

COURAGE. STRENGTH. LEGACY.

tubmandouglassfilms.org

INTERVIEW TUBMAN AND
BONDAGE

AND
FREEDOM.

A Slave, Part II. Thomas Jefferson

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

T.B. DOUGLASS

DR. JAMES MCCUNE SMITH

IN 1845, A SLAVE IN AMERICA WAS FORGOTTEN. A
SLAVE WHOSE NAME WAS NOT KNOWN TO THE WORLD.

BECOMING

Fredrick Douglass

HARRIET TUBMAN
VISIONS
OF FREEDOM

Discussion Guide

C O U R A G E - S T R E N G T H - L E G A C Y

BECOMING
Frederick Douglass

HARRIET TUBMAN
VISIONS
OF FREEDOM



BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS is the inspiring story of how a man born into slavery became one of the most prominent statesmen and influential voices for democracy in American history. Born in 1818 in Maryland, he escaped from slavery in 1838 and went on to become the most well-known leader of the abolitionist movement. A gifted writer and powerful, charismatic orator, it is estimated that more Americans heard Douglass speak than any other 19th-century figure — Black or white. The documentary explores how Douglass controlled his own image and narrative, embracing photography as a tool for social justice, and the role he played in securing the right to freedom and complete equality for African Americans. Executive produced by Academy Award-nominated Stanley Nelson together with Lynne Robinson, the film features the voice of acclaimed actor Wendell Pierce as Douglass.

HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM is a rich and nuanced portrait of the woman known as a conductor of the Underground Railroad, who repeatedly risked her own life and freedom to liberate others from slavery. Born in Dorchester County, Maryland, 200 years ago — 2022 marks her bicentennial — Tubman escaped north to Philadelphia in 1849, covering more than 100 miles alone. Once there, Tubman became involved in the abolitionist movement, and through the Underground Railroad guided more than 70 enslaved people to freedom. The film goes beyond the legend of Tubman to explore what motivated her — including divine inspiration — to become one of the greatest freedom fighters in our nation's history. Executive produced by acclaimed filmmaker Stanley Nelson together with Lynne Robinson, the film is narrated by Emmy® award-winning actor Alfre Woodard. Actor Wendell Pierce is featured as the voice of abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

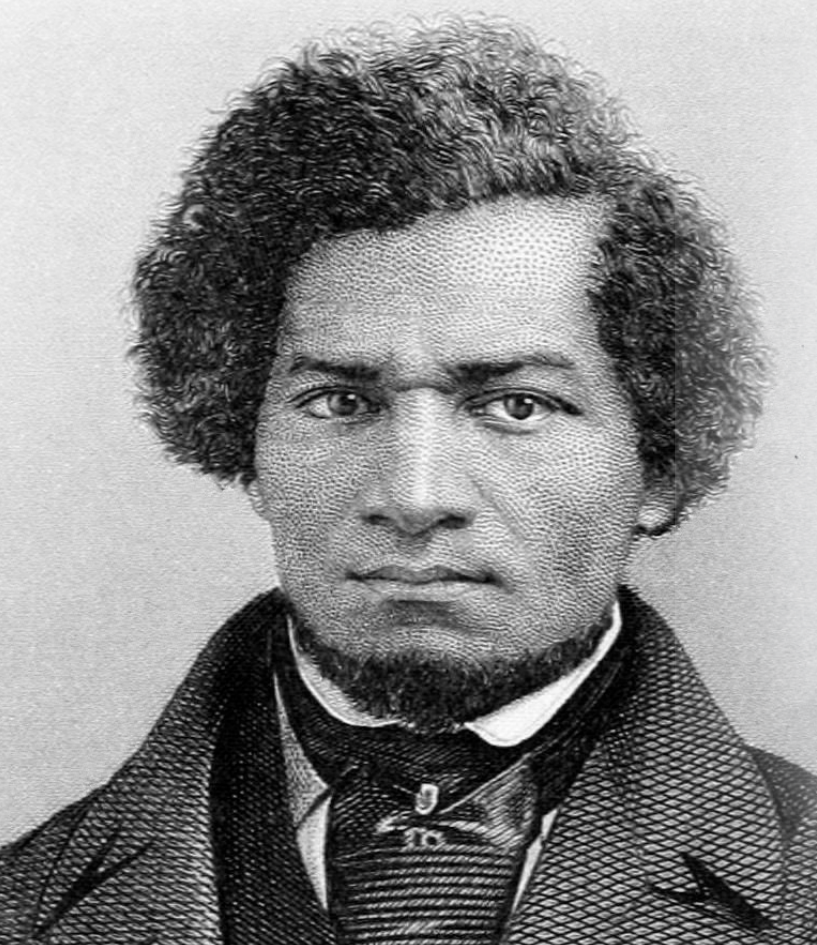




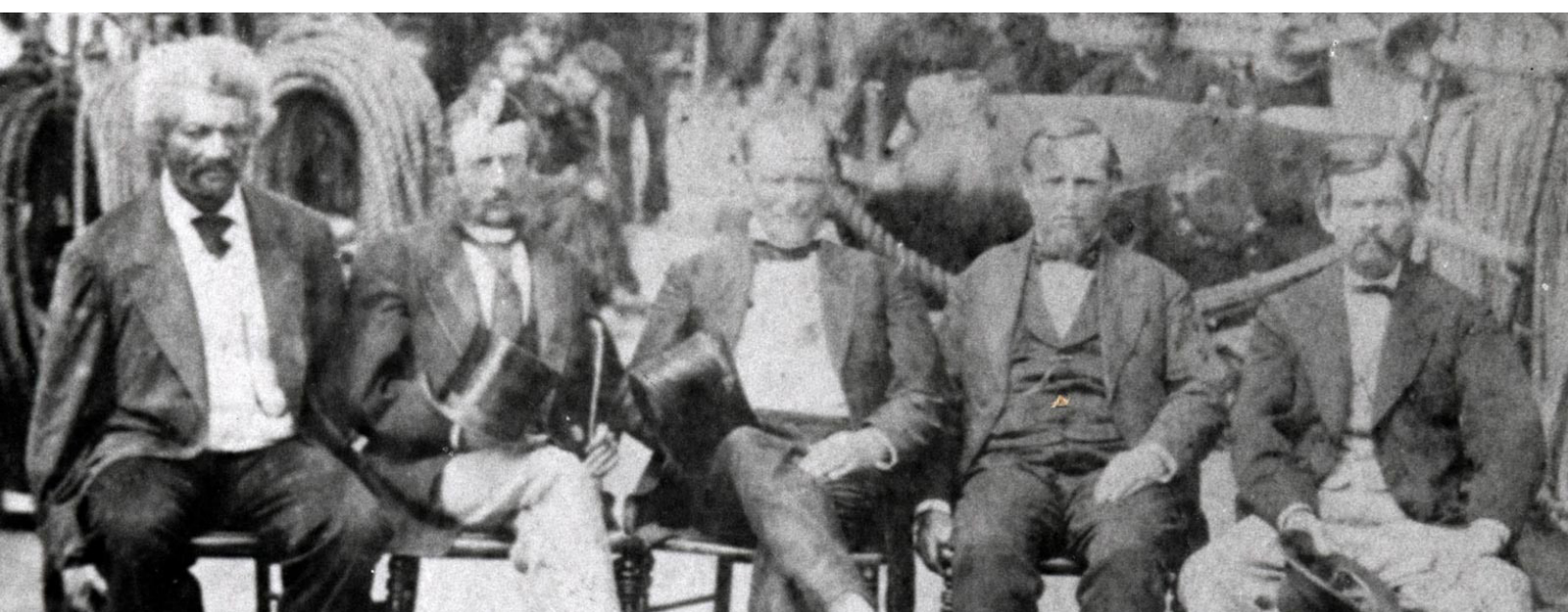
Table of Contents

- Using this discussion guide
- Producer/director's statement
- Meet the filmmakers
- Key themes
- BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS
 - Topics by film clips
 - Film historians and experts
- HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM
 - Topics by Film Clips
 - Film historians and experts
- Facilitating open dialogue
- Resources to learn more
- Credits

Using this Discussion Guide

Use this guide as a resource to inform and prepare community-based facilitators for screening Maryland Public Television's **BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS** and **HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM** documentary films. The past is a powerful tool that helps us understand the complex world around us. The systems we live in are not accidental or random but the product of history. As we build more just and humane communities, it's important to understand how and why events that happened before contributed to injustices in the world today. Exploring the past can improve our understanding of the present, offering a library of strategies for building just change and a guide to discerning who we are now.

This companion guide will help you navigate the complexities of discussing the histories and legacies of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, which continue to shape our world. Find tips for organizing a successful event, including a five-step framework for facilitating productive dialogue around the films and engagement strategies to inspire and foster a participatory event for general audience members and college students alike.



A close-up portrait of Stanley Nelson, an older Black man with a grey beard and mustache, looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a dark blue jacket over a plaid shirt.

Stanley Nelson
(Executive Producer, Director,
Producer)

There are no two people more important to our country's history than Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. Their remarkable lives and contributions were a critical part of the 19th century, and their legacies help us understand who we are now as a nation. As a filmmaker, it is an honor to share their stories with a country that continues to grapple with the impact of slavery and debate notions of citizenship, democracy, and freedom.

