

Finding Freedom in New Bedford



On Site

Pre-Visit

Post-Visit

Journey 1

Journey 2

Journey 3

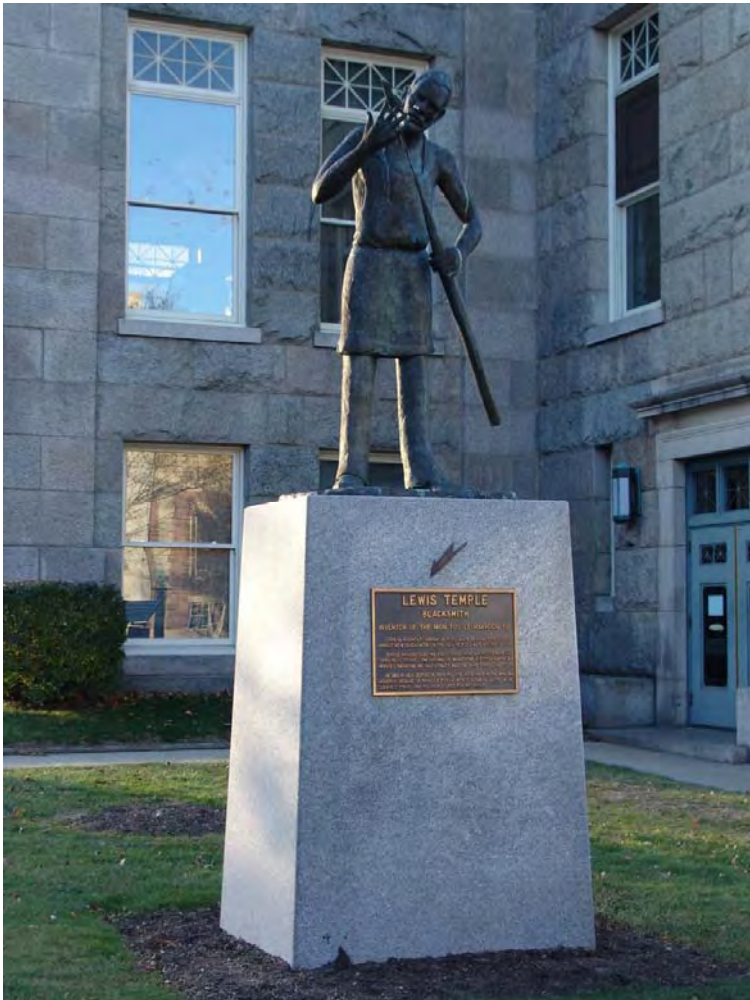
Handouts

Finding Freedom in New Bedford

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park



When Samuel Nixon escaped from slavery to New Bedford, Massachusetts, in the early summer of 1855, he took the name Thomas Bayne and found “many old friends” from his native Norfolk, Virginia, already living in the small but bustling port city. By that time New Bedford was considered “one of the greatest assylums [sic] of the fugitives,” as whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan put it; to runaway slaves like George Teamoh, the city was “our magnet of attraction.”

This curriculum-based lesson plan is one in a thematic set on the Underground Railroad using lessons from other National Parks. Also are:

[Hampton National Historic Site](#)
Hampton Mansion: Power Struggles in Early America

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To Indicate a Student handout



To indicate a Teacher resource



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The whaling industry employed large numbers of African-Americans, Azoreans, and Cape Verdeans. New Bedford’s role in 19th-century American History was not limited to whaling; it was also a major station on the Underground Railroad moving slaves from the South up North and to Canada.

Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

How did New Bedford represent both risk and opportunity for freedom seekers and those who helped them?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the significance of New Bedford in the anti-slavery movement. • Explain some of the risks and opportunities New Bedford provided for freedom seekers. • Describe the role of the whaling industry in the Underground Railroad. | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain information from both primary and secondary sources. • Make decisions based on information gathered from multiple sources. • Demonstrate different patterns of speech through role play. |

Materials:

- Underground Railroad brochure (NPS), Link to brochure:
<http://www.nps.gov/nebe/planyourvisit/upload/ugrr.pdf>
- Underground Railroad Walking Tour Activity Sheet (one for each student)
- Role Play Cards for each student
- Clipboards and pencils for each student

Teaching/Learning Sequence**Preparation:**

Contact New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park at (508) 996-4095 prior to your visit. A park ranger will greet your group at the National Park Visitor Center at 33 William Street before you begin your self-guided visit.

Underground Railroad Walking Tour Activity Sheet

Students will use the activity sheets during their visit to New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. They will write a brief description of each location and determine if this place represents a risk and/or an opportunity for the fugitive from slavery.

Role Play Cards

At each stop along the Underground Railroad walk, students will read quotes from “those who were there.” These quotes provide a firsthand account that will help students form their own opinion as to whether the historical site represents a risk or an opportunity.

Underground Railroad Brochure

As you visit each site along the Underground Railroad walking tour, read the description from the National Park brochure. Allow students to read their quotes at each stop, and plan time for the students to record their observations.

Complement Your Visit:

A view of the harbor will greatly enhance your visit to New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. To enjoy this view, walk north on N. Water St. and turn down Rodman St. The buildings on these corners are the Rodman Candleworks Building and the Double Bank Building.



The Power of Place

Site Visit:

Have you ever stood on the spot where some historical event occurred and felt a sense of awe and inspiration? This is the power of place you can experience when you visit a National Park. Historic places provide us with opportunities to connect with the lives of the generations before us. The power of place is that it gives history immediacy and relevance. As historian David McCullough* states, "When you stand there, in that very real, authentic place, you feel the presence of that other time, that history in a way that would be impossible did it not exist."

New Bedford was the mid-19th century's preeminent whaling port and for a time "the richest city in the world." Come stroll down cobblestone streets, visit the world's largest whaling museum, tour a whaling merchant's home and whaleman's chapel, and walk a 19th-century schooner's decks. Walk in the footsteps of Herman Melville and Frederick Douglass and learn about a remarkable era.

* From "History Lost and Found," *Journal of the National Historic Trust for Preservation*. Winter, 2002.

Plan your visit

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Connections to Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies

5.23 Describe the responsibilities of government at the federal, state and local levels (e.g. protection of individual rights and the provision of services such as law enforcement and the building and funding of schools).

5.31 Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution and of the 1808 law that banned the importation of slaves into the United States.

5.33 Explain the importance the whaling industry to 19th century New England.

Language Arts

The students will differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

6.4 Demonstrate through role-playing appropriate use of formal and informal language.

24.3 Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources and presenting research in individual and group projects.

27.3 Create a media production using effective images, text, music, sound effects or graphics.

Itineraries for New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

“Finding Freedom in New Bedford”

This itinerary is designed to meet the needs of two classes visiting New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park at the same time. Total program time is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes. Classes will arrive at the National Park Visitor Center at 33 William Street. A park ranger will meet the groups and introduce the park.

Group 1:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Introduction at the Visitor Center | 10 minutes |
| Walking tour on New Bedford’s connection to the Underground Railroad | 90 minutes |
| Explore Visitor Center Exhibits; use restrooms | 15 minutes |
| Ranger-led conclusion | 15 minutes |

Group 2:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Introduction at the Visitor Center | 10 minutes |
| Explore Visitor Center exhibits; use restrooms | 15 minutes |
| Walking tour on New Bedford’s connection to the Underground Railroad | 90 minutes |
| Ranger-led conclusion at the Visitor Center | 15 minutes |

Student Handouts

To print this set of files right click on the Handouts item in the bookmarks on the left of the screen. This will allow you to print or extract (open) just these pages.



The Underground Railroad: New Bedford

If you don't know your history, you're destined to live it again. People made great sacrifices for this country to be where it is today. . . But unfortunately, our history has reflected more of one side than the other. People need to understand the contributions that have been made to make this country what it is. Alonzo Gaskin, In Relentless Pursuit of an Education, UCAC 2006.

Welcome to the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park! These very streets are the ones used by seafarers for hundreds of years. Those who used these streets to go “down to the sea in ships” were of many races and cultures from around the world. Today, we will be focusing on a special group of people who came to New Bedford – fugitives from slavery and those who helped them. At each stop, you will write a brief description of what happened and use the information presented to you to determine whether the stop created a risk or provided an opportunity for the fugitives. Make sure to take careful notes, as they will help you in your post-visit activity.

Stop #1 – State Pier

Important Events:



Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Stop #2 – The Four Corners Union and South Water Street

Important Events:



Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Stop #3 – Sgt. Carney Plaque Pleasant and Union Street



Important Events:

Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Stop #4 – Joseph Ricketson Home Site Union and Seventh Street



Source: www.maps.google.com

Important Events:

Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Stop #5 – Nathan & Polly Johnson Properties 17-21 Seventh Street

Important Events:



Risk Opportunity Why? _____

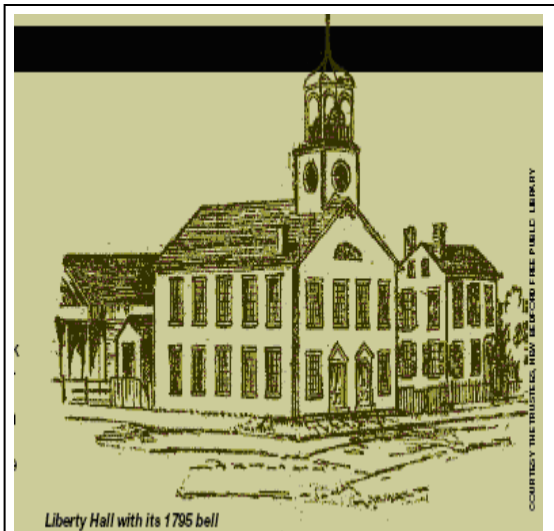
As you proceed to Stop #6, Liberty Hall, please take note of the Louis Temple Memorial outside of the New Bedford Free Public Library, located at 613 Pleasant Street.

Important Events:



Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Stop #6 – Liberty Hall Purchase and Union Street



Important Events:

Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Source: New Bedford Public Library



**Stop #7 – 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Plaza
William Street and Acushnet Avenue**

Important Events:



Risk Opportunity Why? _____

Role Play Cards to be Used at Stops along the Underground Railroad Walking Tour

Stop #1, the State Pier

I waited until the captain went down below to dress for going ashore, and then I made a dash for liberty... When the ship tied up at the wharf at the foot of Union Street... I was over the edge and in the midst of an excited crowd. "A fugitive, a fugitive," was the cry as I sprung ashore... Had never heard the word "fugitive" before and was pretty well scared out of my wits. But a slave had little to fear in a New Bedford crowd in slavery days... They stood aside and let me pass.

- Joseph M. Smith, recalling events from around 1830

Stop #1, the State Pier

I am a fugitive slave from Maryland, and have a family in Philadelphia; but fearing to remain there any longer, I thought I would go on a whaling voyage, as being the place where I stood least chance of being arrested by slave hunters.

- John Thompson's confession to a whaling boat captain in 1842

Stop # 2 – The Four Corners

Quite a large number of fugitives for a time stayed at his [William Bush's] house and received the same hospitalities as did his regular boarders, notwithstanding the former were not able to pay their way. If any reliance may be placed in the statement of many of the older citizens of New Bedford, Deacon (Mr.) Bush... has been one of the most zealous, hard working and liberal friends the fugitives ever found.

- George Teamoh, about black boardinghouse keeper William Bush

Stop #3 – Carney Panel

During the Civil War battle at Fort Wagner in 1863, commanding officer Colonel Shaw was shot as he led his troops, shouting, “Forward, Fifty-fourth!” At the same time, Sgt. John Wall, who was carrying the flag, began to fall. Sgt. William Carney, observing both incidents, rushed over and kept the flag from hitting the ground, in spite of a hail of bullets that wounded him in the chest, right arm, and both legs. Carney took over command of Shaw’s black regiment, but not until the reinforcements reached him was he able to retreat to friendly lines. When he crossed into friendly territory, he handed the flag to another soldier in his regiment. As he collapsed, he uttered the words, “Boys, the old flag never touched the ground.”

