

# Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Teacher's Guide



HARRIET  
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**STOWE**  
CENTER

*Her words changed the world.*

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## Welcome and Learning Objectives

### Welcome

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center welcomes you to the *Teacher's Guide* to Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The *Guide* enables you, and thus your students, to learn facts and information about Stowe and her best-known book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its impact, and the community in which she lived. It also helps you prepare for the tour of Stowe's Hartford home and neighborhood. The activities and content are linked to the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework.

The mission of the Stowe Center is to preserve and interpret Harriet Beecher Stowe's Hartford home and the Center's historic collections, create a forum for vibrant discussion of her life and work, and inspire individuals to embrace and emulate her commitment to social justice by effecting positive change.

This historic site includes a Visitor Center (1873 carriage house) and museum shop, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House (1871) that is open for tours, and the Katharine Seymour Day House (1884). A tour of the Stowe House provides an intimate glimpse into the life of the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The Day House offers magnificent interiors with changing exhibits and a research library. Visitors will enjoy the Center's tranquil surroundings, accented with historical Victorian Gardens.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe Center is on the Connecticut Freedom Trail and the Connecticut Women's Heritage Trail, and commemorates Black History Month and Women's History Month.

The *Guide* is designed to frame and inform your experience and deepen student learning. The experience of visiting the Stowe Center includes:

1. A brief tour of the exhibition "A Moral Battle Cry for Freedom."
2. A tour of the Hartford home of Harriet Beecher Stowe.
3. A brief Nook Farm neighborhood walking tour.
4. Your formal evaluation of the program.
5. Preparatory and follow-up activities.

Many resources exist for teaching about Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the impact of the book. A list of some of these resources can be found at the back of the *Guide*.

We hope you enjoy your visit and we look forward to seeing you at the home and neighborhood of Harriet Beecher Stowe.

## Learning Objectives

### Study Guide Objectives

1. Provide teachers with background information and activity suggestions on the topics of Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its impact, nineteenth-century slavery, and the Hartford neighborhood known as Nook Farm.
2. Provide historical context for visiting the Harriet Beecher Stowe house and the Nook Farm neighborhood.
3. Offer resources for further study of Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and slavery.

### Learning Objectives for Students in Social Studies and Language Arts

	Learning Objective	Connecticut Curriculum Framework
1.	Learn about Harriet Beecher Stowe – writer, woman, mother, artist, abolitionist.	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes.
2.	Learn about the intentions and motivations of Harriet Beecher Stowe in writing <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> .	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes.
3.	Enable students to understand how Stowe came to an abolitionist position.	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes; 4-applying history. <i>Language Arts:</i> 1-read & respond; 2-producing texts.
4.	Learn about the impact of <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> .	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes.
5.	Understand how children and youth grew up on Nook Farm.	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes.
6.	Enable students to understand how Harriet Beecher Stowe worked for change in her community.	<i>Social Studies:</i> 1– historical thinking; 2-local history; 3-historical themes; 4-applying history. <i>Language Arts:</i> 1-read & respond; 2-producing texts.

## Background Facts and Information: Harriet Beecher Stowe

### Who Was Harriet Beecher Stowe?

Harriet Beecher Stowe – writer, mother, painter – wrote the watershed book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The book was the best seller of its time; it humanized the plight of slavery and motivated people to work against slavery.

Stowe was the seventh of eleven children of a prominent Congregational minister. Born in 1811 in Litchfield, Connecticut, she first attended school in Litchfield and then attended the **Hartford Female Seminary**, a school founded by her sister Catherine. Her father's dynamic preaching, religious energy and commitment coupled with her mother's interest in improving herself educationally, had a profound impact on Stowe and her siblings. Her father imbued a strong sense of social responsibility in his children and believed his family would play a valuable role in shaping the young United States.

**Hartford Female Seminary** was first located on a single floor above the White Horse Harness Shop. It later moved to 100 Pratt St, which is close to the modern-day Civic Center.

Stowe moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she met her husband, Calvin Ellis Stowe, a professor of theology at Lane Theological Seminary. While in Ohio, Stowe became heavily exposed to the **abolitionist** movement, which would later help her in writing her famous **antislavery** novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The story was first serialized in an abolitionist newspaper, *The National Era*, and then published as a book in 1852. In addition to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe wrote poems, travel books, biographical sketches, children's books, adult novels, and non-fiction books and articles on a wide range of subjects including homemaking and religion. In total, she wrote over thirty books, many of them best sellers.

**Abolitionism vs. Antislavery**  
**Antislavery** was a belief system based on the understanding that slavery was wrong. To be an **abolitionist** meant that you held antislavery views AND worked to end slavery.

She raised children and managed a household with her husband, Calvin, who was, for the times, very supportive of his wife and her career. Stowe helped to support her family financially with her writing. She died in 1896 at the age of 85 at her home in Hartford, CT.

**Personal asides:** In addition to her career as a writer, Stowe had several hobbies and interests, including painting and gardening. Many of her paintings, mostly flowers and landscapes, are on display in her Hartford home at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. She also enjoyed traveling and playing the piano, and had several pets, including a Pug dog.

