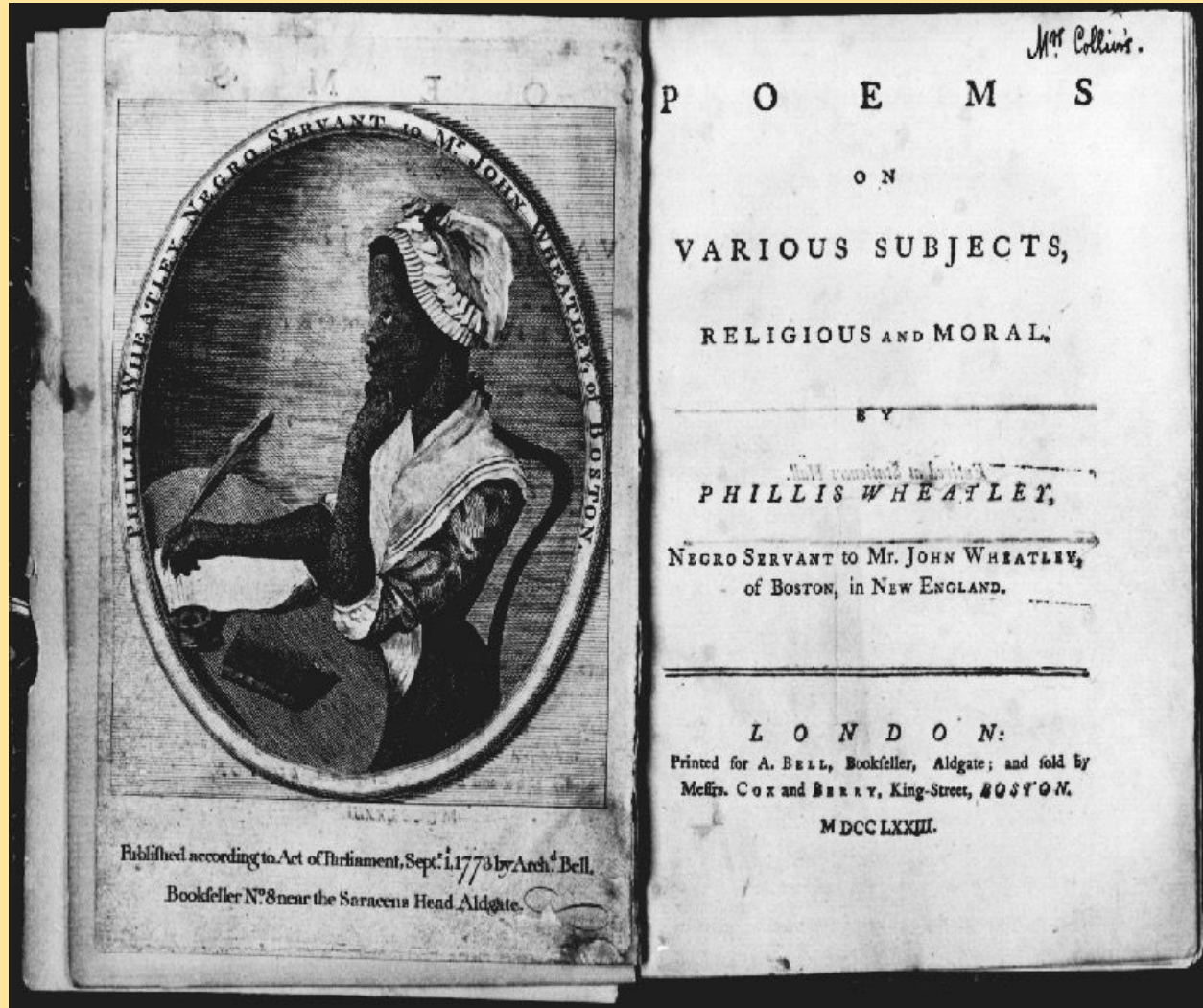
# Olaudah Equiano



Nine editions of his autobiography were published during his life

Died as a wealthy and respected man in England in 1794

# Phillis Wheatley (1753-84)



# Preface to Wheatley's book

AS it has been repeatedly suggested to the Publisher, by Persons, who have seen the Manuscript, that Numbers would be ready to suspect they were not really the Writings of PHILLIS, he has procured the following Attestation, from the most respectable Characters in *Boston*, that none might have the least Ground for disputing their *Original*.