I think it's essential that we understand how long African Americans have been fighting and struggling for freedom. So many times the abolitionist movement — which both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were an integral part of — is associated with white people. But the first abolitionist was the first African who was put on a slave ship and the abolitionist movement was, in many ways, driven by African Americans.

Exploring the lives of these two pivotal figures couldn't come at a better time, while we as a nation are in a moment of examining our past and looking at how we got to where we are today. Now is a perfect time for re-telling their stories and looking at them in a fresh light. One of the things that I hope these films reveal is who Harriet Tubman was as a person and who Frederick Douglass was as a person. That's very hard to do — we're still learning and we're still discovering.

I think that both Frederick Douglass's and Harriet Tubman's stories represent courage. First, to escape from enslavement but then, to fight against the enslavement of others. Harriet Tubman had an incredible will and strength, as did Frederick Douglass through his leadership and his writing. There exists a legacy from both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass that we all need to know. And we are all made better by knowing.

- Stanley Nelson, Filmmaker

Meet the Filmmakers

Stanley Nelson

(Executive Producer, Director, Producer) is today's leading documentarian of the African American experience. His films combine compelling narratives with rich historical detail to shine new light on the under-explored American past. Awards received over the course of his career include a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, five Primetime Emmy® Awards, and lifetime achievement awards from the Emmys and IDA. In 2013, Nelson received the National Medal in the Humanities from President Obama. In 2019, *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool* was nominated by the GRAMMY® Awards for Best Music Film and went on to win two Emmy Awards at the 42nd Annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards.

Nelson's latest documentary *Attica*, for SHOWTIME Documentary Films, was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 94th Academy Awards® and earned him the DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary. In 2021, Nelson also directed the feature film *Crack: Cocaine, Corruption & Conspiracy* for Netflix, which was a 2022 duPont-Columbia Awards Finalist, and *Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre*, with co-director Marco Williams, for the HISTORY Channel, which was nominated for three Primetime Emmy Awards. Nelson also executive produced *After Jackie* for the HISTORY Channel in 2022 about the generation of Black baseball players who came after Jackie Robinson.

In 2000, Mr. Nelson, and his wife, Marcia Smith, co-founded Firelight Media, a non-profit production company dedicated to advancing contemporary social justice issues, amplifying underrepresented narratives, and fostering a new generation of diverse filmmakers.

Meet the Filmmakers



Lynne Robinson (Executive Producer)

is the CEO and executive producer of Black Robin Media and an award-winning producer, director and writer. Known for her expertise in sports, pop culture, history, and public affairs programming, Robinson's work empowers and inspires audiences by providing an authentic voice to the stories of women and African Americans who have shaped our world.

Robinson's many credits include the Audible Originals Daymond John: Founding FUBU (Editorial Producer); the Smithsonian Channel documentary Reclaiming History: Our Native Daughters (Executive Producer); AspireTV's series Icons, Idols and Influencers (Executive Producer, Director); Steve Harvey: Act Like A Success, Think Like A Success (Executive Producer); and the talk series Exhale (Executive Producer). As executive producer, producer and director, she won a 2008 NAACP Image Award for the TV One special In Conversation: The Senator Barack Obama Interview. A follow-up special, In Conversation: The Michelle Obama Interview, garnered a second NAACP Image Award in 2009. She is currently in production as the executive producer and director of the upcoming Maryland Public Television documentary Unearthing the Past: Chatel Slavery in Maryland.

In addition, Robinson has produced and written numerous films and video projects in museums and exhibitions such as The National Civil Rights Museum, The Muhammad Ali Center, The William

Jefferson Clinton Library, America I AM: The African American Imprint, the Smithsonian's Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment, The Basketball Hall of Fame, and The Sports Museum of America. As executive producer and director, she was honored to lead Black Robin Media's producers, writers, editors and designers in the production of 15 large-format films and media presentations featured in the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture Sports, Musical Crossroads, Taking the Stage and Power of Place permanent galleries. She is leading Black Robin Media in the production of the museum's upcoming exhibition on Afrofuturism, opening in 2023.



Nicole London (Director, Producer) is an Emmy® Award-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated producer and director who began her career as an associate producer at PBS's To The Contrary and local stations in Maryland, and has gone on to work on many projects with the top directors in documentary film.

She was an associate producer for AMERICAN MASTERS Marvin Gaye: What's Going On; Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me; POV's American Promise; and INDEPENDENT LENS' The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution, which was nominated for a 2016 Exceptional Merit In Documentary Filmmaking Emmy. She served as a producer on Life & Life and Netflix's Crack: Cocaine, Corruption & Conspiracy, directed by Stanley Nelson.

She was also the producer for Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool, for which she was nominated for a 2020 GRAMMY for Best Music Film, and which won the 2021 News & Documentary Emmy for Outstanding Arts and Culture Documentary. In 2021, she was honored as a Trailblazer at the 22nd Annual African American Women In Cinema Film Festival. She is currently directing a new project for AMERICAN MASTERS, slated for 2023.



Key Themes

COURAGE - STRENGTH - LEGACY

Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were both born close to 1820 and lived in an era in Maryland's history when many white farmers created wealth using the labor of enslaved African Americans. It was also a time when Black and white abolitionists became increasingly active and vocal in their efforts to end slavery. The tension between the pro-slavery and abolitionist factions was especially strong in Maryland, which officially sanctioned slavery but — unlike the rest of the South — had sizeable communities of free African Americans.

Demonstrating that no race, gender, or social class has a lock on activism, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass masterfully facilitated nationwide societal change. Their efforts were undergirded by personal courage and individual strength, creating an enduring legacy that continues to be relevant today.

View these films as companion documentaries that thoughtfully and accurately depict how enslaved African Americans fled the horrors of slavery, proactively pursued emancipation, and devoted every waking breath to abolition, equality, and freedom.

Themes:

- Allyship
- Advocacy
- Characteristics of genuine heroism in contemporary society
- Civil rights activism
- Community and collective action
- Feminism
- Focus on humanity vs. myth
- Importance of representation
- Meaning of freedom
- Role of networks and communities in making change
- Parallels of 19th-century resistance movement and modern movements
- Personal agency and liberation
- Social justice



BECOMING *Frederick Douglass*

Topics by Film Clip

YOUNG FREDERICK

Young Frederick Douglass is sent to work in the overseer's house where he learns to read, opening his eyes to the possibility of a life beyond slavery.

"Wise as Mr. Auld was, he evidently underrated my comprehension. And the very determination which he expressed to keep me in ignorance only rendered me the more resolute in seeking intelligence." - Frederick Douglass

"Mrs. Hugh Auld doesn't really understand that to keep someone enslaved, you have to treat them as a non-human being. Because they've never had a slave before. They're new to slavery. So she starts teaching Douglass how to read." - Historian Nick Bromell

BATTLING THE SLAVE BREAKER

The young, rebellious Douglass is sent to the brutal "slave breaker," Edward Covey. Refusing to be broken, Douglass emerges even more determined to escape into freedom.

"Individuals who were suspected of being potential troublemakers, they were sent to slave breakers. And his job was to get them in the habit of submitting to the demands of slavery." - Historian Edward Baptist

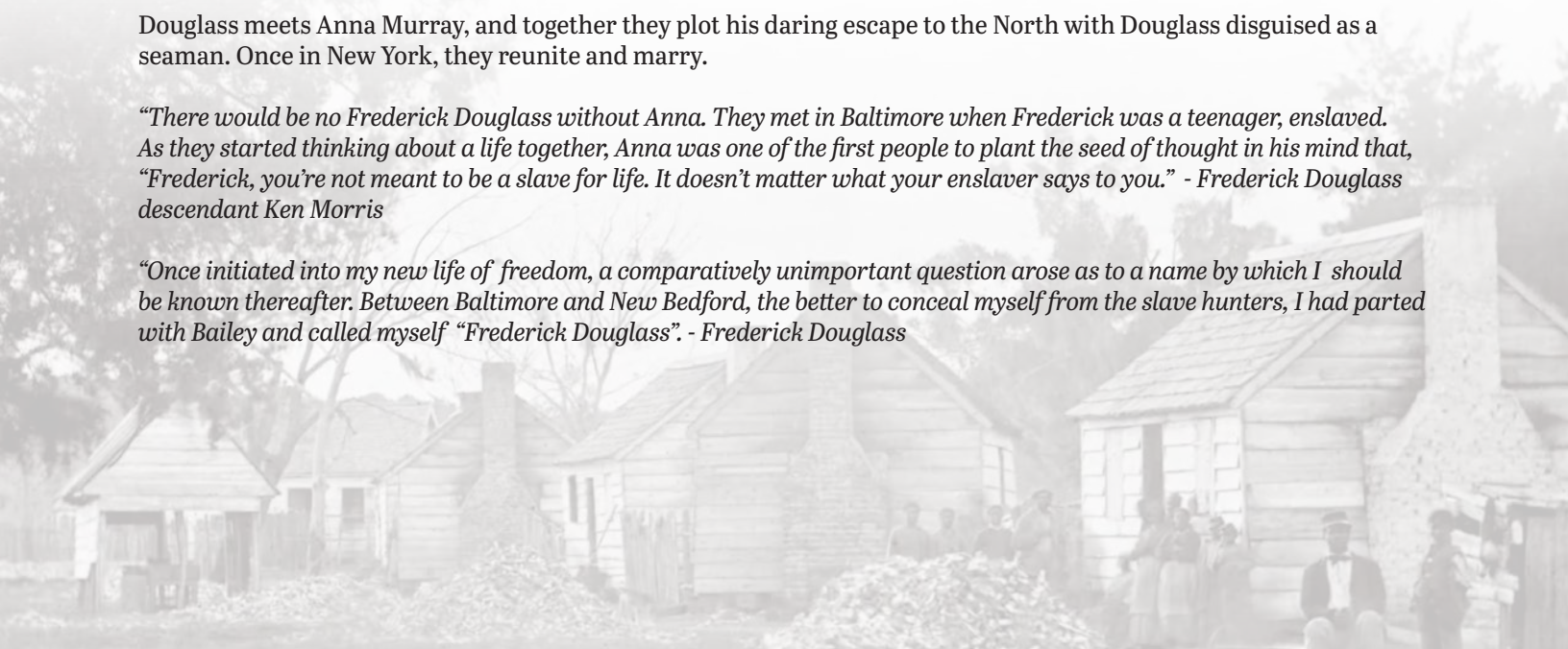
"Douglass's time with Edward Covey is a turning point in his life. He gets sent to Covey, the famed breaker of enslaved people because he's gotten a bit of a reputation as unruly, uncontrolled. He's been reading, he's been holding Sunday schools, he's tried to escape. And so it's the last straw. 'We're gonna finally break you.'" - Historian Derrick Spires