Stop #4 – Joseph Ricketson Home Site

I have received your very valuable consignment of 200 pounds of Humanity last evening and as merchants say will dispose of it to the best advantage.

- Joseph Ricketson, writing to New York abolitionist Sydney Howard Gay about the arrival of Henry “Box” Brown in New Bedford

Stop #5 – Nathan and Polly Johnson

A person stood behind [me] with a heavy pair of tongs in his hand ready to brain [me] if there was any attempt made for Randolph’s liberation.

- Nathan John, recounting his attendance at the trial of John Randolph, a fugitive slave (quoted in the *Republican Standard*, a New Bedford newspaper, May 14, 1878)

Stop # 6 – Liberty Hall

No colored man is really free in a slaveholding state. He wears the badge of bondage while nominally free, and is often subject to hardships to which the slave is a stranger; but here in New Bedford, it was my good fortune to see a pretty near approach to freedom on the part of the colored people

- Frederick Douglass, 1855. Mr. Douglass was a speaker at Liberty Hall.

Stop #7 – 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Plaza

Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.

- Frederick Douglass, on the significance of blacks in the military.

Note: Black Civil War soldiers were paid \$10 a month, \$3 less than white soldiers.

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Pre-Visit Activity

New Bedford was considered “one of the greatest assylums [sic] of the fugitives,” as whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan put it; to runaway slaves like George Teamoh, the city was “our magnet of attraction.”

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Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

How could the promise of freedom and opportunity motivate a person to take great risks?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|--|---|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and identify details in an historic image to make deductions about the setting. • Describe their vision of life in 19th-century New Bedford. • Describe why New Bedford was seen as a good destination for freedom seekers | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and use knowledge of common graphic features (illustration). • Describe a scene using sensory details. • Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details. |

Teaching/Learning Sequence

Using the “Four Corners” painting from the Whaling Museum collection, students will gain an understanding of the town of New Bedford in the early 1800s.



Image courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum

Collection Information, from whalingmuseum.org

Number: 00.34

Category: ART

Geo/Culture: United States

Object: painting

Title: "New Bedford in 1807" "Old Four Corners"

Artist/Maker: Wall, William Allen

Date: 1852-1857

Material: oil on canvas

Dimensions: [H]22" [W]33 1/2" [D] [Dia] [L] [Remarks]

Framed: [H] 24 1/2" x [W] 36"

Description: The best known of all landscape views of New Bedford was recorded neither on the spot nor at the time. It was done fifty years after the event, either from the artist's memory or from sketches made half a century earlier. The picture exists in several versions and carries either the title "New Bedford in 1807" or "Old Four Corners." In 1858, Charles Taber and Company reproduced the subject as a print with the alternate title "New Bedford, Fifty Years Ago." A year after the publication of the lithograph, Wall prevailed upon to identify the participants and structures. The site is Main (later Union) Street as seen looking west from the corner of Water. The house furthest up the street, behind the row of poplars, is the residence of William Rotch, Sr., who is seen in the foreground in his chaise. To the right of the stone post, two men converse: the smaller is Abraham Russell, holding a cane; the larger, portly figure is William Rotch, Jr. Wall identifies some but not all of the others: Samuel Rodman, Sr., shakes hands with Captain Roland Crocker under the barber pole, and the artist's father, William Sawyer Wall, the village pedagogue, stands directly under the clock that advertises the store of Josiah Wood and Son. Speculations by others place Paul Cuffe in the group of blacks and Wall himself, as a child of six or seven, in the driver's seat of the cart pulled by a team of playmates.

Launch:

Print four copies of the image above. Cut out sheets of paper the same size as the image. Cut out one quarter of the paper and cover the picture so that each of the four copies has a different quarter of the image exposed. Divide the class into four groups. Each group will examine one quarter of the image. Have students fill out the attached worksheet, listing all of the details that they see. Students will then describe what they think is in the rest of the picture.

When all of the groups are finished, have students share what they saw and guessed about the picture. Show the entire image to the class and describe what it is. Ask the students to share how accurate their guesses were. Groups will then complete their worksheets.

Exploration:

Have students "place" themselves into the image. Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper. Have students brainstorm a list of sensory details describing what it would be like standing on this New Bedford street corner in the early 1800s. Each group will record its lists on the paper and post them in the front of the room.

Assessment:

Using the information gained through the above activities, students will write a short story based on the following:

An escaped slave has just arrived in New Bedford. What will the first few minutes at the Four Corners be like for him? Tell your story in either first or third person, and from the point of view of either the slave or one of the townspeople in the image.



The Power of Place

Site Visit:

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Connections to Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies

SOCIAL STUDIES

Concepts and Skills: History and Geography 3. Observe and identify details in cartoons, photographs, charts and graphs relating to an historical narrative

5.31 Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution and of the 1808 law that banned the importation of slaves into the United States.

5.33 Explain the importance the whaling industry to 19th century New England.

Language Arts

The students will differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

13.14: Identify and use knowledge of common graphic features (charts, maps, diagrams, captions, illustrations).

13.17: Identify and analyze main ideas, supporting ideas, and supporting details.

24.3: Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources and presenting research in individual and group projects.



Image courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum

Reading an Image

Describe everything you see in your section of the image, using as much detail as possible.

What do you think is in the rest of this picture?

After you have seen the entire picture:

Why do you think the artist painted this picture?

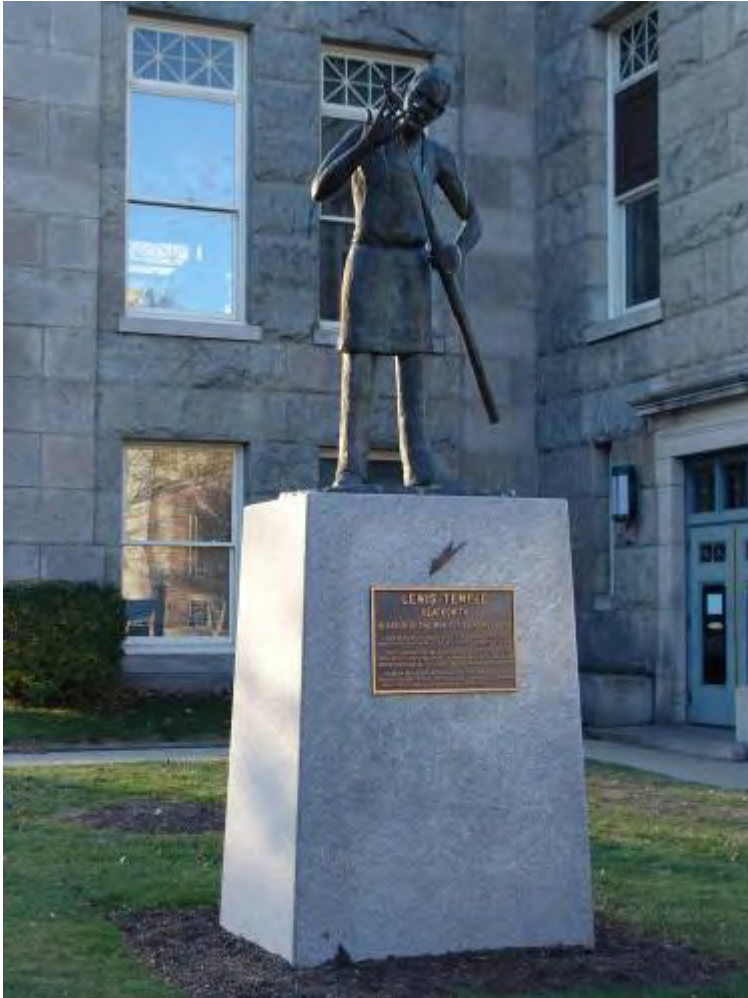
What does the picture make you wonder about?

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Post-Visit Activity

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Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

How does New Bedford exemplify both the risks and opportunities for people seeking freedom for themselves and/or others?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and identify details in photographs. • Describe the life of free African-Americans in America. • Identify risks and opportunities found by freedom seekers in New Bedford prior to the Civil War. | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a media production using effective images and text. • Identify and use knowledge of common textual features. • Apply understanding of agreed-upon rules and individual roles in order to make decisions. |

Teaching/Learning Sequence

Launch:

Divide the class into small groups. Each group will review notes written about sites visited during the walking tour of New Bedford. Students decide as a group whether each site represents a risk or opportunity to freedom-seekers in New Bedford prior to the Civil War.

Exploration:

Option #1

During the tour, students use digital cameras to take photographs that they will use in a PowerPoint presentation. If digital cameras are not available, students can import pictures of each stop from the Photo Gallery at the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park website www.nps.gov/nebe. Each slide should show a different location, provide information about the site, and describe whether the site represented a risk or an opportunity.

Option #2

Students create a poster board presentation using either their own photographs taken during the tour or printed photos from the Photo Gallery on the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park website; www.nps.gov/nebe. Students should place the New Bedford map from the guide in the center of their poster board. At the location of each site, they are to place small railroad tracks that connect the sites with their photos and site facts arranged around the sides.

Assessment:

Each group presents its PowerPoint or poster to the rest of the class, explaining the reasons for the group's decisions about risks and opportunities.

Connections to Curriculum Standards:*Social Studies*

SOCIAL STUDIES

5.12 Describe the harsh conditions of slave life, and the responses of slaves to their condition. Describe the life of free African-Americans in the colonies.

5.31 Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution and of the 1808 law that banned the importation of slaves into the United States.

5.33 Explain the importance of the whaling industry to 19th century New England

English/Language Arts

General Standard 2: Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

General Standard 6: Students will describe, analyze, and use appropriately formal and informal English

General Standard 8: Students will identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as a basis for interpretation.

General Standard 24: Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.

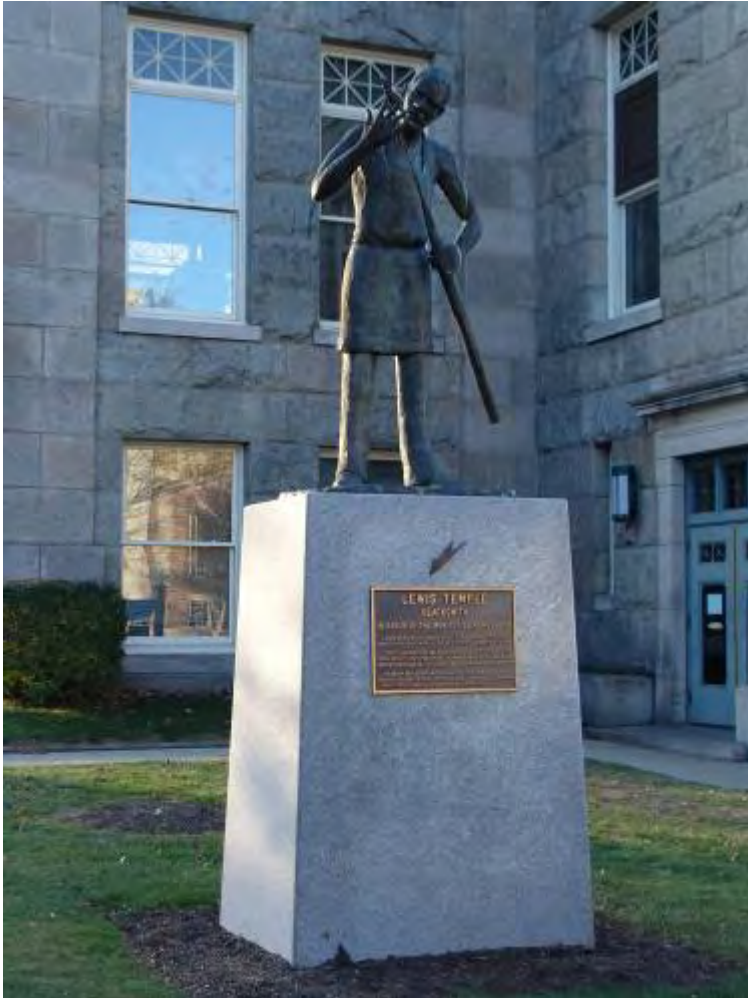
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Journey 1 Lucy Faggins Two Views



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Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

Why would Rev. Spear, Rev. James and Henry Johnson take risks to help Lucy Faggins have the opportunity to be free?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the difference between a free state and a slave state. • Describe the lives of free African-Americans in 19th-century America. • Explain what being a slave really meant, even in a free state. | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. • Listen to information presented orally to gain understanding. • Give oral presentations using language for dramatic effect. |

Materials:

“The Truth According to the New Bedford *Mercury*” script
 “The Truth According to the *Morning Register*” script
 Transcriptions of the following primary sources:

New Bedford *Mercury*, July 14, 1841

The *Morning Register*, July 9, July 10, July 12, and July 14, 1841

Teaching/Learning Sequence**Launch:**

Write a short description of a time when you argued about some incident with a friend or family member. When it came time to give your side of the story, was it much different from the other person’s account? If so, why were your versions of the same event different?