WE whose Names are under-written, do assure the World, that the POEMS specified in the following Page, were (as we verily believe) written by *Phillis*, a young Negro Girl, who was but a few Years since, brought an uncultivated Barbarian from *Africa*, and has ever since been, and now is, under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in this Town. She has been examined by some of the best Judges, and is thought qualified to write them.

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*His Excellency* THOMAS HUTCHINSON, *Governor,*

*The Hon.* ANDREW OLIVER, *Lieutenant-Governor.*

<i>The Hon.</i> Thomas Hubbard,	<i>The Rev.</i> Charles Chauncy, <i>D.D.</i>
<i>The Hon.</i> John Erving,	<i>The Rev.</i> Mather Byles, <i>D. D.</i>
<i>The Hon.</i> James Pitts,	<i>The Rev.</i> Ed. Pemberton, <i>D.D.</i>
<i>The Hon.</i> Harrison Gray,	<i>The Rev.</i> Andrew Elliot, <i>D.D.</i>
<i>The Hon.</i> James Bowdoin,	<i>The Rev.</i> Samuel Cooper, <i>D.D.</i>
John Hancock, <i>Esq;</i>	<i>The Rev.</i> Mr. Samuel Mather,
Joseph Green, <i>Esq;</i>	<i>The Rev.</i> Mr. John Moorhead,
Richard Carey, <i>Esq;</i>	<i>Mr.</i> John Wheatley, <i>her Master.</i>

*N. B.* The original Attestation, signed by the above Gentlemen, may be seen by applying to *Archibald Bell*, Bookfeller, No. 8, *Aldgate-Street*.

\* The Words "following Page," allude to the Contents of the Manuscript Copy, which are wrote at the Back of the above Attestation.

## Phillis Wheatley

### On Being Brought from Africa to America

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,  
Taught my benighted soul to understand  
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:  
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.  
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,  
"Their colour is a diabolic die."  
Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,  
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

# Abolitionism

## **Enlightenment**

- Reason
- Individual freedom
- Liberty

## **Reform Movements**

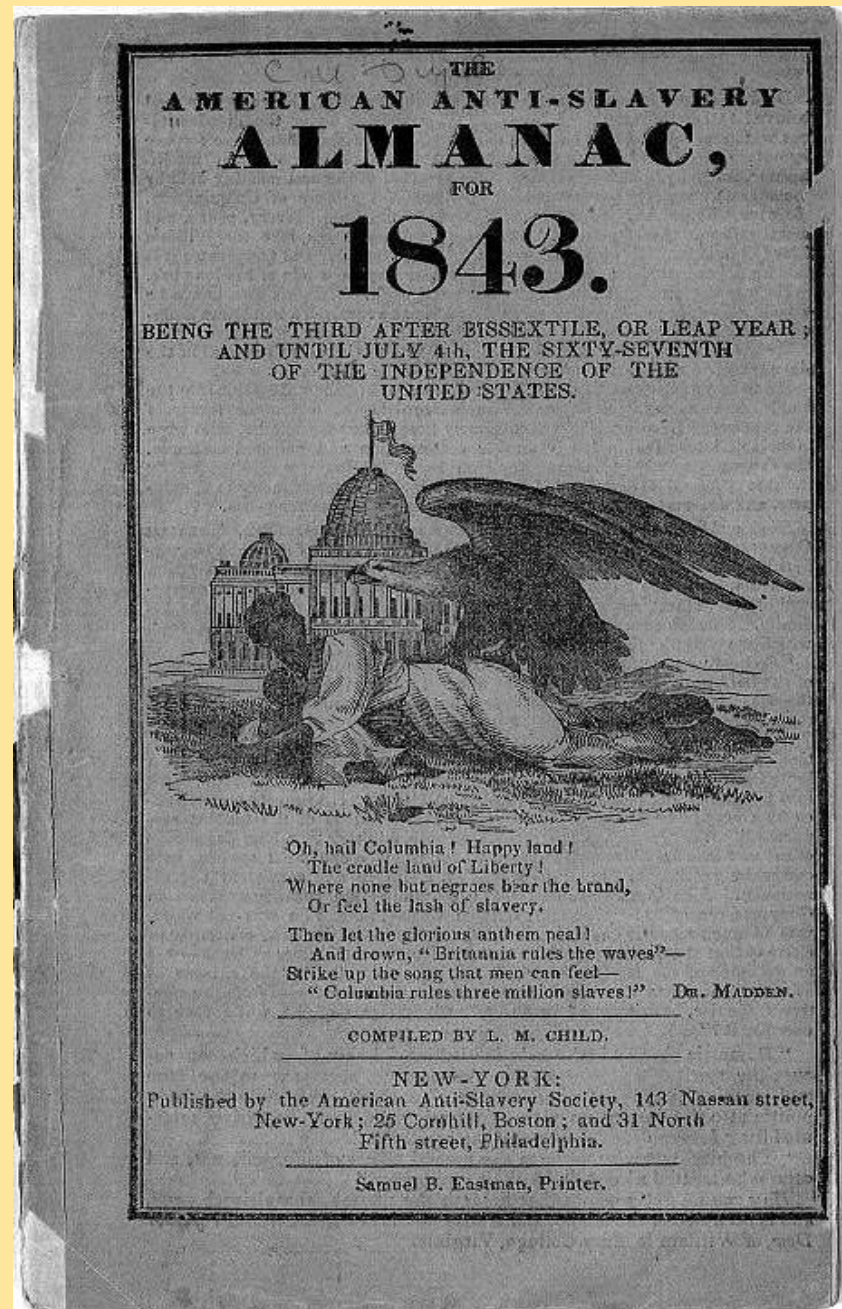
- Temperance movement
- Women's rights
- Education reform
- Anti-slavery movement

# Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade



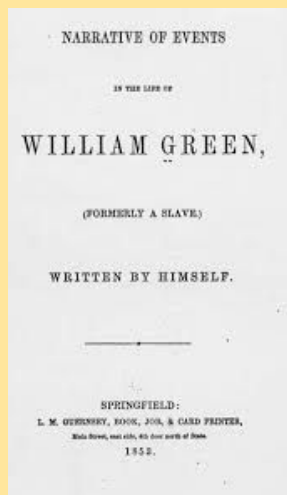
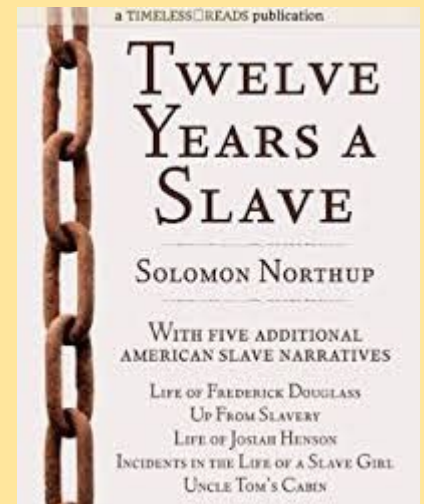
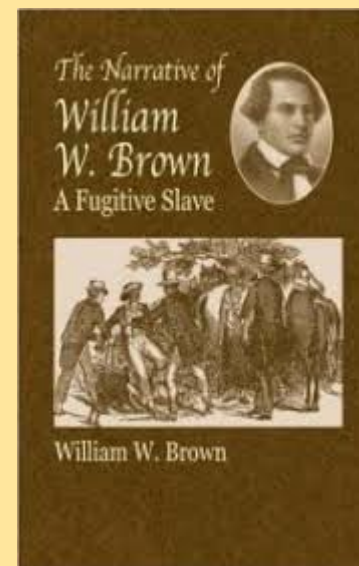
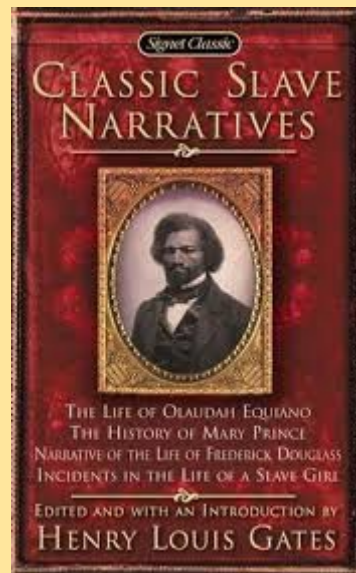