## What Prepared Stowe to Write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

Stowe's mother, Roxanna Foote Beecher (1775-1816), who died when Stowe was only five, was always interested in improving herself educationally. Stowe pursued this same goal throughout her life.

Lyman Beecher's dynamic preaching, religious energy and commitment also had a profound impact on all of his children. In 1820, he preached antislavery sermons in response to the issue of whether Missouri should be admitted to the U.S. as a slave or a free state. He encouraged an intellectual environment at home and would often lead family debates on important issues of the day. Lyman believed that unless an individual made a personal commitment to the Christian religion that he or she was doomed. All of Lyman's children carried out their own commitment to religion, and believed that the best way of serving God was to take action in society to make a better world. Stowe's career as a writer shows how she acted out this vision.

To learn about slavery, Stowe:

1. Received formal education at her sister's Hartford Female Seminary and at the Pearce Academy in Litchfield.
2. Spoke with relatives and friends and witnessed elements and effects of slavery.
3. Felt the emotional impact of losing a child through Charley's death, and then related it to slave women losing their children through slave sales.
4. Read news articles, legal documents, correspondence, and narratives by escaped slaves.
5. Kept an open mind and allowed her views to change.

Young Stowe was first a student and then a teacher at Hartford Female Seminary. Hartford Female Seminary was one of only a handful of schools that took the education of girls seriously. Catharine Beecher introduced many innovations at the school including teaching physical education and domestic science (home economics), and the practice of student government. Catharine argued that running a home was as complicated as running a business and young women should be instructed in these duties the same way boys should be instructed in careers outside the home. Catharine also stressed the importance of written expression. Her students spent many hours composing essays. As a result of Catharine's teaching methods, Stowe received an unusually fine education, and, under her sister's guidance, began to develop her talent as a writer.

For nineteenth century women, writing was a respectable way to earn outside income. Writing could be done at home, making it particularly attractive for married women and mothers. Women also worked in the U. S. as school teachers, milliners, or dress makers. They routinely worked in textile factories, button factories, comb manufacturers; as shoemakers; and they did decorative painting on furniture, bookplates, tinware, etc. They hired out as dairymaids, nurses, and earned money spinning and weaving. Women ran newspapers, taverns and inns, or other businesses. Some of the subject matter that Stowe chose was controversial, not only for the time, but also for her gender. Women were not expected to write about slavery or abolition, but Stowe believed she had something to contribute and she was not going to allow her sex to prevent her from speaking out in the only way she could.

Stowe engaged in considerable research and reflection to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. One of her primary methods was interviewing family, friends, and those with direct experience. Frederick Douglass – abolitionist and former slave – was one of her research subjects. There is a copy of the original letter she wrote to him requesting information about his experiences beginning on page 27.

### Why Did Stowe Write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

There were several different positions to take on slavery in the early-to-mid nineteenth century. For those opposed, most people fell into one of two camps: antislavery or abolitionist. To be “antislavery” meant simply to be against its practice. The abolitionists, however, worked to “abolish” the institution. Stowe moved from antislavery to abolitionist through self-education and life changing experiences.

In 1850, the United States government passed the Fugitive Slave Act: It demanded that everyone help slave owners to track down escaping slaves. This act made it legally impossible for enslaved people to find a safe place in the United States. The Fugitive Slave Act also mandated that anyone found helping an enslaved person escape could be fined or sent to jail. Stowe's anger over this became one of the driving forces behind writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The other experience that changed Stowe's point of view was the death of her infant son Samuel Charles Stowe, or “Charley.” Eighteen-month old Charley died during a Cincinnati **cholera** epidemic in 1849, a loss which devastated Stowe. The loss of her son, she said, helped her to understand what enslaved mothers must feel when their children are torn from them and sold into slavery. Stowe felt slavery's impact on families was its worst aspect. While living in Cincinnati, Stowe and her husband helped a slave escape to freedom using the Underground Railroad. Stowe's servant, a woman Stowe thought was free, was actually an escaped slave. Stowe learned this when the woman's owner came looking for her. Stowe's brother, Henry Ward Beecher and her husband Calvin helped the woman to escape using Beecher's connections to the Underground Railroad.

The progress of the illness in a **cholera** victim was a frightening spectacle: diarrhea which increased in intensity accompanied by painful retching; thirst and dehydration; severe pain in the limbs, stomach, and abdominal muscles; a changed skin hue to a sort of bluish-gray. Source: The Victorian Web, <http://65.107.211.206/health/health10.html>

Combining her personal anguish over the loss of her son, her anger toward the Fugitive Slave Act, and experiences with the institution of slavery in her own town and across the river from Cincinnati in Kentucky Stowe poured her emotions into writing a book that opened people's eyes to the cruelty of slavery.

**Note:** The Fugitive slave Act of 1850 was not the first of its kind. Helping fugitive slaves had been illegal in the U.S. since the 1790s. What was new about the 1850 Law

was the requirement that all citizens were obligated to assist in the capture of fugitives; a significant increase in fines and jail time; and the creation of federally appointed commissioners who determined whether or not an individual was indeed a fugitive slave.