ANNA MURRAY DOUGLASS

Douglass meets Anna Murray, and together they plot his daring escape to the North with Douglass disguised as a seaman. Once in New York, they reunite and marry.

"There would be no Frederick Douglass without Anna. They met in Baltimore when Frederick was a teenager, enslaved. As they started thinking about a life together, Anna was one of the first people to plant the seed of thought in his mind that, 'Frederick, you're not meant to be a slave for life. It doesn't matter what your enslaver says to you.'" - Frederick Douglass descendant Ken Morris

"Once initiated into my new life of freedom, a comparatively unimportant question arose as to a name by which I should be known thereafter. Between Baltimore and New Bedford, the better to conceal myself from the slave hunters, I had parted with Bailey and called myself 'Frederick Douglass'." - Frederick Douglass



THE ABOLITIONISTS

In Massachusetts, Douglass meets abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and uses his brilliant oratorical skills to speak out against slavery — becoming the most famous Black man of his time.

“For the next several years Douglass traveled throughout the North and what’s now the upper-Midwest, speaking out against slavery. Douglass in a sense was so eloquent and elegant as a speaker that some whites started to accuse him of being a fraud.” - Historian John Stauffer

“Once he publishes the narrative, he’s probably the most famous Black person in the world at that point. But he, in the narrative, has outed himself as a fugitive...Douglass goes to the UK in part to seek refuge but also in part to continue to boost his political profile. And when he goes there he is incredibly well received.” - Historian Chris Bonner

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law empowers the government — and everyday “slave catchers”— to recapture any previously enslaved people and return them to their former enslavers.

“Between the ratification of the Constitution 1789 and 1850, there’s increasing conflict over the rendition of fugitives from slavery. And so, the southern-most states: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, make a demand which is that they will be able to claim anybody that escapes from slavery in the slave states to the free states. And this immediately puts the freedom of every single African American in the north at a much greater level of threat.” - Historian Ed Baptist

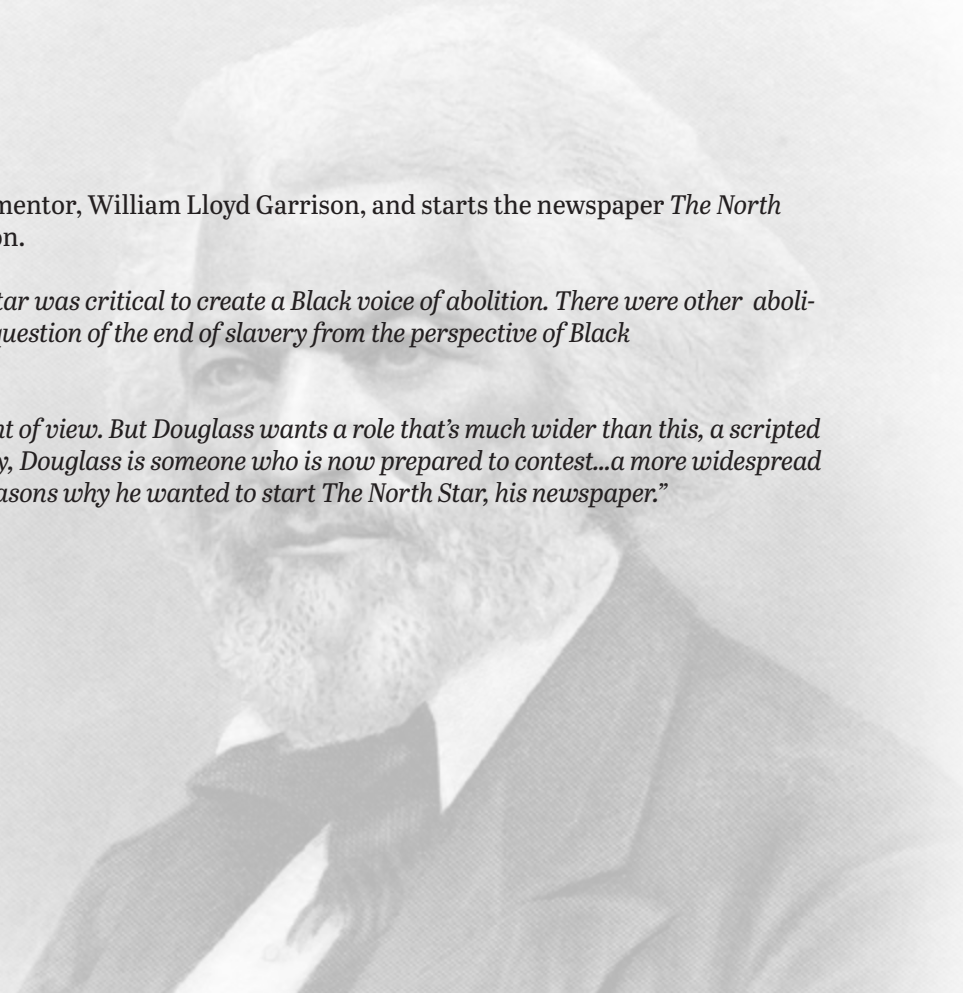
*“What we saw were these slaveholders who were very politically connected and very wealthy, and they lobbied the Congress to have a fugitive slave act that not only meant that their escaped property would be brought back, but anyone, Black or white, involved in assisting that person to escape slavery would also have criminal consequences.”
- Historian Gloria Browne Marshall*

THE NORTH STAR

Douglass breaks away from his abolitionist mentor, William Lloyd Garrison, and starts the newspaper *The North Star*, an independent Black voice for abolition.

*“For Frederick Douglass, starting *The North Star* was critical to create a Black voice of abolition. There were other abolitionist newspapers, but very few spoke to the question of the end of slavery from the perspective of Black people.” - Historian Marcia Chatelain*

*“White abolitionists think there is only one point of view. But Douglass wants a role that’s much wider than this, a scripted role of someone who simply opposed to slavery, Douglass is someone who is now prepared to contest...a more widespread system of injustices. And this was one of the reasons why he wanted to start *The North Star*, his newspaper.”
- Historian Nick Bromell*





FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND THE PHOTOGRAPH

One of the most photographed men of the 19th century, Douglass brilliantly uses the power of his image to challenge stereotypes of African Americans — a crucial step toward the abolition of slavery.

“In speeches and essays Douglass talks about the daguerreotype, developed in 1840s as one of the central modern marvels of the day. As important as, say, the telegraph for its ability to capture a reality, unfiltered. And so Douglass saw in photography, a way to show African descended people as they were, in all their beauty.”

- Historian Derrick Spires

“We now understand that Frederick Douglass is the most photographed American man of the 19th century, not African American man, but American man. He consciously put himself in front of the camera because he understood the democratic power of that new technological medium.”

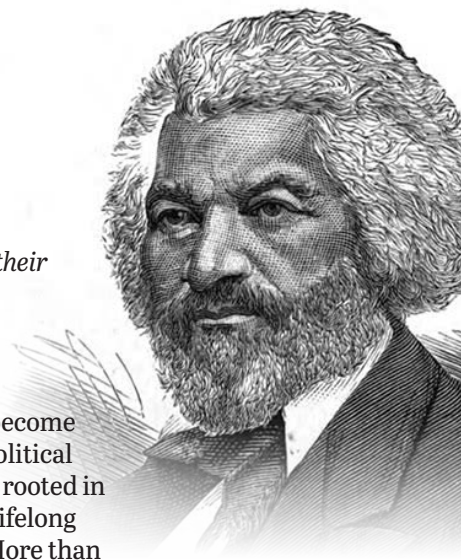
- Historian Sarah Lewis

Film Historians and Experts

"Frederick Douglass moved from being a mirror to hold up to the nation about its failures to becoming a lens for future generations to understand their own public service, to understand their own commitment to justice, to understand why bravery is so important. Frederick Douglass challenges us to become the fullest expression of ourselves and our ideals."

