

LINAH ROSS, Harriet Tubman's older sister, was 13 years old when Hatt was born. They lived together as any other slave family on a Maryland tobacco plantation until Linah was suddenly sold South at auction when Hatt was ten.



For slaves, plantation life was filled with hardship. Working sunrise to sunset, six days a week, slaves had little or no time and money to spend on themselves. Life was harsh. Still somehow, the spirit of most slaves simply could not be broken. Some owners did treat their property better than others. But it was rare for an owner—especially in the Deep South where Linah was sent—to show real kindness or understanding to his slaves.

On a plantation, a slave woman might be given any one of a variety of jobs. If she were a skilled seamstress, she would make clothing for those on the plantation. Other slave women became midwives, assisting in childbirth and helping to raise the children, black and white. If Linah was a talented cook, she might be in charge of making food for the owner's family in the plantation house. These duties would leave Linah little time to raise her own family, but still, she would consider herself lucky to work as a "house slave." Most slave women worked in the fields, laboring alongside the men under the most brutal conditions.

On each of Hatt's daring rescues, she wanted desperately to find her lost sister. But because Linah was sold into the Deep South, there was little chance of ever finding her again. And Hatt never did. However, Linah's daughter, Kessiah, would be the first relative Hatt helped escape from slavery.



If she were still alive in 1850, Linah would have been against the Fugitive Slave Act because it made it all the more difficult for her people to gain their freedom.



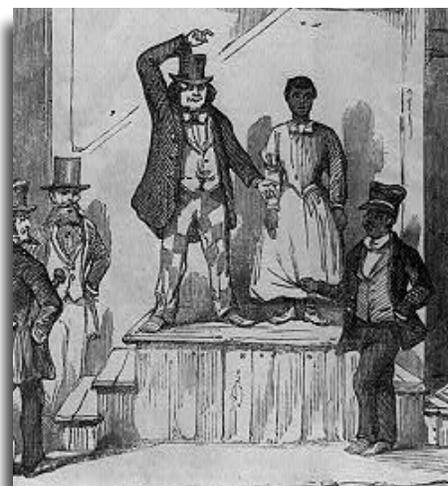
SOPHIE ROSS, Harriet Tubman's older sister, was 11 years old when Hatt was born. They lived together as any other slave family on a Maryland tobacco plantation until Sophie was suddenly sold South at auction when Hatt was ten.

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On each of Hatt's daring rescues, she wanted desperately to find her lost sister. But because Sophie was sold into the Deep South—1,000 miles or more from her home in Maryland—there was little chance of ever finding her again. And Hatt never did. Sophie, if she was still alive in 1850, would have been deeply opposed to the Fugitive Slave Act because it made it all the more difficult for her people to gain their freedom.





ELLEN AND WILLIAM CRAFT were slaves on a Georgia plantation who grew famous after their daring escape North to freedom.

For slaves, plantation life was filled with hardship. They worked sunrise to sunset, six days a week, with little or no time and money to spend on themselves. While some Masters treated their slaves better than others, most thought of “negroes” not as human beings, but simply as their property.

Ellen and William could stand this harsh life no longer, and decided to escape together once they had married. Instead of simply fleeing from their plantation, the couple devised a plan. Ellen was light skinned, and often mistaken for a white woman instead of a “negress.” So she dressed as a male slaveholder, covering her beardless face with bandages and wearing her arm in a sling so she would not be asked to write. William posed as her slave, assisting his Master on a Northern journey.

Instead of trying to conceal themselves, the Crafts traveled in broad daylight on public transportation. Aboard trains, steamboats and ferries, the couple played their parts perfectly, finally arriving safely in Pennsylvania to enjoy freedom at last.

Once abolitionists heard tell of Ellen and William’s journey, they asked the Crafts to share their story at anti-slavery meetings. The couple rose to fame quickly, speaking in assembly halls across the North. But when the Fugitive Slave Act became law in 1850, the Crafts knew they were in grave danger. Normal citizens—now turned slave catchers—were on the prowl for runaways, and could send the Crafts back South at any moment. To escape this fate they fled to England, where they raised five children. The Crafts returned to the States after the Civil War, once slavery had been abolished forever.