### **How Did Stowe Approach the Writing of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?**

Stowe found a way, through *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, to preach her views with an eloquence and urgency that had far more impact on the world than any sermonizing done by her seven preaching brothers. From the mid-nineteenth century through her death in 1896, there is hardly a major moral or religious issue that Stowe did not address. Stowe chose fiction as her chief means of expression and influence.

Stowe began her antislavery writing career using the pseudonym “Franklin” in a letter sent to the editor of the Cincinnati Journal. The letter used a technique Stowe would use to great persuasive effect all her writing life. It was written as a conversation between Franklin and a more conservative friend, allowing the reader to hear both sides of an argument as it might unfold, almost like a talk radio discussion.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe uses words and strongly drawn characters to produce a “picture” of slavery in Southern states – helping her readers visualize slavery’s horrors.

### **What Was the Impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?**

**Its Impact on the Nation** – When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was first published as a book in 1852 it sold 10,000 copies in the first week. By the end of the first year it had sold 300,000 copies in the United States. Many were shocked and repulsed by the atrocities that they read about in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. On the other hand, some slave owners were outraged that Stowe had written this book. People said Stowe was lying, that she had no idea what slavery was like. Stowe had never owned slaves and visited only one **plantation** (in Kentucky in 1834), but the eighteen years she spent living in Cincinnati, Ohio, a free state, exposed her to slavery and its human impact. The city was on the border of Kentucky, a slave state, and was a major trading zone for goods flowing between North and South, mixing staunch abolitionists, slave owners (and often their slaves) into regular, and sometimes violent, contact. Stowe witnessed some of this. In response to the outpouring of criticism, Stowe wrote *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, describing her sources. The book validated her information and further stimulated abolitionist fervor.

<p><b>Plantation:</b> an agricultural estate usually worked by resident labor (north or south).</p>
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**Its Impact on the Civil War (1861-1865)** – *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did not start the Civil War, but it helped to fan the arguments ravaging the young United States. The novel focused public interest on the issue of slavery and helped to aggravate the divisions between North and South. For many readers who had no personal experience with

slavery, the novel personalized its evils. For others, the novel stirred anger and outrage, as they felt that the novel was an unfair portrayal of slavery.

The issue of slavery was a major point of contention in the United States. In 1820, the Missouri Compromise kept the balance between free and slave states by balancing each free state admitted into the Union with the addition of a slave state. In addition, no territories above the southern border of Missouri could be admitted as slave states. The compromise narrowly passed within Congress, but it set the stage for future difficulties. Antislavery sentiment was growing, and by the 1850's the number of escaping slaves was increasing. Slave owners demanded legal recourse as their frustration about escapes grew. The Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 was adopted to appease the South, but the North strongly objected. Tensions grew and Southern states threatened to secede from the Union and form their own nation. As the newly elected President, Lincoln would not allow the Union to disintegrate and the Civil War erupted in 1861 with the secession of South Carolina.

### ***Uncle Tom's Cabin – A Summary***

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* begins in Kentucky. The novel contains two major story lines, several subplots, and many characters.

In the first story line, the main character is Tom (Uncle Tom), a trusted and religious man who is sold to pay his owner's (Mr. Shelby) debt. Faced with the decision of whether or not to run away, Tom decides not to run away so that he might save his own family from being sold or dispersed. Taken from his wife and children, Tom is brought by boat to New Orleans. On the journey, he rescues a young white child, Eva St. Clare, from drowning. Her grateful father purchases Tom and he becomes the family's valued coachman. After the deaths of Eva and her father, Tom's situation changes abruptly. He is sold to the cruel Simon Legree. Legree eventually whips Tom to death.

George Harris, his wife Eliza, and their infant son Harry, are the focus of the second story. The family is living apart because George is the property of one owner, and Eliza and Harry are the property of Mr. Shelby. Mistreated by his owner, George decides to escape to Canada. He intends to go alone and then purchase his wife and son's freedom. After his escape, Eliza discovers that their child is to be sold along with Tom to settle Shelby's debt and so she runs away with Harry. Pursued by slave catchers, she makes a dangerous crossing of the semi-frozen Ohio River by jumping from one ice block to the next to reach the shore of the free state of Ohio. Eventually the Harris family is reunited and they flee together to Canada.

## Who is Uncle Tom?

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is controversial today just as it was in 1852. Deeply religious, Stowe intended the book to demonstrate that slavery was a crime against God and to convince her readers that they should not tolerate slavery. Filled with a cast of characters from the North and South, black and white, enslaved and free, slave owner and abolitionist, Stowe tried to show that the institution of slavery dehumanized everyone: those who practiced it, those who supported it, those who tried to ignore it, and those who lived under its yoke. Ten years after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appeared, leading abolitionist Frederick Douglass asserted that Stowe's portrayal of slavery was accurate and praised the book as one of the chief factors in bringing freedom to slaves. Other readers felt that the character of Uncle Tom was submissive and called this a chief defect of the novel.

