



ON THE ABOLITION CIRCUIT

African American Abolitionists Describe Their Experiences, 1840s

Among the most effective abolitionist speakers were former slaves — men and occasionally women who had fled the South and become active in the anti-slavery movement, often exposing themselves to as much danger of injury and death as they had experienced in the confines of slavery. Accounts from the slave narratives of Henry Bibb, James Lindsay Smith, and Frederick Douglass are presented here, as well as a newspaper account by Martin Robinson Delany, a freeborn black activist.

Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave*, 1849

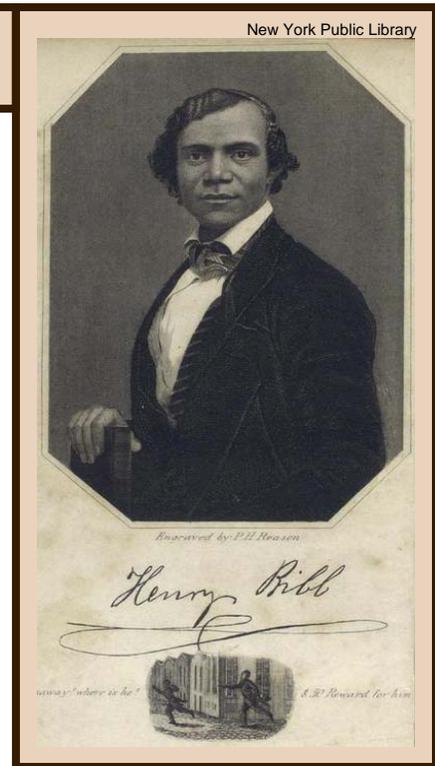
Born enslaved in Kentucky, Henry Bibb escaped to Canada — twice: first in 1837, after which he returned to the South in a failed attempt to free his family and was recaptured, and then in 1841 when he settled in Michigan and became active in the abolitionist movement. Here he describes the risks and hardships of travelling in Michigan and Ohio in 1844 with white abolitionists, recounting his experiences as a slave to often hostile audiences.

The first time that I ever spoke before a public audience was to give a narration of my own sufferings and adventures connected with slavery. I commenced in the village of Adrian, State of Michigan, May, 1844. From that up to the present period, the principle part of my time has been faithfully devoted to the cause of freedom — nerved up and encouraged by the sympathy of anti-slavery friends on the one hand, and prompted by a sense of duty to my enslaved countrymen on the other, especially when I remembered that slavery had robbed me of my freedom — deprived me of education — banished me from my native State and robbed me of my family.

I went from Michigan to the State of Ohio, where I traveled over some of the Southern counties of that State, in company with Samuel Brooks and Amos Dresser, lecturing upon the subject of American Slavery. The prejudice of the people at that time was very strong against the abolitionists; so much so that they were frequently mobbed for discussing the subject.

We appointed a series of meetings along on the Ohio River, in sight of the State of Virginia; and in several places we had Virginians over to hear us upon the subject. I recollect our having appointed a meeting in the city of Steubenville, which is situated on the bank of the river Ohio. There was but one known abolitionist living in that city, named George Ore. On the day of our meeting, when we arrived in this splendid city there was not a church, school house nor hall that we could get for love or money, to hold our meeting in. Finally, I believe that the whigs consented to let us have the use of their club room to hold the meeting in; but before the hour had arrived for us to commence, they re-considered the matter and informed us that we could not have the use of their house for an abolition meeting.

We then got permission to hold forth in the public market house, and even then so great was the hostility of the rabble that they tried to bluff us off by threats and epithets. Our meeting was advertised to take place at nine o'clock A.M. The pro-slavery parties hired a colored man to take a large auction bell and go all over the city ringing it and crying, "ho ye! ho ye! Negro auction to take place in the market house at



nine o'clock by George Ore!" This cry was sounded all over the city, which called out many who would not otherwise have been present. They came to see if it was really the case. The object of the rabble in having the bell rung was to prevent us from attempting to speak. But at the appointed hour, Bro[ther]. Dresser opened the meeting with prayer, and Samuel Brooks mounted the block and spoke for fifteen or twenty minutes, after which Mr. Dresser took the block and talked about one hour upon the wickedness of slaveholding.