Pair-Share: Have students share their journal entries with a partner and then with the whole class.

Instruct the students to think about their own experiences while they re-enact different perspectives of an event that occurred in July of 1841 in New Bedford, MA. The *Mercury* and the *Morning Register* were two New Bedford newspapers that covered the story. Students will perform two plays based on different accounts of the same event—the freeing of Lucy Faggins.

Exploration:

Divide the class into two groups. One group will act out the *Mercury*’s version of the story while the other will perform the *Morning Register*’s account. Give both groups time for at least one read-through before performing for the other group. Tell students in the audience to take notes on differences between the two groups’ accounts of the same event. Audience members may also be needed as extras to play the roles of African-Americans outside Captain Dunbar’s home.

Summary:

After the two performances, have students work in small groups to create Venn diagrams of similarities and differences between the accounts. They should then answer the following: Why were there differences in the two accounts? *(Both sides believe the incident illustrates certain beliefs and should evoke certain feelings; as a result, each side emphasizes those aspects, or reputed aspects, of the incident that support its views and downplays or omits aspects that don’t.)*

Ask students the following:

- Do you believe that Lucy ever told Mr. and Mrs. Ludlam that she wanted to return to Virginia?

- Why might she want to return to Virginia?

Before sharing the rest of the story, ask students to think about the enduring understanding that people take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Now for the rest of the story, according to Kathryn Grover, historian:

Given the financial losses of Mr. Ludlam, he threatened to bring legal action against Rev. Spear for loss of property; however, there is nothing in the court records to show that he followed through with his threat.

Because most people subscribed to the *Mercury*, most people in New Bedford, including anti-slavery supporters, believed that accounting of the story. Anti-slavery supporters could not condone the allegedly violent actions taken to remove Lucy from Captain Dunbar's home and turned against the abolitionists based on the belief that they would continue to use violence to free slaves. As a result, Rev. Spear's reputation was so badly damaged that he had to resign as pastor of the First Universalist Society, which he had helped organize.

Lucy Faggins remained in Boston until things cooled down and she no longer believed that Mr. Ludlam would try to take her back to Richmond. By 1850 she returned to New Bedford, where she married a fugitive from Maryland and remained for most of her life. Two years earlier, her sister Martha and Martha's husband-to-be, Henry Joseph Onley, moved from Richmond to New Bedford.

Wrap-Up:

Have students use a graphic organizer to categorize people and events under "Risks" and/or "Opportunities."

Discuss the following questions:

- What motivated Rev. Spear, Rev. James, and Henry Johnson to help Lucy?
- What sort of risks did Lucy take?
- What opportunities did she have because of her choice?
- What impact did this case have on the abolitionists of New Bedford?

Assessment:

Option #1

After reviewing the plays and the transcripts of actual newspaper stories, students write a letter to the editor of either the *Morning Register* or the *New Bedford Mercury* with their own accounting of the events of the Lucy Faggins case. Students should direct their account to the editor of the opposing side's newspaper.

Show students a few examples of letters to the editor in their local newspapers, stressing that the letter writer's purpose is to persuade.

Option #2

After reviewing the plays and transcripts of actual newspaper stories, students write a balanced or neutral accounting of the events surrounding the Lucy Faggins case.

Review with students the general format of a newspaper, stressing that the reporter's purpose is to inform. Show students a modern-day article and an editorial column on the same subject to make the point that, at least in theory, objective and/or fair accounts appear in the bulk of the paper, while editorial writers and columnists are supposed to express opinions, to argue a particular point.

Connections to Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies

5.23 Describe the responsibilities of government at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., protection of individual rights and the provision of services such as law enforcement and the building and funding of schools).

5.31 Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution and of the 1808 law that banned the importation of slaves into the United States.

Language Arts

The students will differentiate from primary and secondary sources.

6.4 Demonstrate through role-playing appropriate use of formal and informal language.

17.3 Identify and analyze structural elements particular to dramatic literature (scenes, acts, cast of characters, stage directions) in plays they read, view, write, and perform.

19.8 Write formal letters to correspondents such as authors, newspapers, businesses or government officials.

24.3 Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources and presenting research in individual and group projects.

The Truth According to the New Bedford *Mercury*

Scene One: Late June, 1841. The Ludlums are vacationing in Old Point Comfort, VA, about 150 miles from their home in Richmond, VA.

Mr. Ludlam: My dear wife, I have just received an extremely distressing correspondence, a letter from your father's physician. I am afraid that your father's health has failed him, and his doctor believes that he may die soon.

Mrs. Ludlam: We have to leave for New Bedford right away.

Mr. Ludlam: Of course, but shouldn't we return the children and Lucy to our home in Richmond first?

Mrs. Ludlam: There is no time. I cannot risk not seeing my father again before he dies.

Mr. Ludlam: You know the laws are different up there. They passed a law five years ago saying that a slave would be free if she was brought to Massachusetts by her own master.

Mrs. L: Don't be ridiculous—our Lucy would never leave us. Here, I'll show you.
(calling with raised voice, towards door) Lucy! Come here right away. I need to speak to you.

(Lucy, a 18- to 20-year-old slave, hired from her master to work with the Ludlum family for a year, enters the room.)

Mrs. L: Lucy, we have to leave for New Bedford right away, as my father is quite ill and may die.

Mr. L: You need to know that you will be considered free up there, and you will not have to return with us. While we are there, you will be able to come and go as you please when we do not need you to care for the children. You will have the same privileges of any servant up there. But as of now, what are you planning to do?

Lucy: I will return to Richmond with you and continue to take care of your children. Not only that, I could not stay there and never see my brothers and sisters again.

Mrs. L: See, I knew Lucy would make the right choice. We have nothing to worry about.

Scene Two: Ten days after arriving at the home of Captain Joseph Dunbar, New Bedford, MA. The Rev. Thomas James and three members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on South Second Street approach the house.

Rev. James: I really appreciate your coming along with me on this visit.

Woman 1: Well, when I heard that they are keeping a slave in this house, how could I not come to speak to her?

Woman 2: The poor thing probably does not even know her rights here.

(Rev. James knocks on the door, and Mr. Ludlam himself answers.)

Mr. L: What business do you have here?

Rev. James: We are from the AME Zion Church, and we wish to speak with your slave.

Mr. L: I have never said a word when Lucy has had visitors in the kitchen. But how dare you come to the front door? I understand that things are different here, but I never thought it was a custom to visit a servant at the front door, even if you are a minister. I mean no disrespect to you or the women with you, but I feel disrespected. You must leave now.

Scene Three: Sheriff Pratt, Rev. Knights, and Rev. Spear arrive at Capt. Dunbar's house. About fifteen free negroes, including Henry Johnson, are stationed down the street, carrying bludgeons and clubs and carrying on loudly.

(Sheriff Pratt knocks on the door. A servant answers and, upon Sheriff Pratt's request, gets Mr. Ludlam.)

Mr. Ludlam: Gentlemen, what business do you have here?

Sheriff Pratt: I am here to serve a writ of habeas corpus which states that I must deliver your slave to Boston for a hearing with Judge Wilde. It is against our laws to keep a person against her will. The Reverends Spear and Knights are here as my witnesses.

Mr. Ludlam: I think there has been some misunderstanding. We are not keeping anyone, especially Lucy, against her will. What are those negroes doing out on the street?

Rev. Spear: They are only here to observe the house and make sure no one tries to leave with Laura.

Mr. L: Her name is Lucy. Could you ask them to quiet down and drop the bludgeons? We have a dying man in the house who should not be disturbed.

Mrs. L: What is all the noise? My father is quite upset.

Sheriff: May we come in and settle this matter quickly?

Mr. L: Yes, please come in, gentlemen, and make yourselves comfortable in our parlor while I send for my lawyer, Mr. Colby.

(A short time later, Mr. Colby and several friends from New Bedford arrive at Capt. Dunbar's house.)

Mr. Colby (examining the writ of habeas corpus): This looks in order, Mr. Ludlam. I am afraid that you will have to relinquish the girl to Sheriff Pratt even if you don't agree with it. I will have a chance to explain your side when I see the judge.

Mr. Ludlam: You cannot be serious. My wife is distraught over her father's condition. He may die at any time. Can't you arrange a delay in the proceedings?

Mr. Colby: When is she scheduled to appear before Judge Wilde? Does she have to leave tonight?

Sheriff: Actually Judge Wilde is on Nantucket Island right now and is scheduled to hear this case on Saturday.

Mr. Ludlam: Then why do you have to take her now? Why can't you come back on Saturday or trust that I will take her in time to see the judge?

Sheriff: No, my orders are clear that I need to take her now.

Mr. L: But we need Lucy to care for the children in these trying times. My wife is sick with worry over her dying father. Certainly you can understand and let us keep her as long as possible.

Mr. Colby: I think it is time to do as they ask, Mr. Ludlam. Do not worry—I will resolve this issue on Saturday.

(Mr. Ludlam goes upstairs and returns a short time later with Lucy and Mrs. Ludlam)

Mrs. Ludlam: The poor girl is frightened out her wits. She had to be dragged out from under my poor father's death bed. (To Lucy:) Do not worry—my husband will bring you home as soon as he can.

(Sheriff Pratt, Rev. Spear, and Rev. Knights leave with Lucy.)

Scene Four: Saturday, July 12, 1841 at the Court House in Boston. Mr. Colby, Mr. Ludlam, and Rev. Spear are present. Mr. Colby arrives at the Court House with Mr. Ludlam. Lucy is on the other side of the building with her new abolitionist friends from Boston.

Mr. Ludlam: Colby, just look at her! She is carrying on with those people as if they were long-lost family. They have brainwashed her. She has forgotten all that we have done for her. She will never agree to return with us now.

Mr. Colby: Let's just get in there and see what happens.

(Inside the courtroom)

Mr. Colby (addressing Judge Wilde): Your honor, I feel a great disservice has been done to the Ludlam family as well as to their servant, Lucy. She was not their slave, rather a servant given all the freedom of any servant in this state. Not only have the children been deprived of their nurse, Lucy



has imprisoned awaiting this hearing, against her will. Mr. Ludlam did not keep Lucy against her will—this court did. Additionally, this Rev. Spear who swore out the complaint did not even know Lucy’s real name. He called her Laura Fearings. He also could not determine Capt. Dunbar’s first name to be Joseph. How much time did you think he spent investigating the allegations before he made this ridiculous claim?

Judge Wilde: You raise interesting points, Mr. Colby. Perhaps the best way to determine if Lucy was being held against her will, and whether she would like to claim her freedom, is to ask her. (To a court officer:) Please bring Lucy into the courtroom. (To Mr. Colby, Mr. Ludlam, and Mr. Spear:) Gentlemen, please wait in the hallway.

(About fifteen minutes pass before the gentlemen are called back into the courtroom.)

Judge Wilde: I informed Lucy of her rights in this state, which she seemed to understand well. When I asked her whether she would like to remain here in Boston or return to New Bedford to ultimately return to Richmond, VA, she made it known that she would stay in Boston for now. She has already left with some of her friends from this city. We are adjourned.