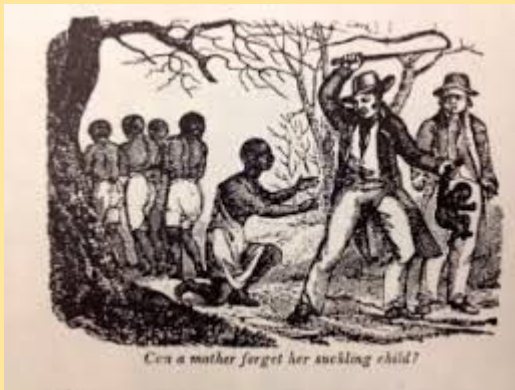
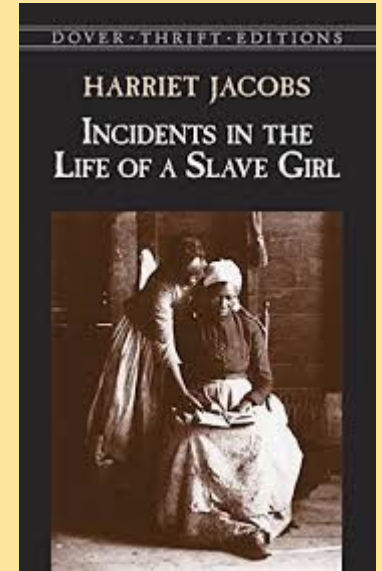
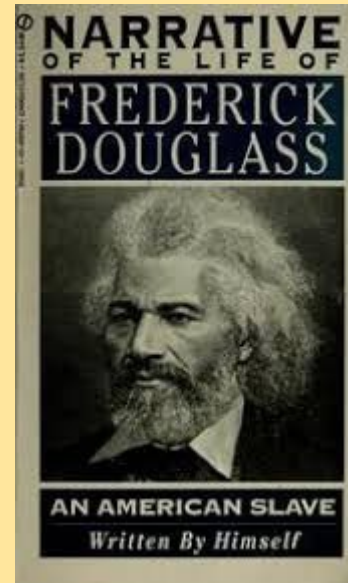
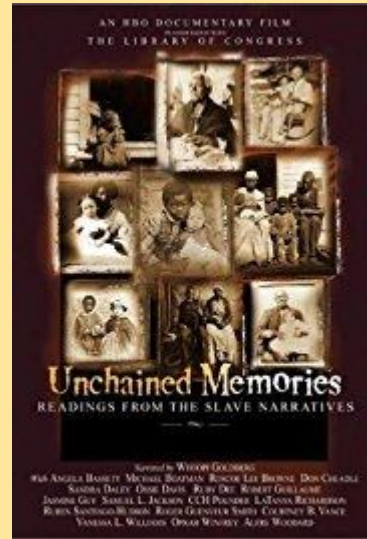
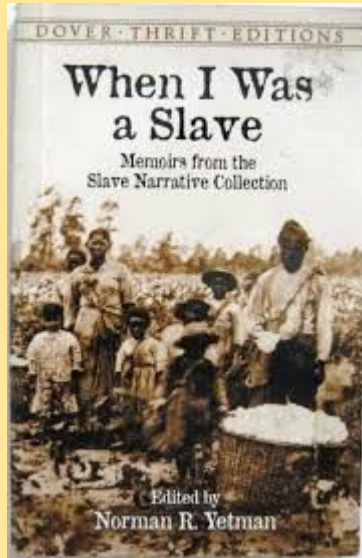
“Am I not a man and a brother?”