There were not yet many persons present. They were standing off I suppose to see if I was to be offered for sale. Many windows were hoisted and store doors open, and they were looking and listening to what was said. After Mr. Dresser was through, I was called to take the stand. Just at this moment there was no small stir in rushing forward; so much indeed, that I thought they were coming up to mob me. I should think that in less than fifteen minutes there were about one thousand persons standing around, listening. I saw many of them shedding tears while I related the sad story of my wrongs. At twelve o'clock we adjourned the meeting, to meet again at the same place at two P.M. Our afternoon meeting was well attended until nearly sunset, at which time we saw some signs of a mob and adjourned. The mob followed us that night to the house of Mr. Ore, and they were yelling like tigers until late that night, around the house, as if they wanted to tear it down.

In the fall of 1844, S. B. Treadwell, of Jackson and myself spent two or three months in lecturing through the State of Michigan upon the abolition of slavery, in a section of country where abolitionists were few and far between. Our meetings were generally appointed in small log cabins, school houses, among the farmers, which were some times crowded full; and where they had no horse teams, it was often the case that there would be four or five ox teams come, loaded down with men, women and children to attend our meetings.

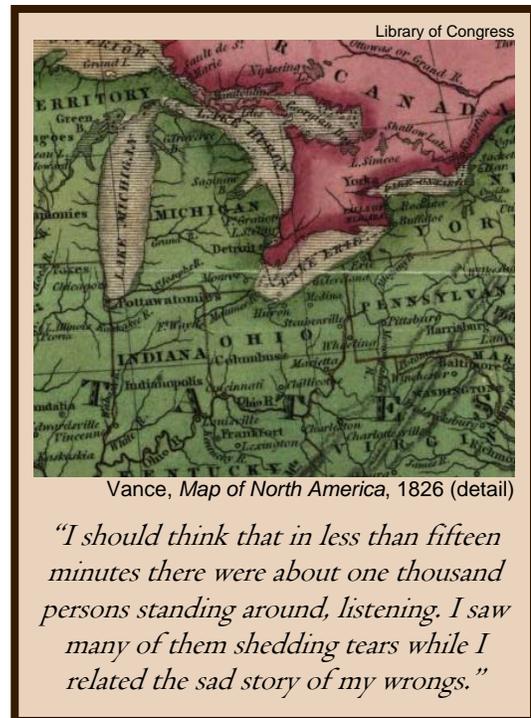
But the people were generally poor, and in many places not able to give us a decent night's lodging. We most generally carried with us a few pounds of candles to light up the houses wherein we held our meetings after night; for in many places, they had neither candles nor candlesticks. After meeting was out, we have frequently gone from three to eight miles to get lodging, through the dark forest, where there was scarcely any road for a wagon to run on.

I have traveled for miles over swamps, where the roads were covered with logs, without any dirt over them, which has sometimes shook and jostled the wagon to pieces, where we could find no shop or any place to mend it. We would have to tie it up with bark, or take the lines to tie it with, and lead the horse by the bridle. At other times we were in mud up to the hubs of the wheels. I recollect one evening, we lectured in a little village where there happened to be a Southerner present, who was a personal friend of Deacon Whitfield, who became much offended at what I said about his "Bro. Whitfield," and complained about it after the meeting was out.

He told the people not to believe a word I said, that it was all a humbug. They ask him how he knew? "Ah!" said he, "he has slandered Bro. Whitfield. I am well acquainted with him, we both belonged to one church; and Whitfield is one of the most respectable men in all that region of country." They asked if he (Whitfield) was a slaveholder?

The reply was "yes, but he treated his slaves well."

"Well," said one, "that only proves that he has told us the truth; for all we wish to know is that there is such a man as Whitfield, as represented by Bibb, and that he is a slave holder."