- Historian Marcia Chatelain

Born in 1818 in Maryland, Frederick Douglass escaped from slavery in 1838 and went on to become many things: abolitionist, autobiographer, essayist, diplomat, orator, editor, philosopher, political theorist, newspaper publisher and social reformer. BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS is rooted in the singular truth of Douglass's life: his insistence on controlling his own narrative and his lifelong determined pursuit of the right to freedom and complete equality for African Americans. More than a dozen scholars provide historical grounding and insight into arguably one of the most accomplished men of his time.



Gerard Aching is professor of Africana and Romance Studies at Cornell University. His collaborative Underground Railroad Research Project informs his new book project, *The Promise of Rebirth: A Contemporary Approach to the Underground Railroad*.



Christopher Bonner is associate professor of History at the University of Maryland and the author of *Remaking the Republic: Black Politics and the Creation of American Citizenship*.



Gloria J. Browne-Marshall is a professor of Constitutional Law at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY) and the author of many articles and books including *She Took Justice: The Black Woman, Law, and Power*.



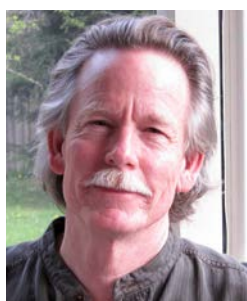
Marcia Chatelain is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and professor of History and African American Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Farah Jasmine Griffin is the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where she also served as the inaugural chair of the African American and African Diaspora Studies Department. She is the author of eight books including *Read Until You Understand: The Profound Wisdom of Black Life and Literature*.



Edward E. Baptist is a professor of History at Cornell University and the author of *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*.



Nick Bromell is the author of six books, including *The Time Is Always Now: Black Thought and the Transformation of US Democracy* and *The Powers of Dignity: The Black Political Thought of Frederick Douglass*. He teaches in the English Department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



Eric Foner, DeWitt Clinton Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University, is the author or editor of over 20 books, including *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, which won the Bancroft Prize, the Pulitzer Prize for History and the Lincoln Prize. His most recent book is *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution*.



Adam Goodheart's most recent book, 1861: *The Civil War Awakening*, was a national bestseller in both hardcover and paperback. He also serves as the Hodson Trust-Griswold Director of the Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.



Vincent Leggett is founder and president of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF), which documents, promotes, and educates on the significant contributions of African Americans to the Chesapeake Bay's maritime industries and culture.

Film Historians and Experts



Keith Leonard is associate professor of literature at American University and author of *Fettered Genius: The African American Bardic Poet from Slavery to Civil Rights*.



Robert S. Levine is Distinguished University Professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park. His most recent book is *The Failed Promise: Reconstruction, Frederick Douglass, and the Impeachment of Andrew Johnson*.



Sarah Elizabeth Lewis is associate professor at Harvard University in the Department of History of Art and Architecture and the Department of African and African American Studies and founder of The Vision and Justice Project.



Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. is co-founder and president of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, which advocates for a more equitable world on the issues of human trafficking and racism. He is the great-great-great-grandson of Frederick Douglass and the great-great-grandson of Booker T. Washington.



Derrick Spires is associate professor of literatures in English and affiliate faculty in American Studies, Visual Studies, and Media Studies at Cornell University. He is the author of *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States*.



John Stauffer is the Sumner R. and Marshall S. Kates Professor of English and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. He is the author or editor of 20 books, including *GIANTS: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln*, a national bestseller, and *Picturing Frederick Douglass*.



Amy Murrell Taylor is the T. Marshall Hahn Jr. Professor of History at the University of Kentucky and author of *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps* as well as *The Divided Family in Civil War America*.



HARRIET TUBMAN VISIONS OF FREEDOM

EASTERN SHORE

Harriet Tubman is born into slavery in Maryland in 1822 and forced to work—catching muskrats in the swamps and cleaning and caring for a colicky baby—by age five.

“Maryland was in transition in the 19th century and more specifically on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where enslavers typically had smaller plots of land, smaller numbers of enslaved people working their farms. It really created a different kind of economy. One that required many enslavers to rent out the people they called their property.” - Historian Erica Dunbar

“A childhood experience in slavery is not a childhood. The idea here is that slavery was a profit-driven industry and slave owners extracted the most profit from all of their enslaved people throughout their lives.” - Historian Marisa Fuentes

COTTON IS KING

Young Harriet and her family live with the terror of being separated and sold to the Deep South. Public slave auctions are common and Harriet witnesses her older sisters being dragged away in chains.

“Buying slaves was something that people participated in very enthusiastically. Slave auctions were kind of a social occasion in which a lot of people would come around, sort of look and see what was there. Buying a slave was something that many whites saw as sort of a realization of all their hopes...because they thought that slaves were an investment.” - Historian Mia Bay

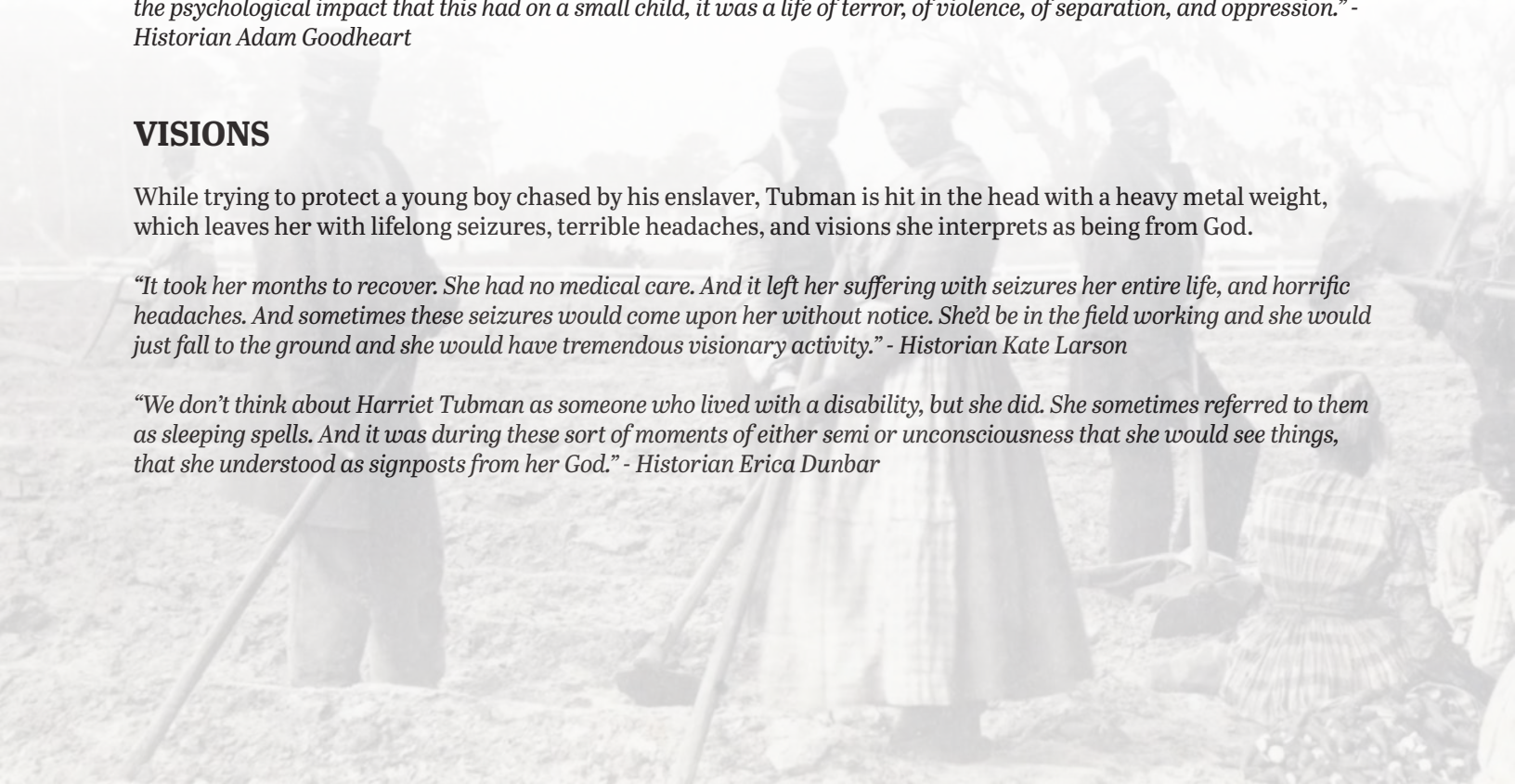
“She lived under constant threat, constant terror of being separated forever from her loved ones. And when you imagine the psychological impact that this had on a small child, it was a life of terror, of violence, of separation, and oppression.” - Historian Adam Goodheart

VISIONS

While trying to protect a young boy chased by his enslaver, Tubman is hit in the head with a heavy metal weight, which leaves her with lifelong seizures, terrible headaches, and visions she interprets as being from God.