Stowe drew heavily on a variety of real life people and "types" for her portrayal of all the characters. She drew on historical figures including the former slave Josiah Henson, a minister who fled to freedom in Canada and had published his autobiography. Tom has all the qualities and virtues that Stowe admired and wanted to celebrate: strength of character, devotion to family, and, above all, religious faith. Religion formed an essential part of Stowe's life, and she described how Tom's faith is constantly tested as he faces hardship, pain, danger, and death. He has been called a Christ-like figure. Tom ultimately sacrifices his life in order to save the lives of others, and forgives his persecutor.

### How Did Uncle Tom Become an "Uncle Tom"?

Published in 1852, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 10,000 copies in the first week and over 300,000 in the first year. Just as filmmakers today adapt best-selling novels to the tastes of the mass market, so several nineteenth century theatre producers immediately appropriated Stowe's successful book for the stage.

Unlike the novel, many of the **burlesque**, vaudeville and minstrel shows of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appealed to both pro-slavery and antislavery audiences. Called "Tom shows," they significantly distorted Stowe's work. The role of African American characters was minimized while the white characters took center stage. One of the most influential theater versions focused on the close relationship between Tom and the white child that he had rescued, Little Eva. She became the star of the show: her death, not Tom's was mourned and Tom evolved from a physically robust and devoted husband and father who practiced his faith by confronting and dealing with difficult situations to a weak, submissive, elderly man devoted to his white owners.

Incredibly popular, constantly playing to full houses across the country well in to the twentieth-century, these shows strayed further and further from the book until they became carnival-like entertainment complete with music and live animals and white actors playing all the roles. By 1900, the average white American had been to several theatrical productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin's* success spawned other commercial spin-offs, such as “Topsy” Tobacco and “Topsy” Chocolate Soda. The “Tom shows” and the products trivialized and romanticized the horrors of slavery, they perpetuated stereotypes of Blacks that persist today.

### **Why Is *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Important Today?**

Slavery's legacy still affects us. The widespread readership of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* helped many Americans understand the atrocities of slavery and racism. Stowe did what she knew best: she wrote a book from her heart, and with support from friends and family, was able to disseminate it worldwide. This same model can be used by anyone to create change in her or his community.

Stowe's work continues to be explored in films, books, dance concerts, and is studied and discussed by scholars. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is an indelible report of the slave experience and keeps us in touch with the dehumanization of slavery past and present.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Slavery continues today in the United States and elsewhere. For more information visit [www.iabolish.com](http://www.iabolish.com).

## Timeline of Events

1811	Harriet Elisabeth Beecher (Harriet Beecher Stowe), daughter of Lyman Beecher and Roxanna Foote, is born in Litchfield, Connecticut, June 14.
1816	Roxanna Foote Beecher, Stowe's mother, dies in September.
1817	Lyman Beecher, Stowe's father, marries Harriet Porter in October.
1824-31	Harriet Beecher studies and teaches at the Hartford Female Seminary, the school founded by her sisters Catharine and Mary under Catharine's leadership.
1832	The Beecher family moves to Cincinnati, Ohio, where Lyman Beecher was appointed President of Lane Theological Seminary.
1833	The book <u>Primary Geography for Children, on an Improved Plan</u> , written by Stowe and credited to her sister Catherine, is published. After several printings, Harriet Beecher is accorded recognition as a coauthor.
1834	"A New England Sketch" is published in <u>Western Monthly Magazine</u> . This is Stowe's first signed story and she received \$50 for her effort.
1835	Harriet Porter, Lyman Beecher's second wife, dies in July.
1836	Harriet Beecher and Calvin Ellis Stowe marry in January. Their twin daughters, Harriet and Eliza, are born in September. Lyman Beecher marries Lydia Beals Jackson in October.
1838	Henry Ellis Stowe, her son, is born in January.
1840	Frederick William Stowe, her son, is born in May.
1843	Georgiana May Stowe, her daughter, is born in May. <u>The Mayflower: or Sketches of Scenes and Characters Among the Descendants of the Pilgrims</u> , written by Stowe, is published.
1848	Samuel Charles Stowe, her son, is born in January.
1849	Samuel Charles Stowe dies during a cholera epidemic in July.
1850	The Stowe family moves to Brunswick, Maine, where Calvin is appointed to the faculty of Bowdoin College. Stowe moves first with the children, then Calvin follows. Charles Edward Stowe, her son, is born September 18. The Fugitive Slave Act passes. Stowe is urged to write against slavery by her sister-in-law.
1851-52	<u>Uncle Tom's Cabin: or Life Among the Lowly</u> , appears as a serial in the abolitionist newspaper <u>The National Era</u> , June 5, 1851 though April 1, 1852.
1852	<u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> is published in book form March 20. Over 300,000 copies are sold in the first year.
1853	<u>A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> and <u>Uncle Sam's Emancipation</u> are published. The Stowe family moves to Andover, Massachusetts, where Calvin is appointed to the faculty of Andover Theological Seminary. Stowe, now recognized as a leader of the abolitionist movement, tours the British Isles and Europe at the invitation of the Glasgow Antislavery Society.
1857	Her son Henry Ellis Stowe dies while swimming in the Connecticut River. Henry was attending Dartmouth College at the time.
1859	<u>The Minister's Wooing</u> is published.
1862	Stowe met with Abraham Lincoln at the White House.
1869	<u>American Women's Home</u> is published, coauthored with Catherine Beecher, her sister.