James Lindsay Smith, *The Autobiography of James Lindsay Smith*, 1881

Born enslaved in Virginia, James Lindsay Smith escaped to Massachusetts in 1838, established a shoe shop, and attended school for several years. In 1842 he agreed to travel for a year with a white abolitionist speaker through Connecticut and Massachusetts, relating his enslaved life to northerners. Here he recounts the violence and intimidation that met them as they lectured in New England.

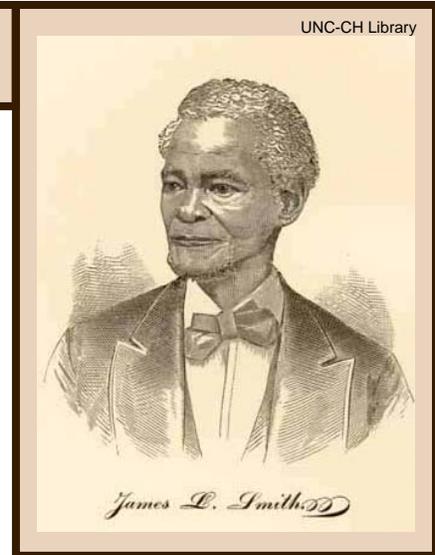
Finally I left school and returned to Springfield [Massachusetts]. I became acquainted with Dr. Hudson, an Abolitionist of great note in those days, who was an anti-slavery lecturer. It was no small thing to be a worker in such a cause. The Doctor engaged me to travel with him for one year. I, according to agreement, accompanied him, for I desired to do all the good I could. We had great success in our mission. We traveled all through the eastern and western part of Connecticut and a part of Massachusetts. We had some opposition to contend with; it made it much better for the Doctor in having me with him. Brickbats and rotten eggs were very common in those days; an anti-slavery lecturer was often showered by them. Slavery at this time had a great many friends.

When we were in Saybrook there was but one Abolitionist in the place, and whose wife was sick. As we could not be accommodated at his house, we stopped at a tavern. The inmates [customers] were very bitter toward us, and more especially to the Doctor. I became much alarmed about my own situation. There was an old sea captain who was there that night, and while in conversation with the Doctor, had some very hard talk which resulted in a dispute, or contest in words. I thought it would terminate in a fight. The captain asked the Doctor, "what do you know about slavery? All you know about it, I suppose, is what this fellow (meaning me) has told you, and if I knew who his master was, and where he was, I would write to him to come on and take him." This frightened me very much; I whispered to the Doctor that we had better retire for the night. We went to our rooms. I feared I should be taken out of my room before morning, so I barred my door with chairs and other furniture that was in the room before I went to bed. Notwithstanding, I did not sleep much that night.

When we had arisen the next morning and dressed ourselves, we went down-stairs, but did not stay to breakfast. We took our breakfast at the house of the man whose wife was sick. We gave out notice, by hand-bills, that we would lecture in the afternoon; so we made preparation and went at the time appointed. The hall was filled to its utmost capacity, but we could not do much, owing to the pressure that was so strong against us: hence we had no success in this place. We went to the tavern and stayed that night. The next morning we went about two miles from this place to the township and stopped at the house of a friend, one of the same persuasion. He went to the school committee and got the use of the school-house. We gave out notice that there would be an anti-slavery lecture in the school-house that night. When it was most time for us, word came that we could not have the school-house for the purpose of such a lecture.

We thought that we would not be outdone by obstacles. The man at whose house we were stopping cordially told us that we might have the use of his house; so we changed the place of the lecture from the schoolhouse to his house. The house was full; and we had, as we thought, a good meeting. At the close of the lecture the people retired for home. After awhile we retired for the evening, feeling that we had the victory.

The next morning the Doctor went to the barn to feed his horse and found that someone had entered the barn and shaved his horse's mane and tail close to the skin; and, besides, had cut our buffalo robe all in pieces; besides shaving the horse, the villains had cut his ears off. It was the most distressed looking animal you ever saw, and was indeed to be pitied. The Dr. gathered up the fragments of the buffalo robe and brought them to the house; it was a sight to behold!