“It took her months to recover. She had no medical care. And it left her suffering with seizures her entire life, and horrific headaches. And sometimes these seizures would come upon her without notice. She’d be in the field working and she would just fall to the ground and she would have tremendous visionary activity.” - Historian Kate Larson

“We don’t think about Harriet Tubman as someone who lived with a disability, but she did. She sometimes referred to them as sleeping spells. And it was during these sort of moments of either semi or unconsciousness that she would see things, that she understood as signposts from her God.” - Historian Erica Dunbar



THE ESCAPE

With her two brothers, Tubman makes her first attempt to escape, braving the terrifying fate faced by runaways including beating, maiming, and death.

“Ran away from the subscriber on Monday the 17th. Three Negroes named as follows. Harry, aged about 19 years. Ben, aged about 25 years, is very quick to speak when spoken to. Minty, aged about 27 years, is of a chestnut color, fine looking at about five feet high. 100 dollars reward will be given for each of the above named Negroes, Eliza Ann Brodess near Bucktown, Dorchester County, Maryland. That ad is what we call a runaway ad.” - Historian Ed Baptist

“Enslaved people are living within situations of racial terror. And that is physical and psychological, that it may not have happened to you, but you’ve seen it happen to others. And in that – that spectacle, that’s part of the racial terror. To communicate to everybody on the plantation that you don’t cross certain boundaries.” - Historian Gerard Aching

ORIGINAL ABOLITIONISTS

Traveling alone, Tubman escapes to Philadelphia and becomes involved with the Black abolitionist movement while the new Fugitive Slave Law makes life for African Americans even more dangerous.

“Enslaved people like Harriet Tubman were the original abolitionists. Even white abolitionists constantly referred to instances of Black resistance to slavery to argue that that is why we are abolitionists. So not only were they the first abolitionists, but they are the ones who first converted white Americans into abolition.” - Historian Manisha Sinha

“The fugitive slave act is the shadow that looms over everything else Tubman does. She begins to enter the speaking circuit, rubbing elbows with, now not just planners from the Underground Railroad but national figures, like Frederick Douglass. Like Sojourner Truth telling these stories, horrors of slavery galvanizing a response, pumping up the growing abolitionist movement.” - Historian Jeffrey Ludwig

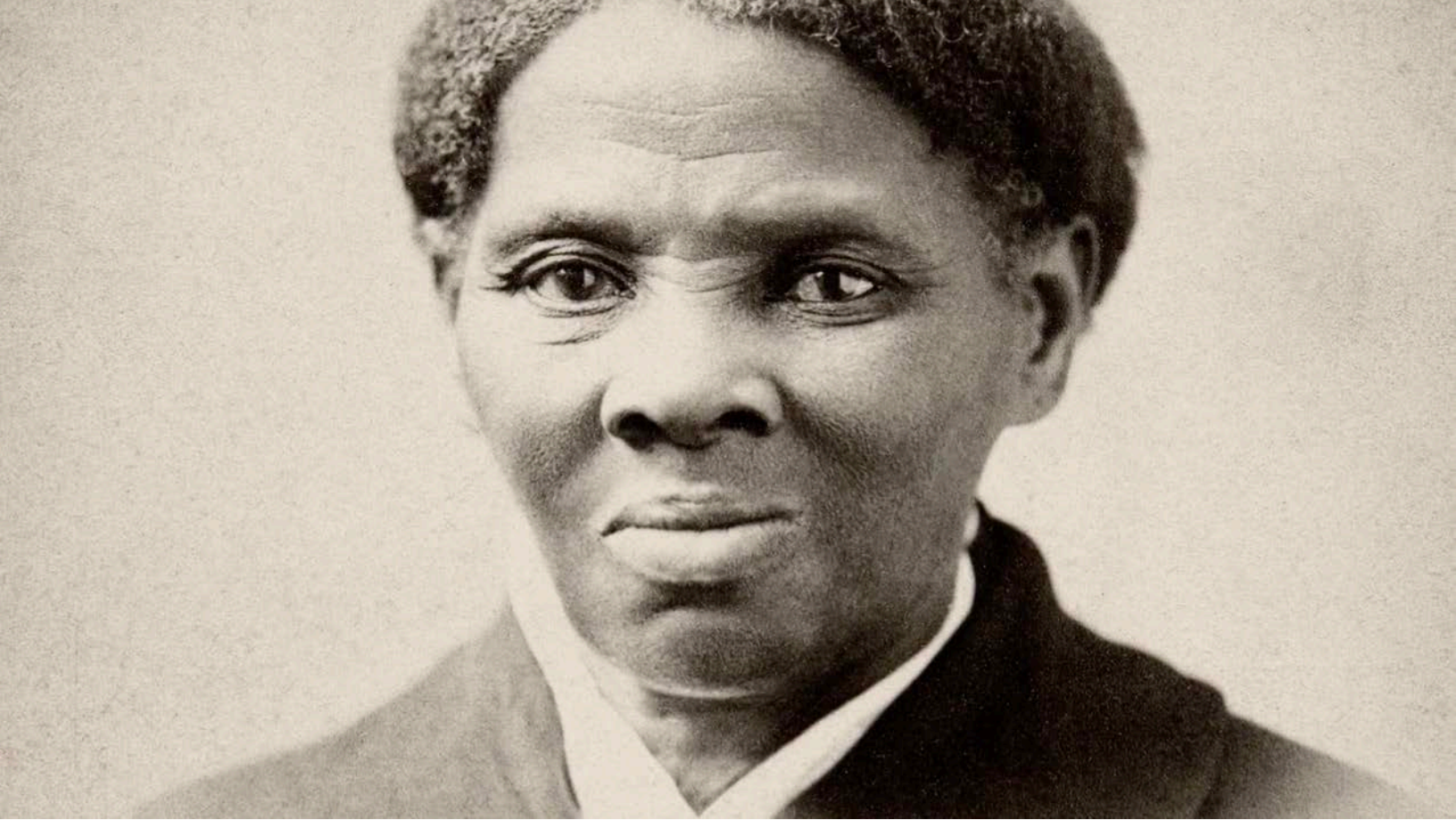
WADE IN THE WATER

Tubman’s fearlessness, extensive knowledge of the land and skills at subterfuge and disguise make her a brilliant conductor on the Underground Railroad.

“She’s a woman who’s outside. The watermen that she may be interacting with from the Chesapeake are...very knowledgeable, worldly people. They carry the information because they’re on the information highway, which is the waters. So she may have gleaned quite a bit of information from these watermen.” - Historian Cheryl LaRoche

“Some of the misconceptions that people have with the Underground Railroad that it was all white Quakers that ran the network and that’s not true. It was people of all backgrounds, but the foundation of the Underground Railroad was African Americans themselves.” - Historian Kate Larson



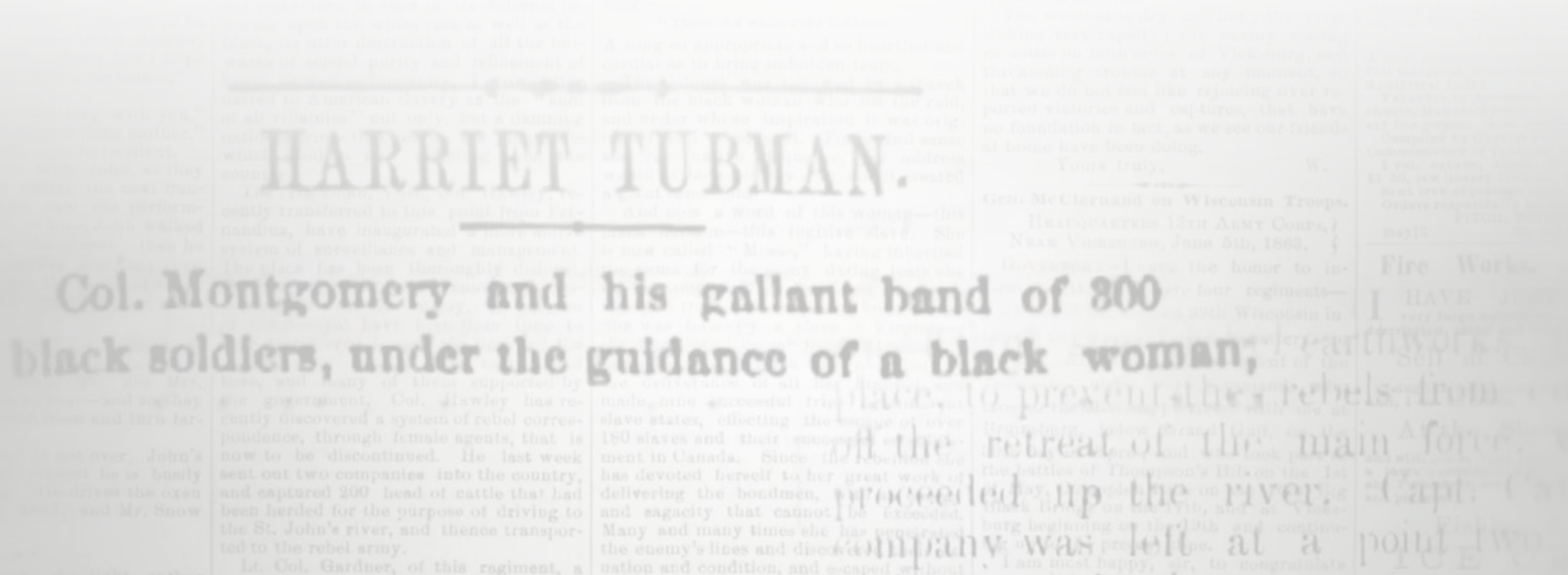


GENERAL TUBMAN

During the Civil War, Tubman is a nurse and spy, and the mastermind behind the first major military operation in American history planned and executed by a woman—one that freed over 720 people.