Transcription – New Bedford Mercury

New Bedford *Mercury*, July 14, 1841

New Bedford, July 10-13

It became our duty to record one of the [most] inhumane acts of brutality committed under the color of law that was ever perpetrated in a civilized community. We shall simply give the facts as they are reported to us, without comment, and leave the public to form their own opinions of the character of the proceedings.

One of our most esteemed citizens. Capt. Jos. Dunbar, has been suffering for several months past, under a most pitiful and lingering disorder, which has at length so far undermined his strength and constitution that little hopes are entertained of his recovery. His physician, about two weeks since, believing that his disorder was approaching a fatal termination, addressed a letter, at the request of the family, to a son-in-law (Mr. H. Ludlum) and daughter, residing in Richmond, Virginia. At the time of the receipt of the letter, they were on a visit at Old Point, about 100 miles this side of Richmond, for the benefit of Mrs. Ludlum's health, with two children, one of them an infant, and a colored servant. Immediately upon the receipt of the alarming intelligence, prompted by the instinct of filial affection, they determined to leave at once for New Bedford, without returning home; in the hope of seeing their father once more alive. The colored girl, whom Mr. Ludlum had hired of her master for a year, accompanied them, with the full knowledge of after her arrival here she would be free to remain or return as she pleased. After their arrival here, about ten days since, she accordingly enjoyed all the privileges which are commonly allowed in this community to persons in service, and went into the streets, and visited when she could be spared, and was under no restraints whatever.

On the evening of Wednesday last, after Capt. Dunbar had taken a final farewell, as he supposed, of family, the family were alarmed by finding the street gradually filling up with a crowd of colored people and soon afterwards by the entrance of an officer with a writ of habeas corpus, from Boston, directing him forthwith to carry the body of the servant before Judge Wilde in Boston. Mr. Ludlum immediately called in a legal advisor and some other friends. The officer also sent for a certain reverend gentleman, whose name will become memorable in connexion [*sic*] with these proceedings, and is believed to have instigated the movement, and to whom the officer was referred by his employers in Boston, when the following extraordinary occurrence took place.

Mr. L stated that the girl was in the house, and that he should do nothing to obstruct or evade the service of the process. It was admitted by the officer that Judge Wilde was at Nantucket, and the case could not be tried at any rate before Saturday morning, but his directions were peremptory to take her immediately into custody and carry her at once to Boston. Under these circumstances, an appeal was made to the Rev. Instigator of the suit, of motives of humanity to permit the girl to remain with the family until Saturday morning. It was represented that Mrs. L [unclear in original] home, was much impaired by her rapid journey, by the grief and excitement occasioned by the alarming illness of her father, that her infant required the constant attention of the servant—her nurse—and that any security that could be demanded, would be given at once, that the girl should reach Boston as early as Judge Wilde. But the Rev. gentleman was deaf to the voice of humanity, and only remarked in reply,

that the officer knew his duty and must perform it. By this time, the crowd of negroes in the street had increased to a pretty large number, and it is known that some of them were armed with bludgeons. The noise had however penetrated to the chamber of the sick man, and it was necessary to communicate to him the cause of it. In order to quiet the tumult it became necessary to deliver the girl to the officer. She had secreted herself under a bed, in order to escape from the officious friends, and could only be persuaded to yield herself under the provision that she go back to Virginia and see her brothers and sisters and cousins, if she wished. She was taken to the house of a responsible clergyman by the sheriff, with a full escort of her pretended friends. She was taken to Boston on Thursday morning. This case will be heard by Judge Wilde, this morning. We shall apprise *[sic]* our reader of the result.

Persons who were present at the house of Capt. Dunbar, represent the scene to have been one of the most distressing they ever witnessed. In the meantime, at a late hour in the night, the feeble mother and the exhausted father, who had wearied themselves with watching the sick, catching such Intervals of repose, day or night, as they could, were thus suddenly left destitute of even the ordinary means of assistance for their children—and the girl, who was as free as air to come and go when and where she pleased, has been imprisoned for three days and two nights, under the same *liberty*. The officer who executed the process, is represented to have conducted himself with perfect courtesy, and whatever blame is attached on account of these proceedings, should fall upon those who could have shown the indulgence asked, but refused.

We are indebted to Mr. Hatch for the following particulars respecting the supposed slave case, to which we alluded on Saturday morning.

The application for habeas corpus was made by the Rev. John M. Spear, a Universalist Minister of New Bedford, in behalf of one Louisa Fearing, whose true name is, however, Lucy Faggins. The petition set forth that she “was unlawfully restrained of her liberty at New Bedford, believed to be of Richmond, Va. and by one Dunbar of New Bedford, whose Christian name was unknown to the petitioner, but whose actual designation is Captain Dunbar; that Ludlam had brought her as a slave from Virginia, and that Ludlam and Dunbar kept her confined in Dunbar’s house in New Bedford, in order that Ludlam might carry her back to Virginia as a slave”

This petition was sworn to by Spear. The fact that he did not know the girl’s true name, nor the name of Capt. Dunbar, may serve to show how accurate and extensive the inquiries made by him had been.

The case was heard by Judge Wilde at the Court House in Boston, at 8 o’clock on Saturday morning—
(Copy ends)

(Top of next column)

..., Judge Wilde returned and stated that he had informed the girl of her legal rights, and had left it to her own choice, whether to remain in Boston or return to New Bedford, and that she had chosen the former, for the present. Whereupon she was taken possession of by her new friends.

The course which Mr. Ludlam has pursued in this unpleasant business has been, in the highest degree, many and honorable, and has elicited from all quarters the warmest expression of sympathy and admiration. It will be seen that he met every allegation in Spear's affidavit, with a positive and emphatic denial, and that from the beginning to the end he has done nothing to justify or excuse it.

We have received a communication on this subject, signed by John M. Spear and Joel Knights, in which they endeavor to excuse themselves for the extraordinary course they pursued. We may publish it at a future day. It is excluded from our columns by a press of other matters, this morning.

[For the *Mercury*]

Mr. Editor: Unwilling as I have always been to come before the public in a newspaper controversy, I feel compelled under the circumstances that have recently occurred in this town, to waive my former prejudices, and to repel the vile misrepresentations that have been made in one of the public journals of the place, and to express to my numerous friends here my sense of sympathy and kindness they have exhibited towards me throughout the whole of this unpleasant affair. At the time I heard of the extreme illness of my father-in-law, Capt. Dunbar, I was staying at Old Point Comfort, near Norfolk, in Virginia, and 150 miles from Richmond, the place of my residence. Not wishing to encounter delay by returning to Richmond, and having two young children with me, I was compelled to bring one of their hired servants with them, to take care of them. I accordingly sent for Lucy, (the heroine of this controversy,) told her of my determination to leave for New Bedford the next morning, and after distinctly stating to her, that if she accompanied us she would be a free girl as soon as she reached Philadelphia, asked her whether she would avail herself of the privilege or return with us to Richmond. She chose the latter, and said she never wished to be separated from her brothers and sisters. We left Old Point the next morning, and arrived in Philadelphia the evening of the day after. There were negro servants at the house we stopped at in Philadelphia, who had frequent opportunities of conversing with Lucy; and on board the boat to New York the next day, she was again brought into contact with them. We arrived in New Bedford the third day after leaving Virginia, and from the time of our arrival up to the night of Lucy's arrest, _[unclear in original]_ days, no restraint whatever had been placed upon her other than that imposed usually upon servants in this town. She spent several whole days away from us, with the children, visiting our friends about town, and went with them when and where she pleased, without creating a suspicion on the minds of any of the family that she would leave us. Indeed, so great was my confidence in her attachment to us, and in her strong desire to return to her relatives in Virginia, that I felt no uneasiness in regard to her, and did not know half the time where she was. I have in passing through the kitchen frequently observed that she had negro visitors, but never by word or look have I expressed to her or to them any disapproval. Having now satisfied every one I trust that she was not "*imprisoned and restrained of her liberty*" as set forth in the writ—I will notice some other statements made in the *Register* yesterday morning purporting to be facts, which I pronounce a garbled statement and a _[unclear in original]_ of falsehoods. From one statement the public would be made to believe that I had treated a clergyman and two ladies with rudeness by refusing them admittance to the house. Now the only persons who ever called at the front door to enquire for Lucy were two negro women and a negro man, and if they had applied at the kitchen as the other negroes did, they would not have met with any

interference, but _[unclear in original]_ Lucy and talked with her as long as they pleased. In regard to the ridiculous account said, to have been given the girl by the family, of stealing negroes to sell them, and of cart-loads of them being taken away in chains and sold, I will only refer to the statement made to Judge Wilde by the girl, and reported by the Boston *Atlas* of yesterday, _[unclear in original]_ that no such account was given her by the family, but that it was an idea of her own.

The account published in the *Mercury* of the arrest of this girl, is correct, and it was not until I had assured her that no harm should happen to her, and promised to go down with her to where she was to be confined for the night, that I could induce her to deliver herself to the officer.

It is stated in the editorial article in the *Register* upon this subject, that it was Capt. Dunbar's wish that the girl should be set at liberty when she first arrived here. Mr. Spear SWORE in Boston that Capt. Dunbar was restraining her in his house that she might be sent back to Virginia as a slave. Which of these statements is the public to believe?

After parting with her the next morning at the Depot, I never saw her again until I met her in the Court room in Boston, surrounded by a crowd of white and black abolitionists, who were in constant conversation with her—even then I did not exchange a word with her, she went fresh from their hands into the Judge's room and, intoxicated with all the glowing accounts that been given her of life in Boston, it is not strange that she at the moment forgot her former ties, and concluded to remain with her new friends. I do not hesitate to pronounce the conduct of those wretches who took a prominent part in the affair on the night of the arrest, as barbarous and disgraceful. Under the cloak of Religion and Law, they committed acts that could disgrace barbarians.

In justice to the community, I have only to add that this was the work of a handful of men, who have separated themselves from the majority of their townsmen and that this outrage must not be identified with New Bedford or New England. I shall now dismiss this subject so far as the public is concerned, but shall seek to redress my private wrongs and bring J.M. Spear before that tribunal where I and my friends were summoned by him.

HENRY LUDLAM

The Truth According to the *Morning Register*

Scene One: Late June, 1841. The Ludlums are vacationing in Old Point Comfort, VA, about 150 miles from their home in Richmond, VA.

Mr. Ludlam: My dear wife, I have just received an extremely distressing correspondence, a letter from your father's physician. I am afraid that your father's health has failed him, and his doctor believes that he may die soon.

Mrs. Ludlam: We have to leave for New Bedford right away.

Mr. Ludlam: Of course, but shouldn't we return the children and Lucy to our home in Richmond first?

Mrs. Ludlam: There is no time. I cannot risk not seeing my father again before he dies.

Mr. Ludlam: You know the laws are different up there. They passed a law five years ago saying that a slave would be free if she was brought to Massachusetts by her own master.

Mrs. L: Don't be ridiculous—our Lucy would never leave us. Here, I'll show you. (calling with raised voice, towards door) Lucy! Come here right away. I need to speak to you.

(Lucy, an 18- to 20-year-old slave, hired from her master to work with the Ludlum family for a year, enters the room.)

Mrs. L: Lucy, we have to leave for New Bedford right away, as my father is quite ill and may die.

Mr. L: You need to know that you will be considered free up there, and you will not have to return with us. While we are there, I caution you to not to speak to the free colored people. They have been known to capture cart loads of people like you by promising a glorious life of freedom, only to sell them off in their markets.

Lucy: I will return to Richmond with you and continue to take care of your children. Not only that, I could not stay there and never see my brothers and sisters again.

Mrs. L: See, I knew Lucy would make the right choice. We have nothing to worry about.

Scene Two: Ten days after arriving at the home of Captain Joseph Dunbar, New Bedford, MA. The Rev. Thomas James and three members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on South Second Street approach the house.

Rev. James: I really appreciate your coming along with me on this visit.

Woman 1: Well, when I heard that they are keeping a slave in this house, how could I not come to speak to her?