We intended to have left that day, but we changed our minds and stayed over another night, and held another meeting. The house was crowded to excess that evening. At the close of the service the Doctor told how someone had shaved and cut his horse, and brought out the cut robe and held it up before the people, saying, "This is the way the friends of slavery have treated me. Those who have done it are known, but I shall not hurt a hair of their heads. I hope the Lord may forgive them." The people seemed to feel very badly about it.

We left the next day for another place, the name I cannot recall now. We had better success when we went to Torrington, for here the people had just passed through a terrible mob on account of an anti-slavery lecturer. The mob broke the windows of the church, and the lecturer had to escape for his life. We arrived here on Saturday and put up with one of the deacons of the church. The next morning, after breakfast, he harnessed up his horse and sleigh (for it was winter), and he and his family and I drove off to the church. Every eye was upon me. The deacon said to me, "Follow me, and sit with me in my pew." I did so, and every eye was fixed upon me, I being a colored man, and being seated in a deacon's pew, caused quite a stir or bustle among the worshipers. There was such a commotion that the minister could hardly preach.

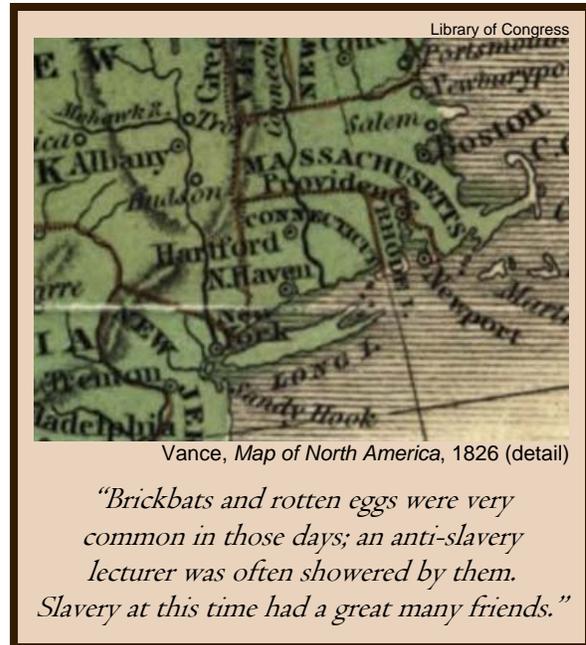
At the close of the service one of the other deacons came to the one that I was with, and seemed to be much excited. My friend asked him, "What is the matter, you appear to be mad?" "No," says he, "I am not mad, but grieved to think that you have taken that nigger into the pew with you. I think you had better promote your own niggers instead of strangers." My friend told him that "the pew was his, that he had paid for it, and that he had the right to have any one sit with him whom he chose, and that he did not think that it was anybody's business." When the controversy was over we went home and ate dinner.

In the afternoon we started for the church again, and after arriving there I took my seat with the deacon; it did not affect the worshipers so much this time as it did in the morning. After the meeting closed we started for home, and ate our supper; and in the evening the Doctor and I intended to have the church for our lecture.

On arriving there, Oh! such a crowd met us at the door that we could hardly get in. Through perseverance we made our way to the pulpit and took our seats. Some of the men who were engaged in the mob a few months before came and took the front seats, and looked as though they could devour us. I did not know what would become of us that night.

We began our meeting. The Doctor spoke first. They did not intend to have him speak, (being a white man) for the men were desirous to hear me. They kept quiet, however, for the sake of hearing me. When the Doctor was through I took the stand, and before I had finished my talk took all the fight out of them. Some of them wept like children; so you see that it changed those men's hearts towards us, for a sympathetic feeling seemed to pervade through their hearts. I made many friends for myself that night. I heard one of them say that "if my master came there after me he would fight for me as long as he had a drop of blood in him." There were no more mobs in Torrington after that.