“Harriet Tubman is famous as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. But she was also a leading abolitionist, a friend of some of the most powerful men and women reformers and radicals of her day, a suffragette, a spy, a scout, she’s a Civil War soldier.” - Historian Jeffrey Ludwig

“With all of that interaction with formerly enslaved people, she was able to get the lay of the land. And get specific information about where the Confederate Army was stationed, what kinds of weapons that they had. She was gathering intelligence. And she would share that with these Union officers.” - Historian Marisa Fuentes



Film Historians and Experts

“One of the things that Harriet believed was that God didn’t mean for anybody to be a slave. Freedom should be universal.”

– Historian Karen Hill

Few Maryland residents have impacted our nation’s history as indelibly as Harriet Tubman. An African American freedom fighter born into slavery in 1822 in Dorchester County, Tubman steadfastly refused to be defined by stereotypes linked to her race or gender. She self-emancipated in 1849 and repeatedly risked her life to help other enslaved people find freedom. **HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM** goes beyond the standard narrative to explore what motivated Tubman — including divine inspiration — to become one of the greatest freedom fighters of all time. The film features more than 20 historians and experts and is grounded in the most recent scholarship.



Gerard Aching is professor of Africana and Romance Studies at Cornell University. His collaborative Underground Railroad Research Project informs his new book project, *The Promise of Rebirth: A Contemporary Approach to the Underground Railroad*.



Douglas V. Armstrong is a professor of Anthropology at Syracuse University, where he holds a Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professorship and Maxwell Professor of Teaching Excellence. His work includes archaeological and historical research at the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn, New York.



Fergus M. Bordewich is a historian and author of eight books, including *Congress At War: How Republican Reformers Fought the Civil War, Defied Lincoln, Ended Slavery, and Remade America*.



Reverend Paul Gordon Carter is site manager for the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn, New York, and pastor of the Frederick Douglass Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Elmira, New York.



Anthony Cohen is a nationally known expert on the Underground Railroad and a descendant of freedom seekers, best known for walking 1,200 miles from Maryland to Canada in 1996. He is the founder and president of the Menare Foundation, located at the Button Farm Living History Center, a 40-acre farm depicting 1850s plantation life in Maryland.



Edward E. Baptist is a professor of History at Cornell University and the author of *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*.



Mia Bay is the Roy F. and Jeanette P. Nichols Professor of American History at the University of Pennsylvania and a scholar of American and African American intellectual, cultural and social history. Her most recent book is *Traveling Black: A Story of Race and Resistance*.



Gloria J. Browne-Marshall is a professor of Constitutional Law at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY) and the author of many articles and books including *She Took Justice: The Black Woman, Law, and Power*.



Marcia Chatelain is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and professor of History and African American Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Angela Crenshaw is a Maryland park ranger and former assistant manager of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park in Church Creek, Maryland.

Film Historians and Experts



Erica Armstrong Dunbar is the Charles and Mary Beard Distinguished Professor of History at Rutgers University and author of *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge and She Came To Slay: The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman*. She is also an adviser to and co-executive producer of HBO's *The Gilded Age*.



Dr. Marisa Fuentes is the Presidential Term Chair in African American History and associate professor of Women's & Gender Studies at Rutgers University and author of *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.



Adam Goodheart's most recent book, *1861: The Civil War Awakening*, was a national bestseller in both hardcover and paperback. He also serves as the Hodson Trust-Griswold Director of the Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.



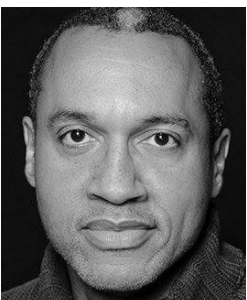
Dale Green is a Morgan State University professor of Architecture and Historic Preservation and a vice president and partner of Sulton Campbell Britt & Associates, PC.



Farah Jasmine Griffin is the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where she also served as the inaugural chair of the African American and African Diaspora Studies Department. She is the author of eight books including *Read Until You Understand: The Profound Wisdom of Black Life and Literature*.



Fredara Mareva Hadley is an ethnomusicology professor at The Juilliard School. *Violence, and the Archive*.



Chris Haley is director of research for the Maryland State Archive's Legacy of Slavery in Maryland project.



Karen V. Hill is president and CEO for the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn, New York.



Cheryl LaRoche, PhD, is a historical and archaeological consultant and the author of *Free Black Communities and the Underground Railroad: The Geography of Resistance*. She is in Historic Preservation at the University of Maryland, College Park.



Dr. Kate Clifford Larson is a historian, consultant, and author of *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. A leading authority on Harriet Tubman, her work has shaped a number of Tubman historical sites, including Maryland's Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park.



Vincent Leggett is founder and president of the Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation (BOCF), which documents, promotes, and educates on the significant contributions of African Americans to the Chesapeake Bay's maritime industries and culture.



Jeff Ludwig is director of Education at the Seward House Museum in Auburn, New York.



Kristen T. Oertel is the Mary Frances Barnard Professor of Nineteenth-Century American History at the University of Tulsa and author of *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in the 19th Century*.



Manisha Sinha is the Draper Chair in American History at the University of Connecticut and author of *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*.



Amy Murrell Taylor is the T. Marshall Hahn Jr. Professor of History at the University of Kentucky and author of *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*, as well as *The Divided Family in Civil War America*.



Facilitating Open Dialogue

STEP 1: Tips for building effective dialogue

- **Take it slow and build trust.** Don't start with the most difficult question or idea. Let your audience get to know each other before tackling the most challenging questions.
- **Build a comfortable space for everyone.** Find a gathering place that is accessible and feels inviting. Make the space welcoming, and if you can provide a meal for the audience, do so.
- **Set ground rules.** Make sure the audience knows what to expect during the conversation. Ground rules are an act of care and help us meet challenges by clarifying:
 - how to show respect,
 - how to respond to disagreement, and
 - how to make sure everyone is able to speak.

Establishing ground rules with the audience only takes a couple of minutes, yet the impact is significant.

- **Use the films as a reference point.** Refer back to the film if the audience gets stuck on a theme or concept. When there is disagreement, or if the audience is having a hard time discussing or accessing an idea, use the content of the films to unlock the problem. Ask the audience to consider how the idea they are struggling with appears in the film.
- **Create small groups.** Build groups of 2-4 people to help the audience get to know each other and talk about big ideas. Small groups help trust and conversation grow. Small groups allow more people to speak and on a person-to-person scale.
- **Ask questions.** Questions model curiosity and drive conversation. Dialogue works best when we start with questions rooted in lived experience (who first taught you about Harriet Tubman and what did you learn?) and then move to big ideas after trust is built. Avoid roleplaying questions (if you were Douglass what would you have done?) as none of us can be anyone but ourselves.
- **Be curious.** When you model curiosity it helps draw it out of others. Being curious as a facilitator will help you build an engaging conversation where everyone is learning.

Dialogue is about individual and collective learning of all the ways we are similar and different. Building dialogue is first and foremost about building trust between people. Take time to get to know each other and build the trust to have a deep conversation.

Building dialogue also means paying attention to the space – physical and social – where the dialogue is taking place. Be intentional, create a welcoming space, give the audience time to build trust, and you will lay the foundation to have an open conversation.

STEP 2: Pre-Screening

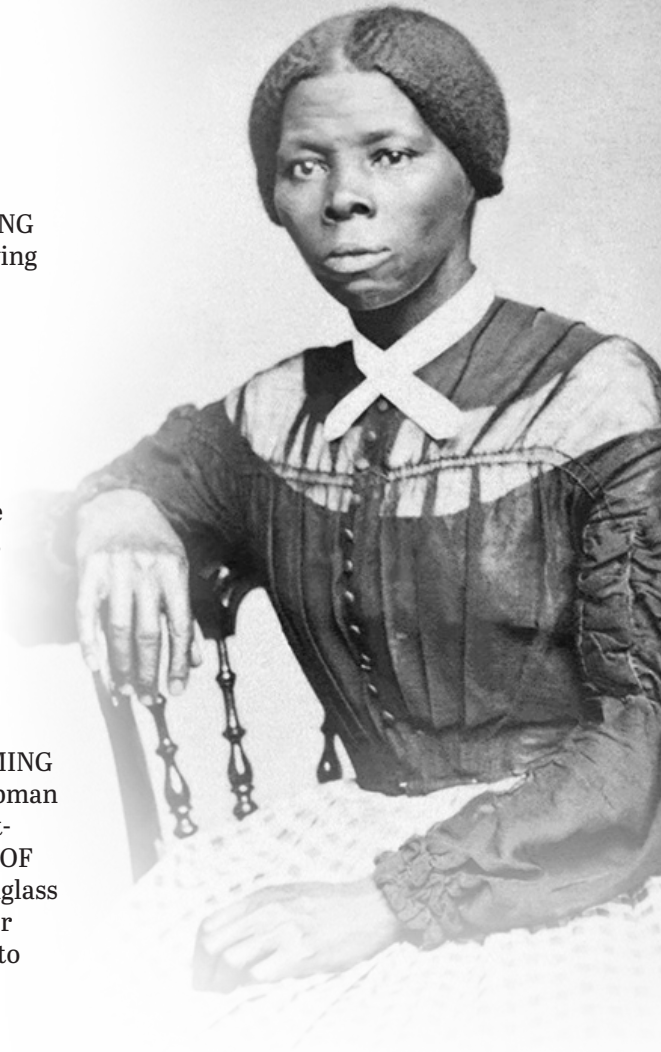
Before viewing *HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM* or *BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS*, take a moment to share and discuss the following questions.