Woman 2: The poor thing probably does not even know her rights here.

Rev.: Henry! Come along. What are you doing over there?

Henry: Just go along without me. I'll catch up.

(Rev. James knocks on the door, and Mr. Ludlam himself answers.)

Mr. L: What business do you have here?

Rev. James: We are from the AME Zion Church, and we wish to speak with your slave.

Mr. L: Why, she is my slave and my servant, and you will not speak to her. You must leave now.

(Henry Johnson goes to the back of the house and knocks on the door. Lucy answers.)

Henry: Hey, I think I know you, but isn't your name Laura?

Lucy (looking around, afraid): Why are you here?

Henry: People at my church heard that there was a slave girl in this house, so a few of us came over to check on you. We wanted to make sure that you knew that by Massachusetts law you are free now. We are here to help you get settled into your new life of freedom. All you have to do is come with us.

Lucy (still looking around, anxious, speaking in a whisper): Keep your voice down. I do not want the servants to hear you. They will certainly report back to my master. He told me that people would come and tell me I could be free if I wanted to be, but he said that was just a trick so you could sell me. I would like to stay here and be free, but I am afraid to go with you.

Henry: Let me talk to the reverend at my church. I'm sure he will know what to do.

Scene Three: Wednesday, July 9, 1841 at one of the regular weekly Social Anti-Slavery Meetings. In attendance are Rev. James, Henry Jackson, and Rev. Spear, abolitionist and minister of Universalist Church, as well as two others.

Rev. James: Rev. Spear, I sure am grateful to you for handling this slave girl case for us.

Rev. Spear: Well, when you and Henry presented those details to the Executive Board of our New Bedford Anti-Slavery Society, we had no choice but to take legal action. All I did was file a writ of habeas corpus.

Henry: What is that?

Rev. Spear: It is a legal way of finding out whether someone is being detained unfairly or illegally. The Ludlams are keeping the slave girl in Capt. Dunbar's home against her will. By law, they must not do that, so Judge Wilde has been assigned to hear the case on Saturday when he gets back from Nantucket. The sheriff should be here very soon to take her back to Boston with him until the hearing.

(Sheriff Pratt enters.)

Sheriff Pratt (introduces self and meets others): I am here to take the slave girl safely back to Boston. I would prefer to have two witnesses. Are you available to come with me, Rev. Spear, since you swore out the complaint?

Rev. Spear: Absolutely. Whom do you want as your second witness?

Sheriff: I do not know many people here in New Bedford, but I do know Rev. Knights, minister of the Church. Could one of you go get him for me?

Henry: I can go get him.

Sheriff: Before you go, were you the one who spoke to the girl?

Henry: Yes, sir.

Sheriff: I think you need to be close by when we go to the house, just in case we need you to report what the slave girl said to you. In fact, I think there should be at least a dozen people on the street, a few houses down, to make sure that the Ludlams do not try to sneak the girl out of the house.

Henry: That is not a problem. We can do that.

Rev. James: Just remember to keep everything quiet. There is a dying man in the house.

Sheriff: I just hope everything goes quietly, and I'll be on my way with the slave girl quickly. I do not think Mr. Ludlam will be pleased to see me or hear my business, so I hope there is no trouble.

Scene Four: Sheriff Pratt, Rev. Knights and Rev. Spear arrive at Capt. Dunbar's house. About fifteen free negroes, including Henry Johnson, are stationed down the street, observing the house. (Sheriff Pratt knocks on the door. A servant answers and, upon Sheriff Pratt's request, gets Mr. Ludlam.)

Mr. Ludlam: Gentlemen, what business do you have here?

Sheriff Pratt: I am here to serve a writ of habeas corpus which states that I must deliver your slave to Boston for a hearing with Judge Wilde. It is against our laws to keep a person against her will. The Reverends Spear and Knights are here as my witnesses.

Mr. Ludlam: I think there has been some misunderstanding. We are not keeping anyone, especially Lucy, against her will. Please come in, gentlemen, and make yourselves comfortable in our parlor while I send for my lawyer, Mr. Colby.

(A short time later, Mr. Colby and several friends from New Bedford arrive at Capt. Dunbar's house.)

Mr. Colby (examining the writ of habeas corpus): This looks in order, Mr. Ludlam. I am afraid that you will have to relinquish the girl to Sheriff Pratt even if you do not agree with the order. I will have a chance to explain that writ is wrong when you see the judge.

Mr. Ludlam: You cannot be serious. My wife is distraught over her father's condition. He may die at any time. Can't you arrange a delay in the proceedings?

Mr. Colby: When is she scheduled to appear before Judge Wilde?

Sheriff: Actually, Judge Wilde is on Nantucket Island right now and is scheduled to hear this case on Saturday.

Mr. Ludlam: Then why do you have to take her now? Why can't you come back on Saturday or trust that I could take her in time to see the judge?

Sheriff: Well, that would be authorizing bail and I cannot do that.

Mr. L: How about you, Rev. Spear? You swore out this complaint—can't you approve bail for Lucy?

Rev. Spear: Of course I cannot do that. I am not a judge.

Mr. L (pulling the sheriff aside): Sheriff Pratt, maybe I could offer the funds to keep you comfortable here in New Bedford until Saturday, when you could return with the writ.

Sheriff: I hope you are not offering me a bribe, as that is illegal, sir.

Mr. L: No, you misunderstand. We need to Lucy to care for the children in these trying times. My wife is sick with worry over her dying father. Certainly you can understand and let us keep her as long as possible.

Rev. Spear (overhearing the last part of the conversation): Sheriff Pratt has no choice other than to follow the order. We have been waiting in your parlour for almost three hours. It is nearly 10 o'clock, and the sheriff needs to make his way back to Boston. Think of your father-in-law. He should not have us here any longer than necessary. Will you please relinquish the girl?

Mr. Colby: I think it is time to do as they ask, Mr. Ludlam. Do not worry—I will resolve this issue on Saturday.

(Mr. Ludlam goes upstairs and returns a short time later with Lucy, who looks calm and leaves without hesitation, accompanied by Sheriff Pratt, Rev. Spear, and Rev. Knights. The crowd of fifteen negroes, who had been waiting quietly outside, disperses once Lucy is outside the home of Capt. Dunbar.)

Scene Five: Saturday, July 12, 1841 at the Court House in Boston. Mr. Colby, Mr. Ludlam and Rev. Spear are present.

Mr. Colby (addressing Judge Wilde): Your honor, I feel a great disservice has been done to the Ludlam family, as well as to their servant, Lucy. She was not their slave, rather a servant given all the freedom of any servant in this state.

Judge Wilde: You raise an interesting point, Mr. Colby. Perhaps the best way to determine if Lucy was being held against her will, and whether she would like to claim her freedom, is to ask her. (To a court officer:) Please bring Lucy into the courtroom. (To Mr. Colby, Mr. Ludlam and Mr. Spear:) Gentlemen, please wait in the hallway.

Mr. Ludlam (in the hallway, pulling Mr. Colby close to him and whispering): Colby, you must do something more. In our haste to get here, I did not get permission from her master to take Lucy out of Virginia. If I do not return to Richmond with her, I will owe her master three times her value. That is \$1800.00.

Mr. Colby: But I already put it in the court record that she was not a slave. Just wait—let's see if Lucy tells Judge Wilde that she wants to stay with you.

(About fifteen minutes pass before the gentlemen are called back into the courtroom.)

Judge Wilde: I informed Lucy of her rights in this state, which she seemed to understand well. When I asked her whether she would like to remain here in Boston or return to New Bedford to ultimately return to Richmond, Virginia, she made it known that she would prefer to stay in Boston for now. She has already left with some of her friends from this city. We are adjourned.

Transcription of *The Morning Register*

THE MORNING REGISTER

Friday, July 9, 1841

RESCUE OF A SLAVE—We learn that a colored female was taken from the house of Joseph Dunbar, Esq., in this place on Wednesday evening, on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and yesterday conveyed to Boston, where a hearing of her case will be had before the Supreme Court to-morrow. She was brought here a few days since from Richmond, Va., as a servant, by a member of Mr. D's family.

Saturday, July 10, 1841

THE SLAVE CASE—We received a communication last evening containing a full statement of the facts connected with the rescue of a female slave in this place. It came too late for to-day's paper, but shall appear on Monday.

Monday, July 12, 1841

We find the following preamble of a most false and exaggerated statement in the *Mercury* of Saturday last.

“It becomes our duty to record one of the most inhumane acts of brutality committed under the color of law, that was ever perpetrated in a civilized community. We shall simply give the facts as they are reported to us, without comment, and leave the public to form their own opinions of the character of the proceeding.”

Who, on reading the above, did not stand aghast, feel their hair stand on end, their blood to freeze in their veins, and involuntarily drop the paper from their hands through fear for their own safety? But let us examine this horrid outrage. The facts are these—Mrs. Ludlam (a daughter of Capt. Joseph Dunbar) came here with her husband, from Richmond, Va., to visit her sick father, bringing a slave girl, 18 or 20 years of age, with them. It soon became known that the slave was here, and the abolitionists resolved to make an attempt to set her at liberty. Accordingly legal measures were resorted to, a writ of *habeas corpus* obtained, and the girl was removed to Boston.

Now comes the cold blooded atrocity, the horrible outrage, “such as was never before perpetrated in any civilized community.” “You that have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now.” The *Mercury* says:

“On the evening of Wednesday last, after Capt. Dunbar had taken a final farewell, as he supposed, of family, the family were alarmed by finding the street gradually filling up with a crowd of colored people and soon afterwards by the entrance of an officer with a writ of *habeas corpus*, from Boston, directing him forthwith to carry the body of the servant before Judge Wilde in Boston.”

Now we are credibly informed that the number of colored people did not, at any time during the evening exceed fifteen or sixteen, they were not armed with bludgeons, as stated in the *Mercury*; they stationed themselves several rods distant from the house, and remained perfectly quiet. Their object was to prevent the inmates of the house from smuggling the slave away.

The next scene in the tragedy—so feelingly touched upon by the *Mercury*—is an act of unparalleled filial affection. The lady who had instilled into the mind of her servant such a frightful

picture of this place, (see communication in another column) informs the girl that a posse of men and an officer were below after her, and that she must secrete herself. The *Mercury* says she did secrete herself under a bed, in order to escape from the officer. It has been said too, that she was *dragged* from under the sick man's bed. If so, it must have been done by some member of the family or their friends, as the girl was first seen by the officer in front entry; she then appeared to be perfectly calm, not withstanding the freight she had been thrown into, and did not manifest the least reluctance at going with him.

The officer was informed before he went to the house that a sick man was requested to there, and was conducting his business with as little noise as possible. If Mr. Ludlam had been equally desirous of preventing a noise, on account of the sick man, he would have given the girl up without delay. But instead of so doing, legal advisers were sent for, and the officer was detained at the house from an early hour in the evening until about ten o'clock. He was requested and offered money to delay the service of the writ, but it was no go.

The contemptible sneers thrown out by the *Mercury* against a "Reverend Gentleman," and a statement that it was in his power to authorize the officer to take bail, or delay the service of the writ, are too silly to reply to. Perhaps the lawyer who wrote the article had an object in view, which probably was to create a prejudice against the "Reverend Gentleman."

We are happy to inform our readers, that the sick man was much more comfortable the day following this "*horrible outrage*" than he had been for many days, previous. This perhaps was owing to the reflection that a human being had been snatched from the jaws of oppression and set at liberty. We are informed that it was Capt. D's wish that the girl should be set at liberty when she first arrived here.

The Slave Case—We learn that the case of Louisa Fearing—the girl who was taken from this place to Boston on a writ of habeas corpus—came up in the Supreme Court on Saturday last.. A complaint was entered against Henry Ludlam, of Richmond, Va., for unlawfully holding the girl in slavery. Mr Ludlam's counsel denied that the girl was held as a slave, and stated that she had not been subject to any more restraint than servants usually are, and *that if she chose to return to New Bedford with him, he would take her back.*

Judge Wilde, after a hearing of the case, decided that the girl should go free, and therefore ordered her to be set at liberty.