1864	Oakholm is completed: Stowe's dream home in Hartford's Nook Farm.
1867	Stowe buys land in Mandarin, Florida, and builds a winter home there.
1871	Her son, Frederick, leaves for the west coast, and the family never hears from him again.
1871	<u>My Wife and I; or, Harry Henderson's History</u> and <u>Pink and White Tyranny; a Society Novel</u> are published.
1872	"Palmetto Leaves from Florida" appears in serial form in <u>The Christian Union</u> . <u>Oldtown Fireside Stories</u> .
1873	The Stoves move into their new home on Forest Street in Hartford, Connecticut, a short distance from "Oakholm," their previous home in the neighborhood. <u>Palmetto Leaves</u> is published.
1874	<u>Woman in Sacred History; A Series of Sketches Drawn from Scriptural, Historical and Legendary Sources</u> is published.
1875	Charles Edward Stowe, Stowe's surviving son, graduates from Harvard. <u>We and Our Neighbors; or, the Records of an Unfashionable Street</u> is published.
1876	<u>Betty's Bright Idea</u> is published.
1877	<u>Footsteps of the Master</u> is published.
1878	Charles Stowe is ordained a minister. <u>Poganuc People; Their Loves and Lives</u> published. This is an autobiographical novel about Stowe's childhood in Litchfield, Connecticut.
1879	Charles Stowe marries Susan Munro, May. He then assumes the ministry of the First Congregational Church in Saco, Maine.
1881	<u>A Dog's Mission; or, The Story of the Old Avery</u> is published.
1883	<u>Nelly's Heroics. With Other Heroic Stories</u> is published.
1886	Calvin Ellis Stowe dies in August of Bright's Disease (a disease of the kidneys).
1889	<u>The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe Compiled from Her Letters and Journals</u> by Charles Stowe, her son, is published. This is an authorized version and is overseen by his mother.
1890	Georgiana Stowe Allen dies due to septicemia (blood poisoning). This may have been due to complications from morphine addiction. Morphine had been prescribed for complications of pregnancy years earlier.
1896	Harriet Beecher Stowe dies on July 1.

## Historical Context

### Opposition to Slavery

Source: National Freedom Trail website,  
<http://209.10.16.21/TEMPLATE/FrontEnd/index.cfm>

The early antislavery movement in the U.S. included early abolition societies, prominent from the 1780s to about 1812, which were present in almost every state. Spiritually based antislavery work became significant in the mid-1700s. These early activities also demonstrated the efforts of African Americans who made political and economic contributions to encourage emancipation, to end the slave trade and, ultimately, to abolish slavery in the United States.

Early antislavery labors were direct precursors to the Underground Railroad. An example of early resistance would be African American efforts to flee the United States for Canada during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, to fight for the British during these conflicts in exchange for freedom, and to organize rebellions as in the Stono Rebellion in 1739, Gabriel Prosser's Conspiracy of 1800, Denmark Vesey's rebellion (1822) and Nat Turner's famous uprising of 1832.

The American Revolution and subsequent adoption of the Constitution challenged slavery in one important, though perhaps unintended, way. The rhetoric and ideology of the American Founding Fathers, especially as embodied in the Declaration of Independence, affirmed individual rights of life and liberty. These philosophies were painfully at odds with the continued enslavement of African Americans, a point not lost on them. The Constitution did not realize the implications of "liberty" offered in the Declaration of Independence. The Constitutional Compromise of 1787 fixed a 1808 date to end American participation in the international slave trade and the 1787 Northwest Ordinance prohibited the spread of "slavery nor involuntary servitude" to lands organized north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi." However, the Compromise also created the "three-fifths" rule, whereby enslaved African Americans were counted as three-fifths of a person for census and congressional delegation tallies in the less populated slaveholding states, thus dehumanizing slaves at the same time.

#### Northern States Take the Lead Against Slavery

Northern states, however racist, were antislavery. Massachusetts in 1780 and New Hampshire in 1783 enacted absolute prohibitions against slavery. Vermont, which framed a Constitution fourteen years before entering the Union, abolished slavery in the first article of that document. In 1780, Pennsylvania ruled that all African Americans born in the state after March 1 would be free at age twenty-eight. In 1784, Rhode Island decreed that all African Americans born in the state after March 1784 were free, while

Connecticut, in that same year, granted gradual emancipation. New York enacted gradual emancipation in 1799, and a second Act decreed that slavery in the state would be forbidden after July 4, 1827. New Jersey enacted gradual emancipation in 1804. The regional character of slavery was beginning to materialize-- an essential development in the Underground Railroad's varied paths to freedom.