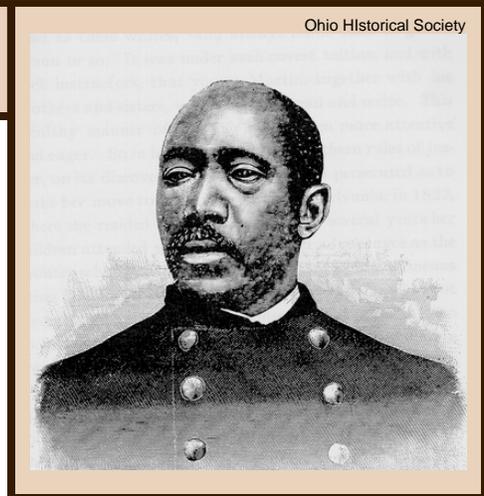
We then started for other parts of the State, and the work of the Lord prospered in our hands. I went back to Wilbraham and lectured in the hall to a large audience; and from there I went to South Wilbraham and spoke in the M[ethodist]. E[piscopal]. Church to a full house. Many that heard of the sufferings of the poor slave, wept like children; many turned from slavery to anti-slavery. I went from South Wilbraham to Boston and spoke in the Spring Street Church before a large assembly. I spoke in Worcester, and many left the slavery ranks and joined the anti-slavery. I have spoken in some places in Connecticut where the



people have acted as though they had never seen a colored man before. They would shake hands with me and then look at their hands to see if I had left any black on them. I met with success everywhere I went. I traveled all the winter of 1842 with the Doctor, and in the spring following I left him and returned to Springfield to resume my trade again (boot and shoe-making), and worked a few months.

Martin Robinson Delany, letter on abolition lecture tour,
1 July 1848; published in *North Star*, 14 July 1848, excerpts¹

Born free in Virginia, Delany moved north to Pennsylvania and became allied with leading abolitionists including Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, with whom he founded the newspaper *North Star* in 1847. While travelling as an abolitionist activist, Delany sent letters to the newspaper recounting his experiences, including his encounter with a threatening mob in Ohio.



The crowd, which consisted well nigh of all the men and boys in the neighborhood who were able to throw a brickbat, being now assembled, “the tar and feathers” were demanded, with a tone which told forcibly the determination with which they intended carrying out their threats. A tar barrel was procured, and after many yelps and howls which rent the air around, they succeeded, in the court of some twenty minutes, in staving in the head. But it appeared that this barrel had been too closely drained of its contents, and as the village was but small, there was none other in the place, as the barrel was obtained from the principal store, directly opposite the hotel, which place was the general headquarters of the rowdies for the night. Failing to find tar sufficient in which to saturate us, they resorted to another expedient, which they were certain would have the desired effect.

A torch was brought, and the tar barrel set in a flame, when store boxes were piled upon it, which produced a fire that must have been seen several miles around. The fire was built in the middle of the street, directly opposite the hotel in which we stayed. Then came the cry, “Burn them alive! — kill the niggers! — they shall never leave this place! — bring them out! — rush in and take them! — Which is their room? Niggers! come out, or we will burn down the house over your heads!” A consultation was held, the result of which was that they would rush into our room, drag us out, tie and hand-cuff us, and take us immediately to the South and sell us! declaring that I would bring “fifteen hundred dollars, cash!” Turning to a blacksmith in the crowd, they asked him whether he would make the “hand-cuffs,” he, slavelike, answered, “yes, any moment.” This, I would observe, was the language of men, and not of lads and boys, who formed no inconsiderable part of this gang of rowdies.

Our position was such that we could look down on upon them, reconnoitre their every movement and hear all that was said. This position we occupied with as much coolness and deliberation as though nothing was transpiring below, fully determined not to leave it only with the loss of our life. We had done nothing worthy of such treatment, and, therefore, under no circumstances could submit to personal violence. My friends may censure me — even both of us — for this, but we cannot help it. We are not slaves, nor will be tamely suffer the treatment of slaves, let it come from a high or low source, or from whatever it may.