We believe the girl did not return with Mr. Colby, but chose to remain with her friends in Boston.

This affair will probably put Mr. Ludlam to some trouble and expense on his return to Virginia. She did not belong to him, but was hired of her master for a certain occasion; and the laws of Virginia will subject him to a fine of three times the value of the slave for taking her out of the State without the consent of her master. The girl was valued at \$600.

[For the *Morning Register*]
TO THE PUBLIC

As sundry false reports are in circulation relative to the taking possession of the girl at the house of Captain Dunbar, it is deemed due to the public to disabuse their minds of those falsehoods by making the following plain statement of facts. It having been learnt that there was a Slave Girl there, the Rev. Mr. James, in company with two ladies, called at the house on Monday last, and requested to see the girl; they were told they could not see her. Mr. James says, why can we not see her. The gentleman (probably Mr. Ludlam) replied, she is a Slave and my Servant, you shall have no conversation with her, and I wish you to go away. Subsequently another person had an interview with her; to whom she stated that she wished to have her freedom, but that she had been told that the Abolitionists and Colored people of New Bedford were very bad people, and she must not go out, or have any thing to say to them, as it would be their object to entice her away for the purpose of selling her, and that it was an every day occurrence for cart loads of Colored people to be sold in our market and sent away in chains. These statements having been made to the Executive Board of the New Bedford Anti-Slavery Society, the Board saw no other way of proceeding than to procure a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, which was done, and an officer of Boston came on to serve it. On his arrival here he stopt [*sic*] at a house where one of the regular weekly Social Anti-Slavery Meetings was being held. Five or six persons had there assembled, without the least knowledge of the Slave Case. Having made known his business, he requested that two persons might accompany him to witness what took place, and having no acquaintance with any one but the Rev. Mr. Knights, he requested that he might be sent for, which was accordingly done. He also requested that those persons present, or some others should station themselves at a short distance from the house, to prevent any attempt being made to smuggle the girl away. They accordingly took their station some rods from the house without the least noise, and totally unarmed, whilst the officer, accompanied by the Rev. Messers. Knights and Spear, proceeded to the house and inquired from Mr. Ludlam. On making known their business they were politely shown into the parlour, which was the only room in the house that they entered. They saw no bed or sick person whilst there, and the first they saw of the Slave Girl was on her being introduced into the entry by some member of the family. She appeared to be perfectly composed and cheerful, accompanied the officer without the least apparent hesitation or reluctance, and manifested not at the time of leaving here in the cars for Boston. ONE OF THE BOARD
New Bedford, July 9th.

We, the subscribers, have examined the above, and we desire to say that the statements therein made are substantially correct. Perhaps, however, we ought to say that we did not go into the house immediately, but remained near it, according to the request of the officer, until we deemed it proper to see him. He then invited us to walk in. We wish also to state that Messers. Ludlam and Colby treated us in a civil and gentlemanly manner.

JOHN M. SPEAR,
JOEL KNIGHTS

Morning Register – New Bedford, Wednesday, July 14, 1841

Page 2, Column 2

Mr. Henry Ludlam—the unfortunate gentleman from the South, made an attempt in yesterday’s *Mercury*, to tell his own story concerning the loss of his hired slave Lucy. He says he told Lucy, before they left Virginia, that if she accompanied them she would be a free girl as soon as they reached Philadelphia—that Lucy replied she never wished to be separated from her brothers and sisters and that she promised to return with him; upon the strength of this promise and her supposed attachment to his family, he brought her on here and felt no uneasiness about her leaving him. He said the statements made in the *Register* are “garbled and a tissue of falsehoods,” but the accounts published in the *Mercury* are correct! He says he didn’t treat two ladies and a clergyman with rudeness, but admits that he did “interfere” a little with “two negro women and a negro man” because they applied for admission at the front, instead of the kitchen door! He denies they told Lucy she must not go out, nor have any thing to say to the abolitionists and colored people, and never told her that it was an every day occurrence [*sic*] for cart loads of colored people to be sold in our market and sent away in chains; that, he says, was an idea of her own. He says that all who were instrumental in rescuing the slaves were wretches, and pronounces their interference as barbarous and disgraceful conduct. The gentleman concludes his article by informing the public that he shall seek to redress his private wrongs by prosecuting Rev. J.M. Spear, as the leader of those who have caused him so much trouble.

The above is the substance of Mr. Ludlum’s communication. In reply to his remarks concerning the statements made in our paper, we have only to say, that we suppose the facts to be correct, as they were communicated to us by eye witnesses, and gentlemen whose character entitle them to the fullest confidence and belief.

Finding Freedom in New Bedford

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

Journey 2 From Samuel Nixon, Enslaved Man, to Dr. Thomas Bayne, Free Man and Surgeon Dentist

New Bedford was considered “one of the greatest assylums [sic] of the fugitives,” as whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan put it; to runaway slaves like George Teamoh, the city was “our magnet of attraction.”



This curriculum-based lesson plan is one in a thematic set on the Underground Railroad using lessons from other National Parks. Also are:

[Hampton National Historic Site](#)

Hampton Mansion: Power Struggles in Early America

To print individual documents in this set right click the name in the bookmark on left and select print pages.

Included in this lesson are several pages of supporting material. To help identify these pages the following icons may be used:



To indicate a Primary Source page



To indicate a Secondary Source page



To Indicate a Student handout



To indicate a Teacher resource



[New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park](#) tells the story of New Bedford the mid-19th century’s preeminent whaling port and for a time “the richest city in the world.”

The whaling industry employed large numbers of African-Americans, Azoreans, and Cape Verdeans. New Bedford’s role in 19th-century American History was not limited to whaling; it was also a major station on the Underground Railroad moving slaves from the South up North and to Canada.

Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

What were some of the risks and opportunities that Samuel Nixon experienced in his escape from slavery?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|---|--|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the challenges many African Americans faced in 19th-century America. • Explain the risks involved with helping freedom seekers. | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between primary and secondary sources. • Apply information gained from a variety of sources. • Create a persuasive product using text, images, or graphics. |

Materials:

“The Truth According to the New Bedford *Mercury*” script
 “The Truth According to the *Morning Register*” script
 Transcriptions of the following primary sources:
 New Bedford *Mercury*, July 14, 1841
 The *Morning Register*, July 9, July 10, July 12, and July 14, 1841

Teaching/Learning Sequence**Launch:**

Have students examine contemporary political advertisements. Ask them: What do candidates do to try to persuade voters? (They describe their education, family connections, and prior experience; they make promises, use slogans, color, photos, etc.). Have students work in small groups to make a list of the things they find most effective and convincing in campaign ads. Students should discuss their findings and post their lists at the front of the classroom.

Exploration:

Divide the class into small groups. Have each group read “From Samuel Nixon, Enslaved Man, to Dr. Thomas Bayne, Free Man and Surgeon Dentist” and the accompanying letters and translations.

Have each group make a list of Dr. Thomas Bayne’s qualifications to be either a New Bedford City Councilor or United States Congressman from Virginia (minimum of 5 accomplishments, personal traits, etc.). Students should use the posted lists to help them create a campaign poster.

Each group will make a campaign poster for Dr. Thomas Bayne for either the New Bedford City Council or the United States Congress. Have students make a rough draft of the poster. They should think about spacing, style, and general presentation.

For this assessment, students will use a “RAFT” format (see below).

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ROLE: | Campaign team |
| AUDIENCE: | Voters of New Bedford or Virginia |
| FORMAT: | Campaign poster |
| TOPIC and Strong Verb: | Convince voters to elect Dr. Thomas Bayne based on his qualifications. |

Assessment:

After editorial approval, students will create a final version of the campaign poster.

From Samuel Nixon, Enslaved Man, to Dr. Thomas Bayne, Free Man and Surgeon Dentist

Samuel Nixon was born into slavery in North Carolina in either 1821 or 1824. He made his first attempt to escape slavery in 1844. However, Sam was caught and sent to jail. There he stayed until Dr. Charles F. Martin, a dentist, purchased him and brought him to Norfolk, Virginia.

Dr. Martin was impressed with how smart Sam was. He taught him to read and write. He also began training him to practice dentistry. Sam became very skilled. Dr. Martin had him keep the accounting books of his business and personal life. He also trained him to tend to patients. He even sent him out to do house calls. Sam estimated that Dr. Martin's business earned about \$3,000 a year. Of that, about \$1,000 came from Sam's work, but Sam was never paid. Eventually, Sam married another slave named Edna, and the couple gave birth to a daughter named Elizabeth. Edna and Elizabeth were owned by a hardware merchant in Norfolk.

Because Sam could come and go around Norfolk, he met a lot of people in the city. He began acting as an agent for the Underground Railroad, helping slaves escape from Norfolk.

In 1855, Sam received an unsigned letter. It warned him that his role in the Underground Railroad might have become known. He knew he had to escape—and quickly, leaving his family behind. He left Norfolk by sea under a blanket of darkness with two other men. Their plan was to sail to Philadelphia. For some reason, the ship could only bring the fugitives as far as a town near Cape Island, New Jersey. From there, the group made its way to Salem, New Jersey.

Once in Salem, Sam went to the home of a woman named Abigail Goodwin. She believed in freedom for all and was an active member of the anti-slavery movement. Goodwin welcomed Samuel and the others into her home. She knew right away that Sam was unusual. He spoke of reading, bookkeeping, and even of being a dentist. She thought he may be an imposter. She wrote to William Still at the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, advising him that Sam was on his way.

After several days, Sam and his friends made it to Philadelphia, where they were welcomed by the Vigilance Committee. The Committee thought that Canada was the safest place for them to be, but Sam had another idea. Sam wanted to go to New Bedford, Massachusetts, and practice dentistry there.

Once in New Bedford, Sam met many of his old friends from Norfolk. He changed his name to Dr. Thomas Bayne and became a surgeon and dentist. Dr. Bayne had an office at 22 Cheapside. (This is approximately where the New Bedford Public Library is currently located.) Dr. Bayne remained in contact with William Still and the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia. He thanked Still for all he had done to help fugitive slaves.

Thomas Bayne became a well-known speaker. He spoke at anti-slavery meetings and other meetings as well. In 1860 he was elected to the office of city counselor on the New Bedford City Council.

At the end of the Civil War, Dr. Bayne went back to Norfolk and continued his political career. In May of 1865, he chaired a public meeting at which eight civil rights resolutions were passed. People attending the meeting spoke against race discrimination and declared that Virginia was loyal to the Union. They also demanded equal voting rights for black and for white Americans.

In 1867, Thomas Bayne was elected as a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention. There, he was part of a group of both whites and blacks. Members tried to pass a law that would provide free public education for all. They wanted black and white children to go to school together. However, the bill did not pass. It would not be until the next century that children would be able to attend integrated schools. Dr. Bayne also ran for a seat in the United States Congress. At first, it seemed that Bayne had won, but a recount showed that he had lost by only a small number of votes.

Dr. Bayne remained active in medicine until 1887. Besides being a dentist and a politician, he was also a minister at a local church. . According to historian John T. Kneebone, Dr. Thomas Bayne's life story is one of the most interesting stories in all of Virginia's history.

SALEM, 3 mo., 25, '55.

DEAR FRIEND:—Thine of the 22d came to hand yesterday noon.

...Samuel Nixon is now here, just come—a smart young man—they will be after him soon. I advised him to hurry on to Canada; he will leave here to-morrow, but don't say that he will go straight to the city. I would send this by him if he did. I am afraid he will loiter about and be taken—do make them go on fast—he has left. I could not hear much he said—some who did don't like him at all—think him an impostor—a great brag—said he was a dentist ten years. He was asked where he came from, but would not tell till he looked at the letter that lay on the table and that he had just brought back. I don't feel much confidence in him—don't believe he is the one thee alluded to. He was asked his name—he looked at the letter to find it out. Says nobody can make a better set of teeth than he can. He said they will go on to-morrow in the stage—he took down the number and street of the Anti-slavery office—you will be on your guard against imposition—he kept the letter thee sent from Norfolk. I had then no doubt of him, and had no objection to it. I now rather regret it. I would send it to thee if I had it, but perhaps it is of no importance.

