

Brief Biographies

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) became a great orator. He wrote *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. In the book information was conveyed about slaves, their owners, and places where slavery was prevalent. As he traveled to Europe, Douglass spoke out in favor of Irish freedom, women's rights, and world peace. Frederick returned to the United States in 1847, establishing newspaper called *The North Star*. Douglass' affiliation with John Brown, who led the famous raid on Harper's Ferry, caused the governor of Virginia to believe him to be the mastermind. A warrant for his arrest was issued. Douglass escaped imprisonment by fleeing to Canada. Returning shortly after the Civil War began, Douglass encouraged President Lincoln to free the slaves and allow them to join the Union forces. Douglass recruited men for the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Massachusetts regiments. He held many public offices before his retirement. Afterward, Douglass focused on the problems of segregation and lynching, joining the crusade led by Mary Church Terrell and Ida Wells-Barnett.

Lewis Hayden (1815-1889) was born a slave and spent a lifetime trying to free others. He was traded for a pair of carriage horses. After escaping slavery via the Underground Railroad to Detroit, he established a school for black children. He then moved to Boston with his wife Harriet and became a leader in the abolitionist movement. In 1850, Southern slave owners were given authority by the Fugitive Slave Act to retrieve their runaway slaves. Boston, where Hayden and his wife Harriet lived, ceased to be a haven for escaped slaves. The Haydens turned their home into an Underground Railroad station. They reputedly kept two kegs of gunpowder under their front stoop. They greeted bounty hunters at the door with lit candles, saying that they would rather drop the candles and blow up the house than surrender the ex-slaves in their trust. In 1873, Hayden was elected to the state legislature. From 1859 until his death in 1889, he held the position of Messenger to the Secretary of State. Harriet Hayden survived her husband. In her will she established a scholarship fund for "needy and worthy colored students in the Harvard Medical School."

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a liberal Quaker and dedicated American reformer, opposed the use of liquor and wanted an immediate end to slavery. She worked hard to end the injustices to humans in the name of slavery. Susan worked organizing meetings and giving lectures for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1863 during the American Civil War, she founded the Women's Loyal League to fight for the emancipation of slaves. After Reconstruction, Anthony fought for the vote for women and the nation's resistance to woman suffrage.

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879) established *The Liberator*, an antislavery journal. Garrison's dedication to the abolition of slavery was strong. Garrison's outspoken stand in favor of immediate freedom for slaves made him and his newspaper unpopular with pro-slavery forces in the North and the South. In Columbia, South Carolina, the Vigilance Committee offered a \$1500 reward for the arrest of anyone distributing *The Liberator*, and the Georgia House of Representatives offered \$5000 for Garrison's capture and trial. He helped organize the New England Anti-Slavery Society, the first organization in the country based on the principle of immediate abolition.



He helped Prudence Crandall in her struggle to open a school for black girls. For his efforts, the pro-slavery forces in the community threatened to arrest him and turn him over to the state of Georgia for the \$5000 reward. On October 21, 1835, Garrison was dragged through the streets of Boston with a rope around his neck. He was rescued and turned over to the mayor who ordered him jailed, claiming it was the only way to assure his safety. The mob, however, attacked the carriage transporting him and almost captured him again.

Garrison had strong opinions about the methods that should be used to bring about emancipation. He did not believe that it could be done through the political process, and would not support any kind of political action. He attacked organized religion and its leaders for not doing enough to fight slavery; in addition, he opposed any attempt at active resistance, believing only in nonviolent disobedience. He also did not limit himself to the issue of slavery; his opinions were just as strong, and as outspoken, on the subject of women's rights. He used *The Liberator* to attack slavery, discrimination against women, smoking, drinking, the military, the clergy, the government, and cruelty to animals. Until his death in 1879, he concerned himself with other reform movements, especially temperance and women's suffrage.

Adapted from Web site <http://www.nps.gov/boaf/williamlloydgarrison.htm>

P.B.S. Pinchback (1837-1921) became the first black governor in U.S. history. He became a riverboat gambler, army recruiter, newspaper publisher, dynamic speaker, entrepreneur, civil rights leader and politician during Reconstruction. When his father died in 1848, Pinckney quit school, toiling on canal boats to elude threats to enslave him by his father's family. In 1862 he was recruiting troops for Corps de'Afrique, an all-black New Orleans Civil War regiment. He resigned the following year, citing military prejudice, but emerged after the war as a principal Republican Party organizer and a delegate to the 1867 Louisiana Constitutional Convention. Elected to the Louisiana State Senate in 1868, he was a supporter of universal suffrage, a free public school system, and civil rights for all people. He introduced legislation outlawing racial discrimination in public accommodations. Beginning in 1870 he published *The Louisianan*, a New Orleans weekly, for 11 years. Selected President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, he was elevated to lieutenant governor when Lt. Gov. Oscar J. Dunn died on Nov. 22, 1871. During impeachment proceedings a year later against Gov. Henry Clay Warmoth, Pinchback was Louisiana's acting governor for 35 days. He relinquished the executive mansion on Jan. 13, 1873. Pinchback ostensibly won the November 1872 election as Louisiana's Congressman-at-large but was refused the seat after a volatile debate. In January 1873, he was elected U.S. Senator but was denied the seat after an election contest that lasted three years. At age 50, he earned a law degree from Straight University, where he served as trustee, and was admitted to the Washington, D.C., bar in 1890. He died there Dec. 21, 1921 at age 84.

Harriet Tubman (1821-1913) received a fractured skull at age 13 while defending another slave from a cruel master. Guided by the North Star, Harriet made her way to freedom in Philadelphia. She was the greatest single conductor in the history of the Underground Railroad. An escaped slave



herself, Tubman earned the nickname "Moses" for her heroic exploits in leading slaves to the promised land. Returning nineteen times to the dangerous South, Tubman led more than 300 slaves to freedom, including her own aged parents. Enraged Southern planters offered \$40,000 for her capture without success. The wily and fearless Tubman carried a pistol on her freedom raids and if a slave had second thoughts about escaping she pulled her gun and said: "You'll be free or die!" During the Civil War, Tubman worked as a scout, spy, and nurse for the Union army. After the war, she tried to start schools for blacks and worked in support of women's suffrage.

Additional stories may be summarized and presented for student use using *Extraordinary Black Americans* or *For the Benefit of All*. See Bibliographical References for more information.