Then came the most horrible howling and yelling, cursing and blasphemy, every disparaging, reproachful, degrading, vile and vulgar epithet that could be conceived by the most vitiated imaginations, which bedlam of shocking discord was kept up until one o’clock at night. There is no tongue can express nor mind conceive the terrible uproar and ferocious blackguardism of this night’s proceedings. Hallooing, cursing, and swearing, blackguardism — the roaring of drums, beating of tamborines, blowing of instruments and horns, the rattling of bones, smashing of store boxes and boards for the fire — all going

¹ Robert Steven Levine, ed., *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 107-108. Permission pending.

on at once and the same time, incessantly for the space of four hours, by far exceeding anything of a similar nature which I have ever witnessed. If “all pandemonium had been let loose,”² and every imp had been a demon, each demon possessing a thousand tongues, each tongue capable of uttering a thousand demoniac howls, it could not have increased the infernal turmoil of this night’s proceedings.

The wretches, not possessing courage sufficient to drag us by force into the street, where to execute, in the midst of their assembled hundreds, their hellish designs, conceived the plot of disfiguring and disabling our horse, and breaking the buggy to pieces. Two or three gentlemen who, overhearing their plot, cautiously secreted the horse and buggy in the barn of a neighbor, which prevented this nefarious scheme from being put into execution. I would observe that, during all this midnight outrage, the proprietor of the hotel acted like a man, and I have no doubt but his influence contributed much, in the morning, toward bringing them to a sober reflection.

The mob eventually concluded, after rioting around the hotel until past one o’clock, having burnt, in all probability, all the spare store boxes, to retire until morning; but not, however, without giving strict instructions to the ostler boy, who slept in the bar-room of the hotel, that, should we in the night attempt to flee, to give the storekeeper near the hotel speedy notice, who was to call up his troop by the beating of the brass drum

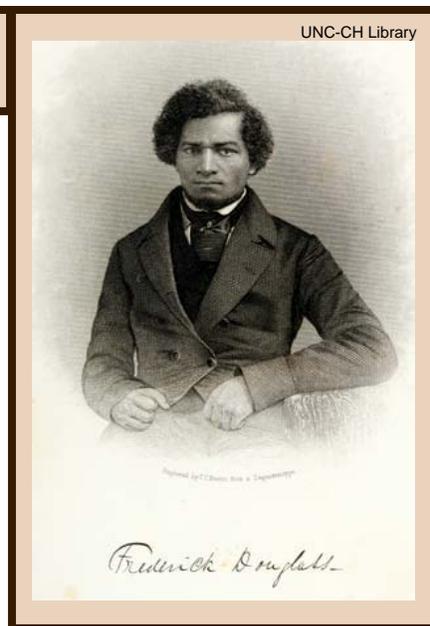
In the morning early, there were six only of them on the ground, among them a store keeper, as I learned, who howled and yelped as we left the hotel, two of whom secreted themselves in a shed, and stoned us, striking the horse and buggy, fortunately without injury to either. I have no doubt had they not feared the consequences, and probably from their blackguardism the night previous, been ashamed to be seen, though early in the morning, and identified, but they would have endeavored, at least, to do us some serious injury. Those who were present threatened us in the name of the town, that should either of us pass that way again our doom was fixed. Unfortunately, I could not learn the name of one of these insufferable villains. We left this place unharmed, and even unfrightened, as we were reconciled as to the course we should pursue.

Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855, Ch. 23, “Introduced to the Abolitionists,” excerpts

Born enslaved in Maryland, Frederick Douglass escaped to New York City as a young man and settled in Massachusetts, soon beginning the life of activism that made him the most renowned African American abolitionist. Here he recounts the beginning of the beginning of his political life at age 23.

In the summer of 1841, a grand anti-slavery convention was held in Nantucket [Massachusetts] under the auspices of Mr. Garrison and his friends. Until now I had taken no holiday since my escape from slavery. Having worked very hard that spring and summer in Richmond’s brass foundry³ — sometimes working all night as well as all day — and needing a day or two of rest, I attended this convention, never supposing that I should take part in the proceedings. Indeed, I was not aware that any one connected with the convention even so much as knew my name. I was, however, quite mistaken.