Before the Films:

- What do you know about Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass? Where did you learn it from?
- Who do you want to have a conversation with after watching the film? Invite them to view the film with you.
- Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass are icons, but they were also human. What keeps your view of someone grounded even as they might inspire you?

STEP 3: Make Connections after the Screening

After watching *HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM* and *BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS*, your audience will appreciate that Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were fighting the same war, just on different battlefields. That point is driven home when *HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM* highlights a laudatory recommendation letter Frederick Douglass sent to his friend, Harriet Tubman. Encourage your audience to consider how the overarching film themes of courage, strength, and legacy come to life through his letter.



August 29, 1868

Dear Harriet:

I am glad to know that the story of your eventful life has been written by a kind lady, and that the same is soon to be published. You ask for what you do not need when you call upon me for a word of commendation. I need such words from you far more than you can need them from me, especially where your superior labors and devotion to the cause of the lately enslaved of our land are known as I know them.

The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day – you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt, ‘God bless you,’ has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism.

Excepting John Brown – of sacred memory – I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you. It is to me a great pleasure and a great privilege to bear testimony for your character and your works, and to say to those to whom you may come, that I regard you in every way truthful and trustworthy.

*Your friend,
Frederick Douglass*

Step 4: Post-Screening Discussion

Discussion Prompts to Get Started

These are non-threatening questions that enable participants to share information about themselves.

General Questions:

- Who first taught you about Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and what did you learn?
- What stood out to you about each film? What surprised you? What was exciting to learn or discover?
- What was new, different or challenging about this documentary?

BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS:

- What are some ways people use words and photos to influence others' perception of their image and daily life?

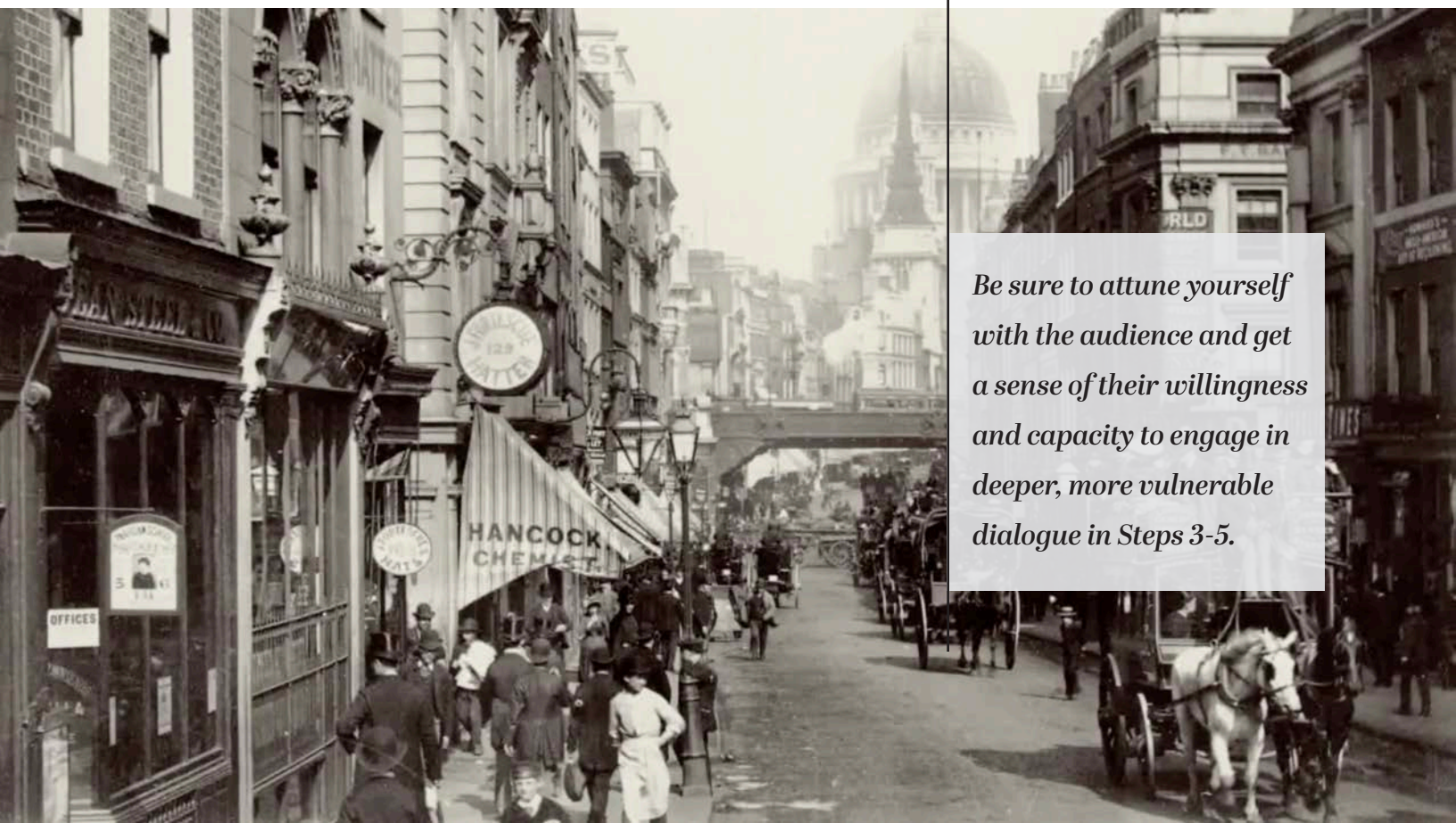
HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM

- Harriet Tubman's knowledge of the water, forests, and outdoor survival skills were critical for her ability to help others escape enslavement and gain freedom. What are some skills not usually associated with change-making that enable you to have an impact and help others?

Invite your audience to connect, engage and be in open dialogue using the following prompts.

The discussion questions progress through three phases: Get Started, Take a Deeper Dive, and Engage with the Most Trust.

All of the questions encourage connectedness and relationship-building within the group. The work done here underpins the successful creation of a safe space where all participants can engage.



Be sure to attune yourself with the audience and get a sense of their willingness and capacity to engage in deeper, more vulnerable dialogue in Steps 3-5.

Discussion Prompts to Take a Deeper Dive

General Questions:

- Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass are often shown as heroic characters acting alone, but each deeply depended on other people and their community for support. Who has shaped and supported you in ways that resonate with the film?
- Before the Civil War, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman challenged slavery in different ways, Tubman primarily through small-scale direct action, and Douglass primarily through public education and advocacy. Where do you see these choices about approaches happening around you today?
- The films directly addressed several myths about slavery. What were you mistaught or not taught about slavery? What have you had to unlearn? What perspectives have helped your new learning?

BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS:

- Frederick Douglass was always a man who was “becoming.” Who are you becoming?
- What parts of yourself have you left behind? Who has helped you become who you are now?
- Frederick Douglass used his own words and photographs of himself to tell his story and influence his listeners and readers. How do you try to show your true face to the world?
- Who tells the story of you or your community well? How do you shape your image to convey a message to the world? What do you leave out?

HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM

- Harriet Tubman saw visions that guided her purpose. What influences your vision for the future?

These questions invite participants to think about their own experiences related to the film topics and themes, and share these experiences with the group.

The facilitator helps participants recognize how their experiences are alike and different, and why.