He wanted the names taken down of nine more who expected to get off soon and might come here. He told us to send them to him, but did not seem to know where he was going to. He was well dressed in fine broad-cloth coat and overcoat, and has a very active tongue in his head. But I have said enough—don't want to prejudice thee against him, but only be on thy guard, and do not let him deceive thee, as I fear he has some of us here. With kind regards, A. GOODWIN

NEW BEDFORD, June 23d, 1855.

Translation:

Dear Friend, your letter written on the 22nd came yesterday at noon.

...Samuel Nixon just arrived here. He is a smart young man. The slave catchers will be after him soon. I advised him to hurry on to Canada. He will leave here tomorrow, but does not say if he will go directly to Philadelphia. If he was going straight to Philadelphia I would send this letter with him, but I'm afraid he will stay around and be caught by the slave catchers. Please make him continue on his journey right away. He has now gone. I didn't hear too much of what he said, but those who did, did not like him. They think he is not who he says he is. They think he brags a lot. He says he has been a dentist for ten years. He wouldn't answer questions like where he came from or his name until he looked at the letter that he brought with him. I am not convinced that he is who he says he is, and I don't believe he is the one you told me about. He says that nobody can make a better set of teeth than he can. He says he will leave tomorrow and took down the number and street of the Anti-slavery office. Be on your guard. He may be an imposter. He kept the letter that you sent with him from Norfolk. I didn't doubt him when he took it, but now I regret letting him take it.

He wanted me to take down the names of nine more fugitives who are expected to arrive by boat soon and may come here. He told us to send them to him, but he would not tell us where he was going to go. He is well dressed in a nice jacket and coat, and speaks a lot. I have said enough, and I don't want to prejudice you against him. I only want you to be on your guard. Do not let him deceive you as I think he deceived us.

With kind regards, A. GOODWIN

NEW BEDFORD, June 23, 1855

W. STILL:-Sir—I write you this to inform you that I has received my things . . .—I see by the Paper that the under ground Rail Road is in operation. Since 2 weeks ago when Sales' Party was betrayed by that Capt whom we in mass are so anxious to Learn his name—There was others started last Saturday night—They are all my old friends and we are waiting their arrival, we hope you will look out for them they may come by way of Salem, N. J. if they be not overtaken. They are from Norfolk—Times are very hard in Canada 2 of our old friends has left Canada and come to Bedford for a living. Every thing are so high and wages so low They cannot make a living (owing to the War) others are Expected shortly.... My business increases more since I has got an office. Send me a Norfolk Paper or any other to read when convenient.

Let me hear from those People as soon as possible. They consist of woman and child 2 or 3 men belonging to Marsh Bottimore, L. Slosser and Herman & Co—and Turner—all of Norfolk, Va. Truly yours, THOS BAYNE.

Direct to Box No. 516, New Bedford, Mass. Don't direct my letters to my office. Di-rect them to my Box 516. My office is 66 1/2 William St. The same street the Post office is near the city market.

Translation:

To William Still: I am writing to tell you that I received my things. I read that the Underground Railroad is back in operation. Two weeks ago the Sales party was betrayed by that Captain. We in Massachusetts are very anxious to know his name. There was another party of fugitives that left last Saturday night. They are my old friends, and we are waiting for them in New Bedford. Please be on the lookout for them. They may be coming through Salem, New Jersey, if they have not been captured. Times are hard in Canada. Two of our old friends have come to New Bedford. Prices are very high in Canada, and wages are very low. They could not make a living, and others are expected soon from Canada. My business has increased since I got an office. Please send a Norfolk newspaper when you can.

If you see my fugitive friends, let me hear from them as soon as possible. The group contains a woman, a child and two or three men belonging to Marsh Bottimore, L. Slosser and Herman & Co—and Turner—all of Norfolk, VA.

Truly Yours, Thomas Bayne.

Direct my mail to Box Number 516, New Bedford, Massachusetts. Don't direct my letters to my office. Address them to my Box 516. My office is 66 ½ William Street. This is on the same street as the post office, near the city market.

NEW BEDFORD, Jan., 1860. No. 22, Cheapside, opposite City Hall.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—Yours of the 3d inst, reached me safely in the midst of my mis-fortune. I suppose you have learned that my office and other buildings burned down during the recent fire. My loss is \$550, insured \$350.

I would have written you before, but I have been to R. I. for some time and soon after I returned before I examined the books, the fire took place, and this accounts for my de- lay. In regard to the books I am under many obligations to you and all others for so great a piece of kindness, and shall ever feel indebted to you for the same. I shall esteem them very highly for two reasons, first, the way in which they come, that is through and by your Vigilance as a colored man helping a colored man to get such knowledge as will give the lie to our enemies. Secondly—their contents being just the thing I needed at this time. My indebtedness to you and all concerned for me in this direction is inexpressible. There are some books the Doctor says I must have, such as the Medical Dictionary, Physician's Dictionary, and a work on Anatomy. These I will have to get, but any work that may be of use to a student of anatomy or medicine will be thankfully received. You shall hear from me again soon. Truly Yours, THOS. BAYNE.

Translation:

NEW BEDFORD, Jan., 1860. No. 22, Cheapside, opposite City Hall.

My Dear Friend, I received your letter of the third of this month. It reached me in the middle of my misfortune. I suppose you have heard that my office and other buildings were destroyed during the recent fire. My loss is \$550, but I am only insured for \$350. I would have written to you sooner, but I was in Rhode Island for a while. When I returned, I looked at my books, and then the fire took place. This is why I was delayed. Thank you so much for the books you sent to me [medical and dental books]. Thank you and everyone else for their kindness. I will always be indebted to you. I will always prize these books, first because they came from you—a black man helping another black man to gain the knowledge needed to overcome our enemies. Secondly, the contents of the books are exactly what I need. I am very thankful to all of you. There are other books that the doctor said I need, including the medical dictionary, physician's dictionary, and a book on anatomy. I do need to get these, but I will greatly appreciate any books like these that I receive. You will hear from me again soon. Truly yours, Thomas Bayne

NEW BEDFORD, March 18th, 1861. MR. WM. STILL:

—Dear Sir—Dr. Powell called to see me and informed me that you had a medical lexicon [dictionary] for me. If you have such a book for me, it will be very thankfully received, and any other book that pertains to the medical or dental profession. I am quite limited in means as yet and in want of books to prosecute my studies. The books I need most at present is such as treat on midwifery, anatomy, &c. But any book or books in either of the above mentioned cases will be of use to me. You can send them by Express, or by any friend that may chance to come this way, but by Express will be the safest way to send them. Times are quite dull. This leaves me well and hope it may find you and family the same. My regards to your wife and all others.

Yours, &c., THOMAS BAYNE, 22 Cheapside, opposite City Hall.

Translation:

New Bedford, March 18, 1861. Mr. William Still:

Dear Sir—Dr. Powell came to see me and told me that you had a medical dictionary for me. If you have it, I would love to receive it and any other medical or dental books so that I can continue to study. I really need books on childbirth and on the human body, but I will take anything you have to send me. You can send them by Express or by anyone you know who is coming this way, but Express is the best way. Times are quiet. I am well and hope that you and your family are the same. My regards to your wife and all others.

Yours, etc., THOMAS BAYNE, 22 Cheapside, opposite City Hall

Source:

"Dr. Thomas Bayne (1885)," Underground Railroad Digital Classroom, Dickinson College, 2008, http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/ugrr/recollection_bayne.html.

RAFTS Rubric (Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Strong Verb)

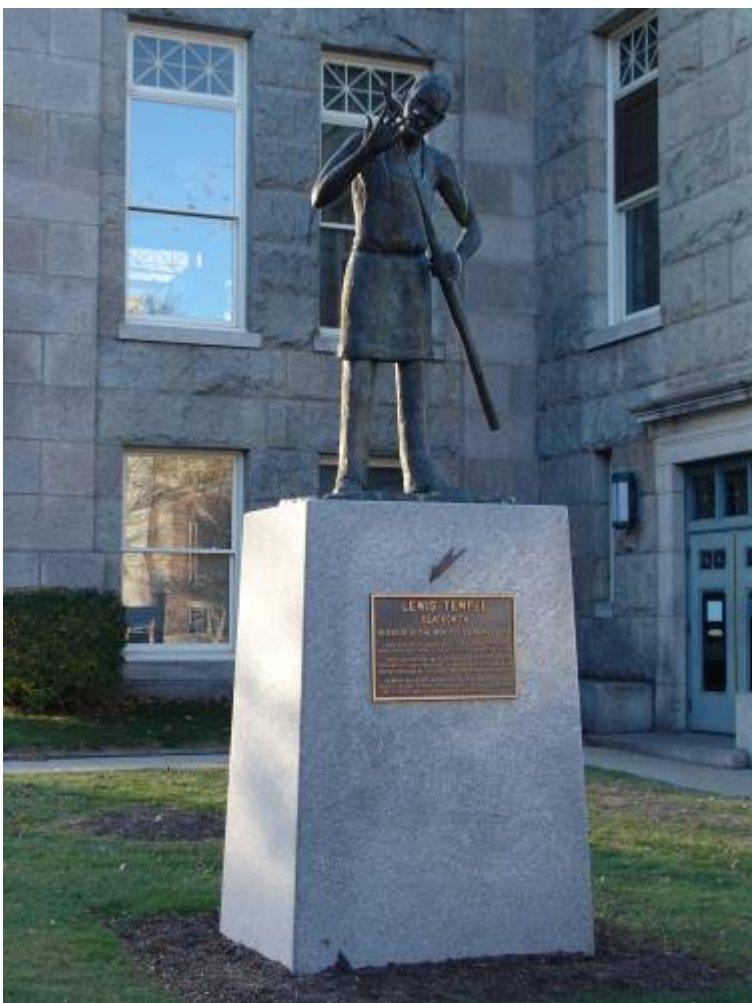
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Accuracy | The information provided in RAFTS is very incomplete and/or has major anachronisms. | The information provided in RAFTS has some small inaccuracies, omissions, or anachronisms. | The information provided in RAFTS is accurate but could use more support or specific details related to subject or time period. | Information and details in RAFTS are always accurate and properly reflect information, ideas, and themes related to the subject and time period. |
| Perspective | Viewpoint or ideas are sketchy and not drawn from time period. RAFTS does not show insight into how characters feel or act during the event(s). | Viewpoint or ideas reflect current concerns rather than time period. RAFTS does not show insight into how characters feel during the event(s). | RAFTS maintains a reasonably consistent point of view and includes ideas relevant to role and time period played. Characters' feelings about the event(s) are evident. | RAFTS maintains clear, consistent point of view. Tone and ideas are relevant to role and time period played. Ideas and information are always tied to role and audience of time. Characters are insightfully shown. |
| Focus | RAFTS wanders from topic; focus cannot be seen or has many side comments. | Central topic and purpose of RAFTS can be seen, but focus is inconsistent. | RAFTS stays largely on topic; its ideas are mostly supported. | RAFTS stays on topic, consistently maintains form or type; details and information are included and directly support the purpose. |
| Use of Class Time | Class time used to disrupt others. Class resources are not or inappropriately used. | Class time and resources used to do work for other classes and/or chat with friends. | Class time used mostly effectively to research the era and create coherent stories. | Class time used efficiently and appropriately to research the era and create interesting, well-written stories; extra effort or involvement beyond class. |
| Presentation | Writing is unclear and has gaps or confusions. Essay is marred by numerous errors, which disrupt reader's understanding. | Writing wanders or is somewhat repetitious. Essay contains several sentence errors and mechanical mistakes that may interfere with clarity of ideas. Audience is irritated by errors. | Writing is clear and direct. Essay contains some fragments, run-ons, or other errors; occasional mechanical mistakes. Audience is informed. | Writing is fluent and interesting. Essay contains few or no fragments or run-on sentences; rare errors or mechanical mistakes result from risk-taking. It engages and informs audience. |

Finding Freedom in New Bedford

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park



Journey 3 Nathan Johnson and the Gibson Family One Family's Story

New Bedford was considered “one of the greatest assylums [sic] of the fugitives,” as whaling merchant Charles W. Morgan put it; to runaway slaves like George Teamoh, the city was “our magnet of attraction.”