# The American Anti-Slavery Almanac

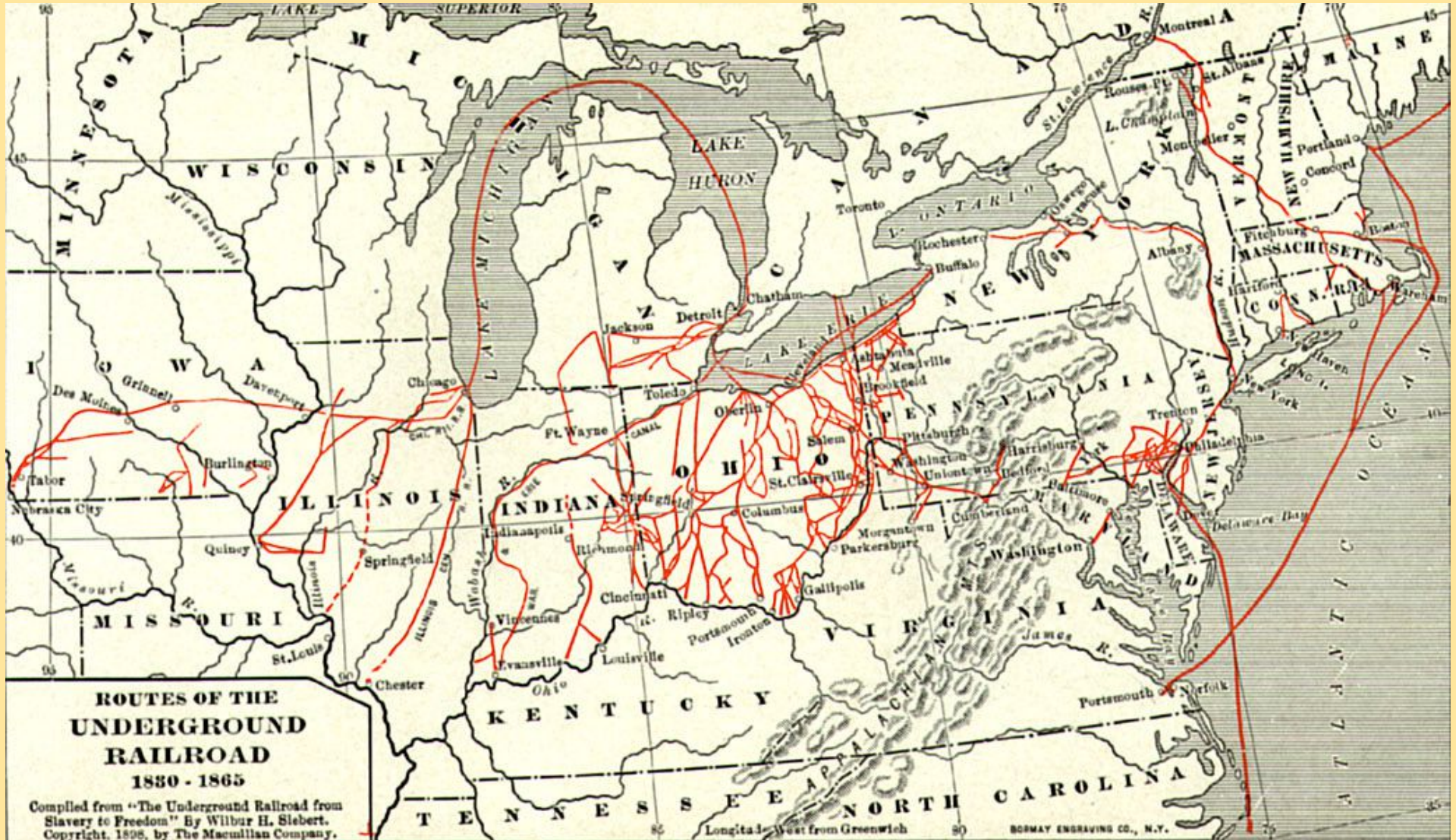




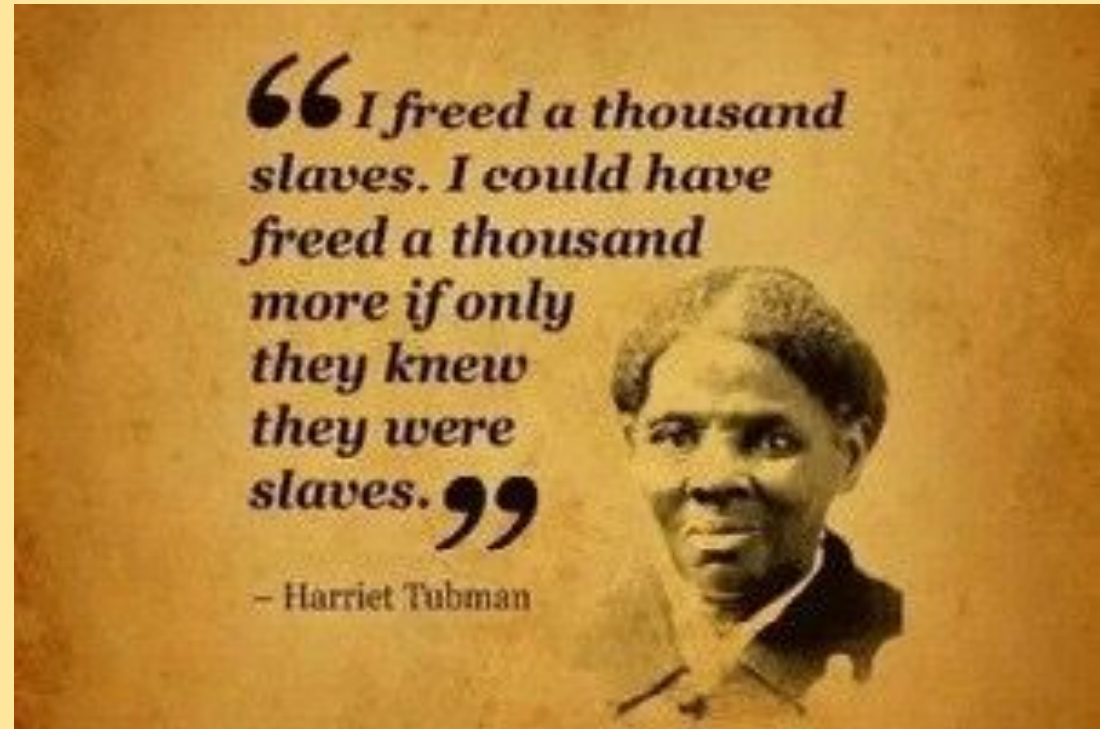
# Slave narratives



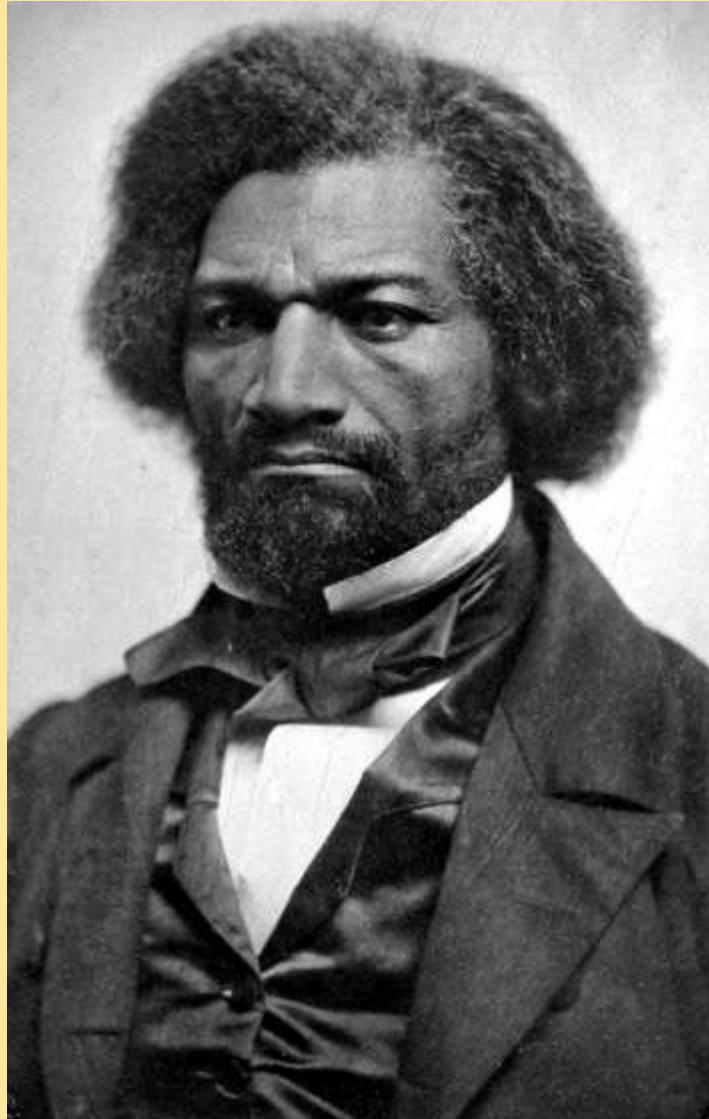
# Underground Railroad



# Harriet Tubman (c. 1822-1913)



# Frederick Douglass (c. 1817-1895)



## MEN OF COLOR TO ARMS! TO ARMS! NOW OR NEVER

This is our golden moment! The Government of the United States calls for every Able-bodied Colored Man to enter the Army for the

## Three Years' Service!

And join in Fighting the Battles of Liberty and the Union. A new era is open to us. For generations we have suffered under the horrors of slavery, outrage and wrong; our manhood has been denied, our citizenship blotted out, our souls seared and burned, our spirits eviscerated and crushed, and the hopes of the future of our race involved in doubt and darkness. But now our relations to the white race are changed. Now, therefore, is our most precious moment. Let us rush to ARMS!