Mr. William C. Coffin, a prominent abolitionist in those days of trial, had heard me speaking to my colored friends in the little schoolhouse on Second street, New Bedford [Connecticut], where we worshiped. He sought me out in the crowd, and invited me to say a few



² Probably an allusion to John Milton (1608-1674), *Paradise Lost*, 1667, wherein he refers to “Pandoemonium, the high capital / Of Satan and his peers” (Book I, 756). [Footnote in Levine, ed., *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (UNC Press, 2003), p. 107]

³ Richmond, Massachusetts.

words to the convention. Thus sought out, and thus invited, I was induced to speak out the feelings inspired by the occasion, and the fresh recollection of the scenes through which I had passed as a slave.

My speech on this occasion is about the only one I ever made of which I do not remember a single connected sentence. It was with the utmost difficulty that I could stand erect, or that I could command and articulate two words without hesitation and stammering. I trembled in every limb. I am not sure that my embarrassment was not the most effective part of my speech, if speech it could be called. At any rate, this is about the only part of my performance that I now distinctly remember. But excited and convulsed as I was, the audience, though remarkably quiet before, became as much excited as myself. . . .

At the close of this great meeting, I was duly waited on by Mr. John A. Collins — then the general agent of the Massachusetts anti-slavery society — and urgently solicited by him to become an agent of that society, and to publicly advocate its anti-slavery principles. I was reluctant to take the proffered position. I had not been quite three years from slavery — was honestly distrustful of my ability — wished to be excused; publicity exposed me to discovery and arrest by my master; and other objections came up, but Mr. Collins was not to be put off, and I finally consented to go out for three months, for I supposed that I should have got to the end of my story and my usefulness in that length of time.

Here opened upon me a new life — a life for which I had had no preparation. I was a “graduate from the peculiar institution,” Mr. Collins used to say, when introducing me, “*with my diploma written on my back!*” The three years of my freedom had been spent in the hard school of adversity. My hands had been furnished by nature with something like a solid leather coating, and I had bravely marked out for myself a life of rough labor, suited to the hardness of my hands, as a means of supporting myself and rearing my children.

Now what shall I say of this fourteen years’ experience as a public advocate of the cause of my enslaved brothers and sisters? The time is but as a speck, yet large enough to justify a pause for retrospection — and a pause it must only be.

Young, ardent, and hopeful, I entered upon this new life in the full gush of unsuspecting enthusiasm. The cause was good; the men engaged in it were good; the means to attain its triumph, good. Heaven’s blessing must attend all, and freedom must soon be given to the pining millions under a ruthless bondage. My whole heart went with the holy cause, and my most fervent prayer to the Almighty Disposer of the hearts of men were continually offered for its early triumph. “Who or what,” thought I, “can withstand a cause so good, so holy, so indescribably glorious. The God of Israel is with us. The might of the Eternal is on our side. Now let but the truth be spoken, and a nation will start forth at the sound!”

In this enthusiastic spirit, I dropped into the ranks of freedom’s friends and went forth to the battle. For a time I was made to forget that my skin was dark and my hair crisped. For a time I regretted that I could not have shared the hardships and dangers endured by the earlier workers for the slave’s release. I soon, however, found that my enthusiasm had been extravagant; that hardships and dangers were not yet passed; and that the life now before me, had shadows as well as sunbeams.

Among the first duties assigned me, on entering the ranks, was to travel, in company with Mr. George Foster, to secure subscribers to the “Anti-slavery Standard” and the “Liberator” [newspapers]. With him I traveled and lectured through the eastern counties of Massachusetts. Much interest was awakened — large meetings assembled. Many came, no doubt, from curiosity to hear what a negro could say in his own cause. I was generally introduced as a “*chattel*” — a “*thing*” — a piece of southern “*property*” — the chairman assuring the audience that *it* could speak.

“I was generally introduced as a ‘chattel’ — a ‘thing’ — a piece of southern ‘property’ — the chairman assuring the audience that it could speak.”

