

The Movement Builds Strength

GUIDING QUESTION *Why did the reform movement gain momentum?*

Gradualism and colonization remained the main goals of antislavery groups until the 1830s. At this time, abolitionists began arguing that enslaved African Americans should be freed immediately. Slavery became America's most pressing social issue.

Making the Case Against Slavery

Massachusetts abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison had a great influence on the antislavery movement. In 1831 he started a newspaper called *The Liberator*.

Garrison was one of the first white abolitionists to call for an immediate end to slavery. He rejected a slow, gradual approach. In the first issue of *The Liberator*, he wrote, "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. . . . I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD."

Garrison was heard. He attracted enough followers to start the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832 and the American Anti-Slavery Society the next year. By 1838, the groups Garrison started had more than 1,000 local branches.

Sarah and Angelina Grimké were two other early abolitionists. The sisters were born in South Carolina to a wealthy slaveholding family. They both moved to Philadelphia in 1832. While living in the North, the Grimké sisters spoke out for both abolition and women's rights.

To show their commitment to abolition, the Grimkés asked their mother to give them their family inheritance early. Instead of money or land, the sisters wanted several of the family's enslaved workers. The sisters immediately freed them.

The Grimkés, along with Angelina's husband Theodore Weld, wrote *American Slavery As It Is* in 1839. This book collected firsthand stories of life under slavery. The book was one of the most powerful abolitionist publications of its time.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was another writer who made a major impact on public opinion. Her 1852 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, became a wildly popular best-seller. The book portrayed slavery as a cruel and brutal system. Some people, however, strongly opposed the book and its message. Sale of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was banned in the South.

Reading **HELPDESK**

Reading Strategy: Summarizing

When you summarize a reading, you find the main idea of the passage and restate it in your own words. Read about the work of William Lloyd Garrison. On a separate sheet of paper, summarize the information in one or two sentences.

African American Abolitionists

Free African Americans in the North especially supported the goal of abolition. Most lived in poverty in cities and had trouble getting good jobs and decent housing. They were often subject to violent attacks. Yet these African Americans were proud of their freedom. They sought to help those who remained enslaved.

African Americans helped organize and lead the American Anti-Slavery Society. They subscribed to *The Liberator*. They also did their own writing and publishing. In 1827 Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm started the country's first African American newspaper *Freedom's Journal*.

Born free in North Carolina and settling in Boston, writer David Walker published a powerful pamphlet against slavery. He challenged African Americans to rebel and overthrow slavery. He wrote, "America is more our country than it is the whites'—we have enriched it with our blood and tears."

In 1830 free African American leaders held a convention in Philadelphia. Delegates met "to devise ways and means for the bettering of our condition." They discussed starting an African American college and encouraging free African Americans to move to Canada.

The Role of Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass is the best-known African American abolitionist. Born into slavery in Maryland, Douglass escaped in 1838. He settled first in Massachusetts.

Frederick Douglass speaks while disorder breaks out at this 1860 abolitionist meeting in Boston, Massachusetts.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Drawing Conclusions Why do you think this abolitionist meeting in a northern city became disorderly?



The Granger Collection, NYC

BIOGRAPHY



Sojourner Truth (1797–1883)

Sojourner Truth was a powerful voice for abolition. Truth worked with William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and others to bring about the end of slavery. She traveled throughout the North and spoke about her experiences in slavery. Sojourner Truth was also an active supporter of the women's rights movement.

► CRITICAL THINKING

Making Connections Why do you think Sojourner Truth later became involved with the women's rights movement?

As a runaway, Douglass faced the danger of capture and a return to slavery. Still, he joined the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. He traveled widely to speak at abolitionist meetings. He even appeared at events in London and the West Indies. Douglass was a powerful speaker who often moved listeners to tears. He also edited the antislavery newspaper *North Star*.

Douglass made his home in the United States because he believed abolitionists must fight slavery at its source. He insisted that African Americans receive not just freedom but full equality with whites as well. In 1847 friends helped Douglass buy his freedom from the slaveholder from whom he had fled in Maryland.

Sojourner Truth

"I was born a slave in Ulster County, New York," Isabella Baumfree began when she told her story to audiences. After a childhood and youth filled with hardship, she escaped in 1826. Then, she officially gained her freedom in 1827 when New York banned slavery. Baumfree later settled in New York City with her two youngest children. In 1843 Baumfree chose a new name. In the biography *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend*, she explained: "The Lord [named] me Sojourner ... Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people."

The Underground Railroad

Abolitionists sometimes risked prison and death to help African Americans escape slavery. They helped create a network of escape **routes** from the South to the North called the Underground Railroad.

Underground Railroad "passengers"—that is, escaping African Americans—traveled by night, often on foot. The *North Star* guided them in the direction of freedom. During the day they rested at "stations"—barns, basements, and attics—until the next night. The railroad's "conductors" were whites and African Americans who guided the runaways to freedom in the northern United States or Canada. Harriet Tubman was the most famous conductor.

The Underground Railroad helped as many as 100,000 enslaved people escape. It gave hope to many more.

✓ PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying What were Underground Railroad "stations"?

Reading HELPDESK



Build Vocabulary: Origins of Sayings

"Underground Railroad" is a metaphor. A metaphor describes one thing by calling it something else. Readers imagine a train track that is literally underground. This helps them understand that the Underground Railroad was a method for moving people that was not visible to the public.

Academic Vocabulary

route line of travel