The 1820 Missouri Compromise had settled, for a time, the debate surrounding the extension of slavery into U.S. territories. Under the compromise, a formula was developed that defined the regional boundaries of slavery and created a system which admitted states into the Union in pairs—one free, one enslaved.

During the course of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War, the debate over extending slavery rose again. David Wilmot, a young Pennsylvania congressman, attached a short amendment to a war appropriations bill which declared "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist" in any lands acquired from Mexico. Though perhaps humanitarian on the surface, The Wilmot Proviso was intended to preserve these lands, as Wilmot declared, for "the sons of toil, of my own race and own color." Other northern politicians resented the Southern presumption of the inevitable spread of slavery, while Southerners saw the Wilmot Proviso as an attack on the Constitution, which slaveholders believed protected slavery. Though the appropriations bill was eventually passed without the proviso, politicians debated the bill not as members of opposing political parties, but as northerners and southerners. The sectional character of the pro and anti slavery debates began to take shape.

With the victory over Mexico in the Mexican-American War, the United States did acquire vast new lands, including California. Questions over the extension of slavery rose again and the political wounds opened during the Wilmot Proviso debate were reopened. To resolve these issues, Congress debated and passed the Compromise of 1850. The territories of New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and Utah would be organized without mention of slavery -- the decision would be left to the territory's inhabitants upon application for statehood. The District of Columbia's large and highly profitable slave trade would be abolished, though slavery would continue. California would be admitted as a free state.

### **The Fugitive Slave Law**

To pacify proslavery advocates who objected to the free and slave state imbalance, a second, more oppressive, Fugitive Slave Law was passed. Of all the acts that made up the Compromise of 1850, this law was the most controversial and most despised. It required citizens to assist in the recovery of alleged freedom seekers. It denied a detained freedom-seeker the right to jury trial. Cases were adjudicated by a special commissioner, who received \$5 for each freedom seeker released and \$10 for each African American condemned to slavery.

The Fugitive Slave Law had drastic consequences for escaped African Americans, who quickly realized that the North was no longer a haven. From 1850 to 1860, an estimated

20,000 free African Americans relocated from northern cities to Canada. Harriet Jacobs, a freedom seeker who would later go on to fame by authoring *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, decried the passage of the law as the "beginning of a reign of terror to the colored population." Conversely, the Fugitive Slave Act made abolitionists more dedicated to the eradication of slavery. The Underground Railroad became more overt, and reached its peak of activity between 1850 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. As the secretary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society wrote in 1851, "Notwithstanding the stringent provisions of the Fugitive Bill, and the confidence which was felt in it as a certain cure for escape, we are happy to know that the evasion of slaves was never greater than at this moment."

To combat the fugitive slave laws, some northern state legislatures passed "personal liberty laws." Some of these acts stretched back to the 1830s, and provided for jury trials and attorneys to the captured freedom seeker. After passage of the 1850 Fugitive Act, new personal liberty laws were enacted all over the north which reinforced the right to trial and counsel, but also prohibited the use of state jails and forbade state officers to give aid to the slaver. In all, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Michigan, Maine, Wisconsin, Kansas, Ohio and Pennsylvania passed personal liberty laws. New Hampshire, New York, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, passed limited personal freedom acts. Conversely, New Jersey and California gave some official sanction to the capture of freedom seekers, though they ostensibly remained free states.

### **Abolitionists**

"Abolitionist" had different meanings at different times in American history. Early state societies were formed to abolish slavery through legislative actions and personal manumission. Where slavery persisted, these societies faded. Slavery as a national issue was revived by Congressional debates on the future of American territories and by the raised voices and actions of free and enslaved African Americans and white abolitionist allies and politicians. William Lloyd Garrison began publishing the anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator* in 1831. The journal soon rose to national prominence as the leading antislavery publication in the United States. Garrison demanded the uncompensated manumission of all enslaved African Americans. Beginning in the 1830s, large-scale emancipation became the goal of abolitionism.

Some abolitionists, or even marginal abolitionists such as President Abraham Lincoln, favored "colonization," the return of African-Americans to Africa or some other region outside the United States. The roots of the colonization movement dates back to various plans first proposed in the eighteenth century. From the start, colonization of free African Americans in Africa was an issue on which both whites and African Americans were divided. Some African Americans supported emigration because they believed they would never receive justice in the United States. Others believed African Americans should remain in the United States to fight against slavery and for full legal rights as American citizens. Some whites saw colonization as a way of ridding the nation of imported Africans while others believed African American colonists could play a central role in Christianizing and "civilizing" Africa.

## **The American Colonization Society**

The American Colonization Society was formed in 1817 to send free African Americans to Africa as an alternative to emancipation in the United States. In 1822, the society established on the West Coast of Africa a colony that in 1847 became the independent nation of Liberia. By 1867, the society had sent more than 13,000 emigrants to the new nation.

In the 1830s, the society came under harsh criticism from abolitionists, who tried to discredit colonization as a slaveholder's scheme. By the end of the Civil War, when many freed African Americans wanted to go to Liberia, financial support for colonization had waned. During its later years the society focused on educational and missionary efforts in Liberia rather than emigration. Colonization never gained a large following, simply because Africa was no longer home to free African Americans who had resided in the United States for years or even generations. Despite racism and slavery, African Americans viewed the United States as home.