Fugitive slaves, at that time, were not so plentiful as now; and as a fugitive slave lecturer I had the advantage of being a “*brand new fact*” — the first one out. Up to that time, a colored man was deemed a fool who confessed himself a runaway slave, not only because of the danger to which he exposed himself of being retaken, but because it was a confession of a very *low* origin! Some of my colored friends in New Bedford thought very badly of my wisdom for thus exposing and degrading myself. The only

precaution I took, at the beginning, to prevent Master Thomas from knowing where I was, and what I was about, was the withholding my former name, my master's name, and the name of the state and county from which I came.

During the first three or four months, my speeches were almost exclusively made up of narrations of my own personal experience as a slave. "Let us have the facts," said the people. So also said Friend George Foster, who always

"It did not entirely satisfy me to narrate wrongs; I felt like denouncing them."

wished to pin me down to my simple narrative. "Give us the facts," said Collins, "we will take care of the philosophy." Just here arose some embarrassment. It was impossible for me to repeat the same old story month after month, and to keep up my interest in it. It was new to the people, it is true, but it was an old story to me; and to go through with it night after night, was a task altogether too mechanical for my nature. "Tell your story, Frederick," would whisper my then revered friend, William Lloyd Garrison, as I stepped upon the platform. I could not always obey, for I was now reading and thinking. New views of the subject were presented to my mind. It did not entirely satisfy me to *narrate* wrongs; I felt like *denouncing* them. I could not always curb my moral indignation for the perpetrators of slaveholding villainy, long enough for a circumstantial statement of the facts which I felt almost everybody must know. Besides, I was growing, and needed room. "People won't believe you ever was a slave, Frederick, if you keep on this way," said Friend Foster. "Be yourself," said Collins, "and tell your story." It was said to me, "Better have a *little* of the plantation manner of speech than not; 'tis not best that you seem too learned." These excellent friends were actuated by the best of motives, and were not altogether wrong in their advice; and still I must speak just the word that seemed to *me* the word to be spoken *by* me.

At last the apprehended trouble came. People doubted if I had ever been a slave. They said I did not talk like a slave, look like a slave, nor act like a slave, and that they believed I had never been south of Mason and Dixon's line. "He don't tell us where he came from — what his master's name was — how he got away — nor the story of his experience. Besides, he is educated, and is, in this, a contradiction of all the facts we have concerning the ignorance of the slaves." Thus, I was in a pretty fair way to be denounced as an impostor. The committee of the Massachusetts anti-slavery society knew all the facts in my case, and agreed with me in the prudence of keeping them private. They, therefore, never doubted my being a genuine fugitive; but going down the aisles of the churches in which I spoke and hearing the free spoken Yankees saying, repeatedly, "*He's never been a slave, I'll warrant ye,*" I resolved to dispel all doubt, at no distant day, by such a revelation of facts as could not be made by any other than a genuine fugitive.

In a little less than four years, therefore, after becoming a public lecturer, I was induced to write out the leading facts connected with my experience in slavery, giving names of persons, places, and dates — thus putting it in the power of any who doubted, to ascertain the truth or falsehood of my story of being a fugitive slave. This statement soon became known in Maryland, and I had reason to believe that an effort would be made to recapture me.

It is not probable that any open attempt to secure me as a slave could have succeeded, further than the obtainment, by my master, of the money value of my bones and sinews. Fortunately for me, in the four years of my labors in the abolition cause, I had gained many friends, who would have suffered themselves to be taxed to almost any extent to save me from slavery. It was felt that I had committed the double offense of running away, and exposing the secrets and crimes of slavery and slaveholders. There was a double motive for seeking my reënslavement — avarice and vengeance; and while, as I have said, there was little probability of successful recapture, if attempted openly, I was constantly in danger of being spirited away, at a moment when my friends could render me no assistance. In traveling about from place to place — often alone — I was much exposed to this sort of attack. Any one cherishing the design to betray me, could easily do so, by simply tracing my whereabouts through the anti-slavery journals, for my meetings and movements were promptly made known in advance.