## FAIL NOW, & OUR RACE IS DOOMED

This the will of our God. We must now awake, arise, or be forever fallen. If we value Liberty, if we wish to be free in this land, if we love our Country, if we love our families, our children, our home, we must strike our name while the country calls; we must rise up to the dignity of our manhood, and show by our own right arms that we are worthy to be freemen. Our enemies have made the country believe that we are craven cowards, without soul, without manhood, without the spirit of soldiers. Shall we die with this stigma resting upon our graves? Shall we leave this inheritance of shame to our Children? No! a thousand times NO! We WILL Rise! The alternative is upon us. Let us rather die freemen than live to be slaves. What is life without liberty? We say that we have manhood; now is the time to prove it. A nation or a people that cannot fight may be pitied, but cannot be respected. If we would be regarded men, if we would forever silence the tongue of Calumny, of Prejudice and Hate, let us Rise Now and Fly to Arms! We have seen what Valor and Heroism our Brethren displayed at Fort Hudson and MIBIKEN'S Bend, though they are just from the galling, poisoning grasp of Slavery; they have startled the World by the most exalted heroism. If they have proved themselves heroes, cannot WE PROVE OURSELVES MEN?

## ARE FREEMEN LESS BRAVE THAN SLAVES

More than a Million White Men have left Comfortable Homes and joined the Arms of the Union to save their Country. Cannot we leave ours, and swell the Ranks of the Union, to save our Liberties, vindicate our manhood, and deserve well of our Country. MEN OF COLOR! the Englishman, the Irishman, the Frenchman, the German, the American, have been called to assert their claim to freedom and a manly character, by an appeal to the sword. The day that has seen a colored race in arms has, in all history, seen their last trial. We saw that our last opportunity has come. If we are not lower in the scale of humanity than Englishmen, Irishmen, White Americans and other Races, we can show it now. Men of Color, Brothers and Sisters, we appeal to you by all your concern for yourselves and suffering, listen to nothing that shall deter you from rallying for the Army. Come Forward, and at once Enroll your Names for the Three Years' Service. Strike now, and you are benefactors and forever Freemen!

E. D. Bassett,	Rev. J. Underdue,	P. J. Armstrong,	Rev. J. C. Gibbs,	Elijah J. Davis
William D. Forten,	John W. Price,	J. W. Simpson,	Daniel George,	John P. Burr,
Frederick Douglass,	Augustus Dursey,	Rev. J. B. Trusty,	Robert M. Adger,	Robert Jones,
Wm. Whipper,	Rev. Stephen Smith,	S. Morgan Smith,	Henry M. Cooper,	O. V. Catts,
D. D. Turner,	N. W. Depee,	William E. Gipson,	Rev. J. B. Reeve,	Thos. J. Dorsey,
Jas. McCrummell,	Dr. J. B. Wilson,	Rev. J. Boulden,	Rev. J. A. Williams,	L. D. CHIE,
A. S. Cassey,	J. W. Cassey,	Rev. J. Asher,	Rev. A. L. Stanford,	Jacob C. White,
A. M. Green,	James Needham,	Rev. Eliza Weaver,	Thomas J. Bowers,	Morris Hall,
J. W. Page,	Ebenezer Black,	David B. Bowser,	J. C. White, Jr.,	J. P. Johnson,
L. E. Seymour,	James R. Gordon,	Henry Minton,	Rev. J. P. Campbell,	Franklin Turner,
Rev. William T. Catto,	Samuel Stewart,	Daniel Colley,	Rev. W. J. Alston,	Jesse E. Glasgow.

A Meeting in furtherance of the above named object will be held

And will be Addressed by

U. S. Steam-Power Book and Job Printing Establishment, Ledger Buildings, Third and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia

# *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*

I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time. A want of information concerning my own was a source of unhappiness to me even during childhood.

# *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

“You have seen how a man was made a slave,  
you shall see how a slave was made a man.”

“My feet have been so cracked with the frost,  
that the pen with which I am writing might be  
laid in the gashes.”

# Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

“He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of.”

# Black soldiers in the Civil War





# Emancipation Proclamation (1862/63)

By the President of the United States of America:  
A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to refuse such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom."

"That the Executive will, on the first day