Religiously motivated abolitionists constituted a large group and were organized loosely into the American and Foreign Anti-slavery society from 1840 until the mid-1850s. Political abolitionists were closely aligned with the church-based groups. Most of the political abolitionists found their way into the new Republication Party; the "Radical Republicans," who were vehemently antislavery, formed in 1854. The political issues of the 1850s energized political abolitionists like no previous era. The Compromise of 1850, steered through Congress by Illinois Senator and future presidential candidate Stephen A. Douglass, politicized the slavery question by enacting the strict federal Fugitive Slave Act, which made citizen assistance in capturing freedom seekers mandatory. Citizens refusing to cooperate were penalized under the law. The compromise ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C., but it did not take the next step of ending slavery in the nation's capitol. Further, it angered Northerners by permitting slavery to spread westward.

## **The Dred Scott Decision of 1857**

The Dred Scott decision of 1857 further enraged free state advocates. Scott, originally from the slave state of Missouri, was transported by his master through the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin. Finally back in Missouri, Scott sued for his freedom on the grounds that his residence in free lands nullified his slave status. The U.S. Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice (and Virginia slaveholder) Roger Taney, not only ruled against Scott but also passed judgment on the larger issue of slave restriction. Taney ruled that African Americans were not citizens and thus not entitled to any rights a citizen might enjoy. Taney went on to state that African Americans had been held "so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," and that Congress had exceeded its authority in limiting the geographic expansion of slavery through acts such as the 1820 Missouri Compromise. Slavery could not be excluded from federal territories. The decision raised a storm of protest, and insured that there could be no long-term accommodation between free and slaveholding interests regarding slavery.

African American abolitionists who had sought white allies sometimes felt they were kept on the margins of the antislavery movement. Anti-slavery did not necessarily translate to pro-African American or even pro-equality sentiment. White abolitionists had often come to abolitionism through benevolence and saw slavery as part of a larger human reform movement. African Americans, meanwhile, saw the fight for the end of slavery as the first priority. Increasingly, free African Americans had their own meetings and supported newspapers published by African Americans, such as *The North Star*, published by Frederick Douglass and the *Colored American* by Samuel Cornish.

### **Safety Through Secrecy**

Where it existed, the Underground Railroad in the South was extremely cautious, careful and secretive. It lived covertly in the port cities of the Atlantic coast and in the Appalachian Mountains of the southern interior. It existed among certain church denominations – Black Baptist or Congregationalist – and as described, it existed where the American South bordered Mexico and Florida prior to that region’s annexation.

As slaveholders and proslavery newspapers described, most of the aid provided to freedom seekers in the South was given by free African Americans and the enslaved. When the freedom seeker Anthony Burns was kidnapped by slave-catchers in Boston and returned to Richmond, Virginia, he kept writing materials hidden in his jail cell. Six times he wrapped a letter to a rock and threw it out the cell window at a passing African American. Each time, the letter was mailed and reached its destination, demonstrating the type of unplanned aid given to freedom seekers -- even those behind bars -- which made the Underground Railroad hard to define and more difficult to control.

Some slave states’ whites also aided freedom seekers. Their activities are shrouded in more secrecy than the actions of white northerners who came south to assist, or forcefully liberate, the enslaved. As early as the 1790s, there are accounts of whites who encouraged African American revolts in Virginia. Gabriel Prosser, following his aborted revolt, hid for ten days on a river vessel captained by a white man. An African American boatman ultimately betrayed him. Such activity by white southerners, once discovered, brought severe and rapid punishments such as imprisonment, fines, whippings and social isolation. By the 1850s, most antislavery southern whites had abandoned the South for abolitionist lives in the North.

## The Harriet Beecher Stowe House

In 1873 Harriet Beecher Stowe purchased a painted brick “cottage” at 1 Forest Street (now 73 Forest St.). It was modest by the standards of the Nook Farm neighborhood, which included several mansions. The gardens surrounding the house reflect Stowe’s fondness for the plantings of the Victorian era. She lived in the home with her husband, Calvin Stowe, a retired professor and Biblical scholar, and their adult twin daughters, Eliza and Harriet. Harriet wrote 30 books during her lifetime. Six of those were written while living on Forest St., one a work of nonfiction: Woman in Sacred History; A Series of Sketches Drawn from Scriptural, Historical and Legendary Sources. The book was a collection of biographies of famous women from the Bible. Stowe wrote the book because she wanted to remind her readers, “that these men and women of the Bible were really flesh and blood, of the same human nature with ourselves.”

This was Stowe’s second residence in the neighborhood. The first, called Oakholm, was built in 1864 in the southern portion of Nook Farm (near the current intersection of Laurel and Capital). The house was torn down years ago to build a factory.

She lived in the house until her death in 1896.

The first floor of the house includes a front parlor, traditionally a setting reserved for receiving distinguished guests or hosting formal events, and a rear parlor, which was a living room for reading, playing games, taking tea, and other family activities. The front parlor includes a table owned by Stowe when she was writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. She likely used it for writing parts of the book.