This curriculum-based lesson plan is one in a thematic set on the Underground Railroad using lessons from other National Parks. Also are:

[Hampton National Historic Site](#)

Hampton Mansion: Power Struggles in Early America

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Included in this lesson are several pages of supporting material. To help identify these pages the following icons may be used:



To indicate a Primary Source page



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To Indicate a Student handout



To indicate a Teacher resource



[New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park](#) tells the story of New Bedford the mid-19th century’s preeminent whaling port and for a time “the richest city in the world.”

The whaling industry employed large numbers of African-Americans, Azoreans, and Cape Verdeans. New Bedford’s role in 19th-cnetury American History was not limited to whaling; it was also a major station on the Underground Railroad moving slaves from the South up North and to Canada.

Enduring Understanding

People take risks to gain economic, political, and social opportunities and to seek freedom for themselves and/or others.

Essential Question

What risks and opportunities did New Bedford provide for the Gibson family?

| Content Objective/Outcomes | Language Objective/Outcomes |
|---|---|
| <p>The students will be able to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the lives of enslaved and free African Americans in 19th-century America. Explain the significance of the abolition of slavery in Northern states prior to the Civil War. | <p>The students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain information from both primary and secondary sources. Make decisions based on information gathered from multiple sources. |

Vocabulary Words

- Anti-slavery: a term used to describe a person, an action, or an idea that is against slavery
- Bondage: slavery; a state of being bound by law
- Consequence: a result of actions
- Fugitive: a person who is fleeing or escaping from something
- Kidnap: to take someone away against his/her will
- Primary source: original document or writing created at or
- Risk: a possible, usually negative, outcome
- Secondary source: source created by someone either not present when the event took place or removed by time from the event

Materials:

Committee Report, Gibson Papers; *New Bedford Mercury*, February 14, 1840

Committee Report, Gibson Papers; *New Bedford Mercury*, February 23, 1840

The Liberator, March 6, 1840 and March 13, 1840

Grover, Kathryn. *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.

Molyneux to Johnson, 19 April and 17 May 1839, Gibson Papers.

The New England Quarterly, September 1958, Vol. LXI, No. 3. Earl F. Muderink, II. "The Whole Town Is Ringing With It": Slave Kidnapping Charges Against Nathan Johnson of New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1839.

Teaching/Learning Sequence**Launch:**

"No colored man is really free in a slaveholding state. He wears the badge of bondage while nominally free, and is often subject to hardships to which the slave is a stranger; but here in New Bedford, it was my good fortune to see a pretty near approach to freedom on the part of the colored people." Frederick Douglass

As a class, translate this quote so it is more understandable. Discuss what Douglass says about being a free colored man in a slaveholding state. What does he say about New Bedford?

Exploration:

Have the students read "Nathan Johnson and the Gibson Family," or read it to them.

Divide the class into three groups. Have all groups read the letters from Patrick Gibson to Nathan Johnson and the report of the Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society. Each group will then compose a letter to read to the rest of the class.

Instructions for groups:

Group 1: You will compose a letter from the point of view of Betsey's children. You are writing to Betsey's mother Grandma Cloey about the death of Patrick Gibson, your father. You have heard that Molyneux, who now owns you, wants you to return to the South, where you will once again be in bondage. Your letter should be about life as a free person in the North and how you do not want to return to slavery. You should include inferences from Patrick Gibson's letters about what your lives have been like in New Bedford.

Group 2: You will compose a letter from the point of view of Nathan Johnson, defending yourself to the Young Men's Anti-Slavery society against their charges that you kidnapped the Gibsons to return them to slavery. You should describe your role in the lives of the Gibsons, to show the society that you always had the Gibsons' best interests at heart.

Group 3: You will compose a letter from the point of view of Grandma Cloey, Betsey’s mother, and grandmother to Helen and Jane. You were saddened by the death of Patrick Gibson. You know that Molyneux is trying to get your daughter and grandchildren back to Georgia. You now hear rumors that he has told Nathan Johnson that he should send Betsey and the girls to Jamaica. The rumor is that you would be able to go, too—this means freedom! Or is it a lie to get the Gibsons back to Georgia? Write a letter to Nathan Johnson, telling him what you think he should do.

Assessment:

After reading and discussing the letters orally, students will design “Journey Shoes” for any of the people introduced in this lesson.

Possible subjects:

Nathan Johnson
Betsey Gibson
Helen, Jane, or Margaret Gibson
Patrick Gibson
Edward Molyneux
Grandma Cloey

Materials

- A pair of old shoes or a picture of a shoe
- Design symbols that tell their story
- Art supplies

Students will use an old pair of shoes, or a picture of a shoe. They will decorate their shoe with designs that tell the story they are trying to convey. Each student will write a brief description of their decorations and explain how they relate to the person they have chosen.

Connections to Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies

5.12 Describe the harsh conditions and responses of slaves to their conditions. Describe the life of free African Americans in the colonies.

5.31 Describe the significance and consequences of the abolition of slavery in the northern states after the Revolution

English/Language Arts

3.8 Give oral presentations for various purposes, showing appropriate changes in delivery and using language for dramatic effect.

3.9 Use teacher developed assessment criteria to prepare their presentations.

24.3 Apply steps for obtaining information from a variety of sources, organizing information, documenting sources, and presenting research in individual and group projects.

Nathan Johnson and the Gibson Family

Nathan Johnson was probably born into slavery around 1796, but we do not know for sure. His wife Polly was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. She was about ten years older than Nathan. The earliest reports say that Nathan came to New Bedford from Philadelphia. Some reports say that he was a slave in Virginia and may have bought his own freedom.

Nathan and Polly owned several buildings in New Bedford. It was at their Seventh Street home in New Bedford that they housed Frederick Douglass. They probably helped many other freedom-seekers, too.

One family that lived at the Johnson home was the Gibsons. Betsey, her children Helen and Jane, and another related girl, Margaret, had come from Georgia. Patrick Gibson, the children's father, was a white plantation owner. He was the legal owner of Betsey and the children. Patrick wanted his children to go to school and to live with a good family, so he brought them to New Bedford in 1834 and settled them with Nathan and Polly Johnson. Patrick paid for everything Betsey and the children needed.

Patrick Gibson died in 1837. In his will, he left some of his slaves to a man named Edward Molyneux. Among the slaves he willed to Edward were Betsey and the girls, who had been living as free women in New Bedford for three years. Edward wanted them sent back to work for him. He tried several times to get Nathan Johnson to send the Gibsons back, but each time Nathan refused. Nathan did not want the women to have to return to slavery. Then Edward tried something new. He told Nathan that he wanted to send the Gibson family to live with relatives in Jamaica, where slavery was illegal, and the women would be free.

Nathan brought the Gibsons to Newport to put them on a ship, thinking the ship would take them to Jamaica. However, another man had followed them to Newport. This man, Benjamin Rodman, convinced Nathan not to let the women leave. He explained that Edward was trying to trick the women in order to get them back to Georgia. Nathan believed Benjamin, and he and the Gibsons returned to New Bedford.

Nathan's troubles were not over. When the New Bedford Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society heard about Nathan bringing the Gibsons to Newport, they accused him of kidnapping them. They said he wanted to send them back into slavery. A lot of people in New Bedford turned against Nathan and Polly Johnson, even though they had helped many fugitives. The investigation, however, showed that Nathan had done nothing wrong in taking care of the Gibsons.

The Gibson women stayed in New Bedford. By 1855 other former slaves named in Patrick Gibson's will as Molyneux's property were living in town as well.

Interesting and Important Investigation –The Innocent Defended

A meeting of the New Bedford Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Society held February 17, 1840. Reason of Committee appointed Nov. 18, in the case of Nathan Johnson was presented and accepted and to be published.

--JOSEPH CONGDON, Pres. and C. COFFIN, Secretary

At a regular meeting of the Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Society held November 18, 1839, a committee was appointed to investigate the charges against Nathan Johnson. That committee has attended to the duty with which they were charged and present as a result of their investigations as following:

Early in the month of November last this community was thrown into a state of great excitement by statements made at a public meeting that certain persons who had been residing for several years in the family of Nathan Johnson, who had once been a slave, but who had been brought to this town by their master and supported here by him, had been taken by the individual with whom they had a living and carried to Newport by him with all to their taking passage at that place near which they had resided were held in bondage – with a certainty, that would again be their condition, should they return. It was further stated, that had it not been for timely interference of a certain benevolent intervention of this town they would have departed for a vessel in which they had engaged passage and that consequently they would have been reduced to a state of slavery...

[The Society has concluded that Johnson] “cannot be charged with having violated his duty as a faithful guardian of their rights, or as a member of the society.”

Translation: Last November, a committee of the New Bedford Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Society became very concerned about comments made at a public hearing. The comments had to do with the Gibson women, who had been living at the home of Nathan and Polly Johnson for several years. Some said that Nathan Johnson had taken the women to Newport to put them on a ship to return them to slavery. It was also said that if Benjamin Rodman had not stepped in, Johnson would have succeeded in sending them back to slavery.

The Anti-Slavery Society has determined, however, that Johnson did nothing wrong and has taken good care of the Gibsons.

Letter One

First Letter to Nathan Johnson

August 7, 1834

Mr. Johnson

—Captain Howland will inform you, how I was in New York. I did not improve any by the vapor bath, or by medicine I took—it made me a great deal worse. I have got over its bad effects. I start this afternoon for Saratoga Springs, where I shall remain for two weeks—then will proceed to the Falls of Niagara. I shall not be in New Bedford till some time next month or beginning of Oct. I hope Helen, Jane and Margaret are getting along, and improving fast in their learning. Capt. Howland informed me, when I saw him in New York, that Tobey [a boy mentioned as coming to New Bedford with Mr. Gibson] did not know if he was to stay with you or Mr. Cole. I thought you were to board him for his work—if you have no employ for him, I will pay his board. I have letters before I left New York, from Magar Thomas and from Creighton Island. The people are all well excepting Pardon and Nancy.

Yours, Patrick Gibson

—Give my regards to Mrs. Johnson.

Letter Two
Second Letter to Nathan Johnson
October 11, 1834

—Mr. Johnson—I shall send the goods by Capt. Howland and thirty dollars in cash. I think the stuff for cloaks will answer for the children. If the piece of white cloth is too fine, you can exchange it for a piece that may suit better for the purpose—it cost 18 cent a yard.

Be sure and give the children plenty of blankets in the cold winter nights, and anything they want you can get for them. Write me now and then, how they do and how they came on. I shall write you. No peaches to be had. Give my respects to Mrs. Johnson.

Yours, Patrick Gibson

Letter Three

Third Letter to Nathan Johnson
November 17, 1834

Mr. Johnson

—Dear Sir—No doubt the children are anxious to hear from home. I got here three weeks ago after a passage of ten days from New York. I found all here well. Grandma Cloey is anxious to hear from Betsey and the children. Be sure and write to her grandma. I hope they are learning to read fast. Be sure and keep them close at school, and don't let them want for anything that is necessary for their comfort and good. Did the articles I sent from New York by Capt. Howland answer? Billy, Daniel, little Harry and their mother, send their kind thanks for the clothes sent by Tobey. Greenwich is in Savannah with Mr. Molyneux. Tell them that grandma Cloey will come in the summer to see her, and to be a fine girl and learn her book. Grandma Cloey, Lucia, Granny Dido, Nan, Charlotte, Louisa, Cuffee, Tobey and everyone send their love to them all, and "how do." Write me how they are doing at school and give my kind respects to Mrs. Johnson.

I am, dear Sir Patrick Gibson