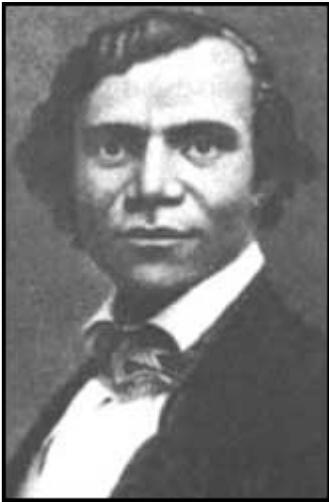
ELIZA HARRIS was a beautiful slave woman on a Kentucky plantation who escaped with her child to find freedom in the North.

For slaves, plantation life was filled with hardship. Most owners thought of “negroes” not as human beings, but simply as their property. Because of her duties, Eliza barely had time to raise her own family. She was forced to work every day, even while pregnant. Two of Eliza’s three children died while still young, nearly breaking the slave woman’s heart. When she learned that her Master planned to sell her final child to a slave-trader, tearing the baby from her arms, Eliza could stand it no longer. She left with her son in the dead of night, heading North along the Underground Railroad.

Although kind stationmasters helped Eliza as she journeyed towards freedom, the mother could not out-run her Master. Eliza knew she’d have a chance if only she could cross the Ohio River. When she reached it, with slave catchers closing in, Eliza realized to her horror that the river was no longer frozen. She had only one choice. Son in her arms, she stepped onto the ice, jumping from block to block, and crossed the river to safety. Eliza would continue her journey, finally reaching Canada with her son. Soon after, author Harriet Beecher Stowe interviewed Eliza and included her story in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a world-famous novel that forced Americans to open their eyes to the horrors of slavery.

Eliza opposed the Fugitive Slave Act because her people could no longer expect the Underground Railroad to help them as stationmasters had helped Eliza years before. Even if slaves could make it North, normal citizens—now turned slave catchers—were on the prowl for runaways. With this new law, they would likely be caught and sent back South...to meet their fate in chains.





HENRY BIBB was a runaway slave from Kentucky. As a young man, he had escaped several times from different owners. Each time, he had gotten caught when he tried to go back to free his family. After many such attempts to help his wife and daughter get North, Bibb finally managed to find some freedom on his own in Detroit, Michigan. Here, he was able to go to school and eventually began to give lectures. Along with Frederick Douglass, Henry Bibb became one of the best known African

American abolitionist leaders, and campaigned against slavery in the 1840's and 1850's for the Liberty Party.

Like Frederick Douglass, Bibb also wrote books about his life as a slave, including Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb. He even wrote letters to his former owners. One of them concluded: "You may perhaps think hard of us for running away from slavery. But as to myself, I have but one apology to make for it, which is this—I have only to regret that I did not start at an earlier age."

After the Fugitive Slave Act passed in 1850, Bibb no longer felt safe in America. After all, he was still a runaway slave, and so he moved to Canada where he began writing the Voice of the Fugitive, one of the first African American newspapers. He also helped organize the Refugee's Home Society, a group that bought land so that former slaves could settle in Canada.

Because Henry had now become famous as a writer and orator, three of his brothers were able to find him in Canada, after they had escaped from their owners. Henry Bibb died two years later, in 1854, at the tender age of 39.





JOSIAH HENSON escaped slavery and found freedom in Canada. Harriet Beecher Stowe likely based her world-famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on his story.

Henson was born on a Maryland plantation where life was filled with hardship. When just a young boy, he saw his father lose an ear for "saucing" the Overseer. By the age of 10, Henson worked sunrise to sunset, six days a week, with little or no time and money to spend on himself. His Master treated "negroes" not as human beings, but as property.

When Henson's owner died, the boy was sold to a different plantation. But his mother managed to reunite the family by convincing her owner to buy Henson, promising that her son would work hard in the fields. This new Master grew to trust Henson, giving him special responsibilities and promising that the boy could buy his freedom once he earned the proper amount of money. Still, when Henson came to the Master with cash in hand, his owner raised the price. Soon, Henson heard that slave-traders were coming for him. It was then and there that Henson decided to escape, taking his wife and four children with him.

Henson and his family made the journey North to Canada, traveling at night to avoid the slave-catchers close behind. The Hensons finally arrived and settled down in a black community. But once Josiah became a minister, he returned South to give speeches at abolitionist meetings across the United States. It was there that Harriett Beecher Stowe interviewed the free black man before she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.



Henson feared the Fugitive Slave Act, because his people could no longer expect the Underground Railroad to help them reach freedom. Since normal citizens—now turned slave catchers—were on the prowl for runaways, fugitives could be captured at any point on their journey to Canada, and sent back South to meet their fate...in chains.