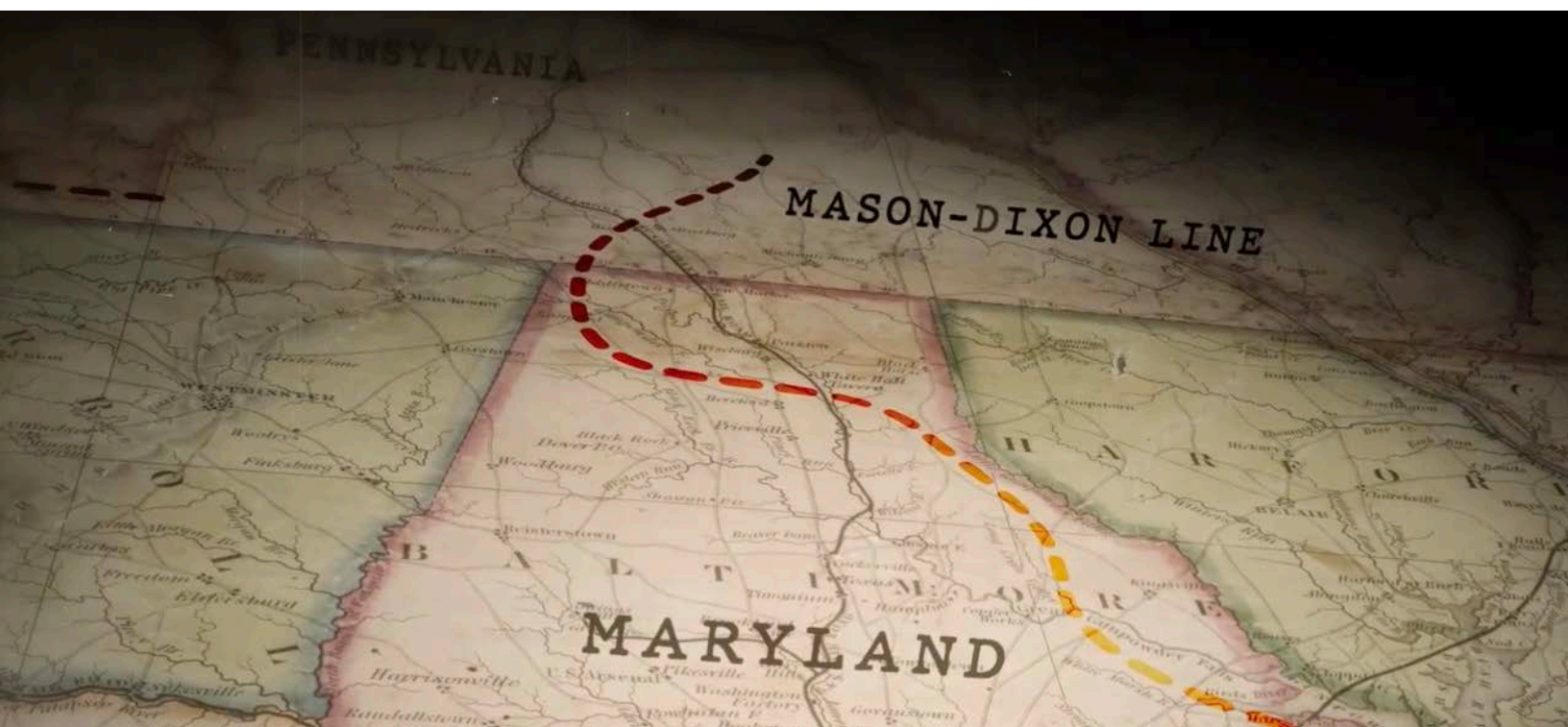


Discussion Prompts to Engage with the Most Trust

- Allies, particularly white allies, are critical and problematic for both Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. Where do you see helpful and unhelpful allyship today? What are the limits of allyship, where is there greater possibility for growth?
- The loss of childhood innocence came early for enslaved children. As we think about raising strong children today, what do they need to be protected from, and what do they need to know?
- Slavery required the destruction of Black networks of support including families (nuclear and extended), churches, the Underground Railroad, etc. Generally speaking, where do you see systems of support being broken down now? Where and how can we grow them stronger?
- One of the myths about slavery is that gender made white women kinder to enslaved people than white men, but both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass experienced a different reality. Where do you see gender confusing conversations about race, and when is it indispensable to those conversations?
- Another myth about slavery is that enslaved people were passive and did not resist, though both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass show us much different approaches. Over the course of their lives, each adopted different strategies for resistance; some strategies were more effective than others. Where do you see successful resistance around you now? What strategies do you see being counterproductive?
- Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were not equally well known in their own time. Are all change makers valued equally today? Are all approaches to change making valued equally? What drives any differences?
- Both Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass had to constantly assess the risks of their work. How have you chosen to weigh the risks of challenging injustice?

Select questions from this list to explore topics beyond participants' personal experiences.

These questions invite critical conversations as participants dig deeper into their assumptions and actively probe underlying social conditions that inform diversity of perspectives. Take note that if conflict is to arise in dialogue, this is the most likely place for it. Participants are no longer talking about themselves but are instead talking about larger visions for society.



STEP 5: Reflection and Next Steps

General Questions:

- What stood out to you about today's conversation? What did you hear that was new? What do you want to think about more?
- Who do you want to share these films and conversations with?
- What are additional resources you would recommend people learn from?

BECOMING FREDERICK DOUGLASS:

- Frederick Douglass told the country things it needed to hear, even if many people did not want to hear them. What will you share with the world?

HARRIET TUBMAN: VISIONS OF FREEDOM

- Harriet Tubman used her role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad to help others reach freedom. Who can you be a conductor for?

After dialogue that reveals differences as well as similarities between audience members, it is important to end your screening program by reinforcing a sense of community.

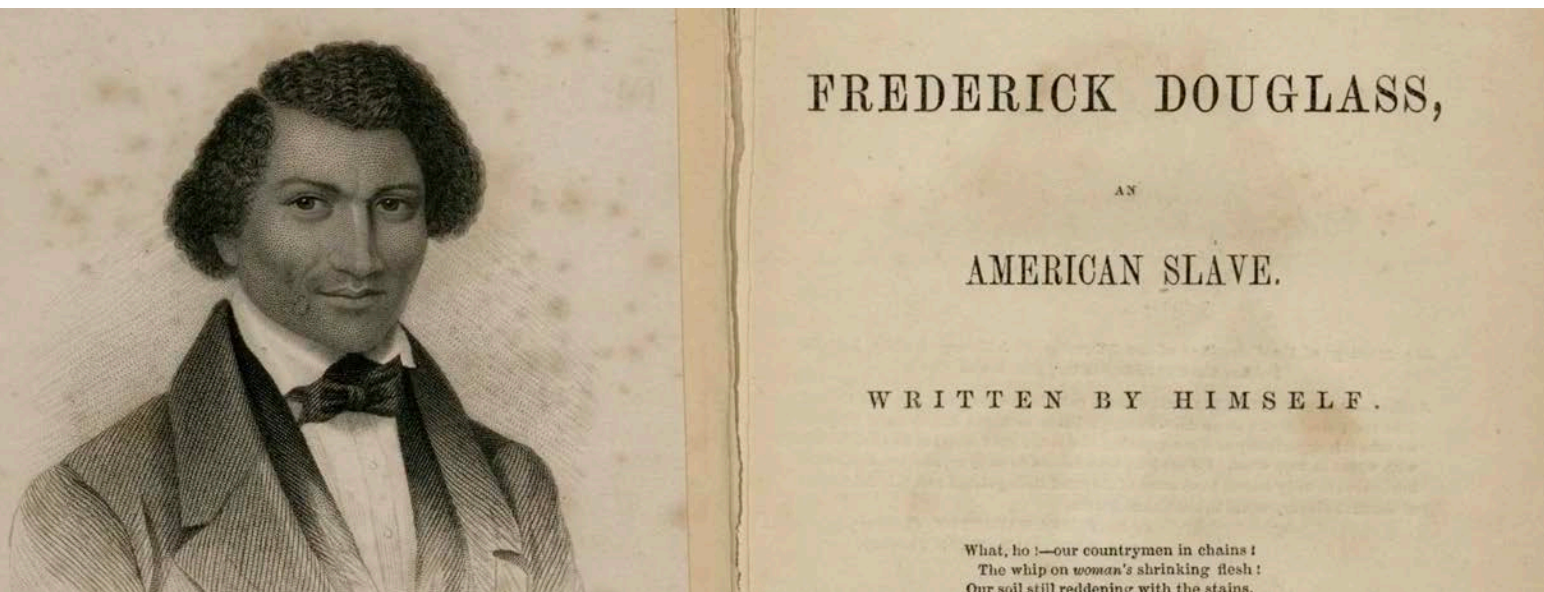
Reflection questions help participants examine what they've learned about themselves and each other and voice the impact that the dialogue has had on them. This is also the time for participants to think about what they would like to do next and how they would like to carry this dialogue further into their lives and communities.



Resources to Learn More

Here are some additional resources you can use to further your research and dialogue, courtesy of the National Park Service.

- **Aboard the Underground Railroad:**
A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary
<https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/states.htm>
Discover more about the people and places associated with the Underground Railroad as you explore historic sites located in more than 20 states.
- **Explore Network to Freedom Listings:**
<https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/states.htm>
Identify sites and locations related to the Underground Railroad as part of the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program. Each location has a verifiable connection to the Underground Railroad.
- **National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom:**
<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/index.htm>
Learn how the Network to Freedom Program honors, preserves, and promotes the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight, and advances the idea that all human beings embrace the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression.
- **Network to Freedom Underground Railroad Map:**
<https://nps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6ae641046056452c8e20d72f9c3bcbd9>
Use this interactive map to explore the Network to Freedom site listings. Listings are searchable by location.
- **Underground Railroad Experiences:**
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/explore-virtual-ugrr.htm>
Immerse yourself in different communities as you learn the stories of freedom seekers and abolitionists fighting to end slavery.



C O U R A G E - S T R E N G T H - L E G A C Y

BECOMING
Frederick Douglass

HARRIET TUBMAN
VISIONS
OF FREEDOM



Credits

Discussion Guide Writers:

- Braden Paynter, International Coalition of the Sites of Conscience
- Karla Thompson | Blair Walker, MPT
- Cara White | Mary Lugo, CaraMar, Inc.

Discussion Guide Editors:

- Michael MacFee
- Tom Williams

Graphic Design:

- John Pszeniczny

tubmandouglassfilms.org

Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom and Becoming Frederick Douglass are co-productions of Firelight Films and Maryland Public Television. Production support provided through an appropriation from the State of Maryland. Additional funding was provided by Bowie State University, DIRECTV and Pfizer, Inc.