The furnishings in the first floor rooms, as well as throughout the house, are a blend of several centuries. There are eighteenth century heirlooms alongside Empire and Victorian pieces. Artworks adorn the house. Paintings, such as the copy of “Madonna of the Goldfinch” by Raphael, and statuary, such as a Venus de Milo reproduction, are souvenirs of Stowe’s travels in Europe. Oils and watercolors painted by Stowe herself attest to her artistic talent.

Dominated by a three-arm gasolier, the formal dining room holds Stowe’s dining table and a set of period chairs. A Victorian sideboard with its realistic carvings of birds and fruits exhibits a decorative assortment of tableware. The pinewood kitchen with bins, shelves, window casings, and doors grained to look chestnut, is based upon the efficient model recommended by Stowe and her educator sister, Catherine Beecher, in The American Woman’s Home (1869).

The American Women’s Home entered a market saturated with books about houses and housekeeping but outsold its competitors and is reprinted today. The sisters began their book by announcing their intent to make domestic work respectable – not demanding that housewives be paid for their labor, but by endeavoring to transform domesticity into a profession, similar to others such as law, medicine, or divinity.

On the second floor are the family bedrooms and a bathing room. Next to Stowe's bedroom is a sitting room, with "cottage-style" furniture decorated by her. Many objects in these rooms were acquired during the family's travels, from the etchings of classical ruins, which are typical tourist purchases of the era, to the scenes of Maine, Florida and Scotland hand painted by Stowe. A Ward's case, or terrarium, in Stowe's bedroom is filled with native ferns and mosses.

## Nook Farm

Nook Farm was a neighborhood in Hartford where the residents were a circle of close friends and literary types who loomed large in the literary, political and social worlds of Victorian-era Hartford and the nation. It got its name from a "nook" in the Park River, which defined the property's southeast corner. Harriet Beecher Stowe made it her home in 1864 and remained there until she died in 1896.

**The boundaries of Nook Farm** are Farmington Ave. to the north; Sigourney St. to the east; the Park River (now underground) to the south and west.

**Isabella Beecher Hooker**, Stowe's younger half-sister, was interested in the status of women; she became one of the most prominent advocates of women's suffrage in the United States. She organized the first convention held in Connecticut to discuss women in government, and formed the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association. In 1871 she organized the suffragist convention in Washington D.C. For seven years until its passage she submitted to the Connecticut legislature a bill to guarantee women the same property rights as their husbands.

In 1853, Nook Farm began as a collaborative purchase between John Hooker (a lawyer, husband of **Isabella Beecher**, and descendant of Hartford founder Thomas Hooker) and his brother-in-law, Francis Gillette (a Senator, abolitionist, and temperance reformer). Following the purchase, the land was subdivided and sold in pieces.

Over the years the community attracted friends, relatives, business associates, and literary types, including Stowe, Hartford Courant editors

**Suzie Warner**, wife of Charles Dudley, was an accomplished pianist.

Joseph Hawley and Charles Dudley Warner (see box for **Suzie Warner**), and Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). This idealistic, liberal circle of friends was a tight one, and there were frequent impromptu social activities and intellectual discussions.

The everyday life of Nook Farm was lived less in the single-family sphere than in the social area where families met on common ground. The informality of the old farm was perpetuated and enlarged in this unique community of friends and relatives. The houses appeared to be irregularly spaced on one enormous estate. Winding among the trees were paths and shortcuts that the neighbors used without going to the street. Doors were unlocked, and residents of the farm walked in and out of each other's houses without knocking. William Dean Howells wrote that the Clemenses and Warners "live very near each other, in a sort of suburban grove, and their neighbors are the Stowes and the Hookers, and a great many delightful people. They go in and out of each other's houses without ringing, and nobody gets more than the first syllable of his first name -- they call

their minister Joe Twitchell.” This was true for all residents attached to the inner circle that included the Clemens, Warners, Stowes, Hookers, and Gillettes.

## Key Terms and Figures

Abolitionism vs. Antislavery	Antislavery was a belief system based on the understanding that slavery was wrong. To be an abolitionist meant that you held antislavery views AND worked to end slavery.
Abolitionist	An abolitionist held antislavery views AND worked to end slavery.
Beecher, Henry Ward	Beecher, Stowe’s brother, had a national reputation for his oratorical skills, and drew crowds of 2,500 regularly every Sunday. He strongly opposed slavery and favored temperance and woman’s suffrage. He served as minister at Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, NY.
Burlesque	A literary or dramatic work that seeks to ridicule by means of grotesque exaggeration or comic imitation.
Cholera	The progress of the illness in a cholera victim was a frightening spectacle: diarrhea which increased in intensity accompanied by painful retching; thirst and dehydration; severe pain in the limbs, stomach, and abdominal muscles; and skin hue of bluish-gray.
Douglass, Frederick	A former slave, was one of the foremost leaders of the abolition movement which fought to end slavery in the United States in the decades prior to the Civil War.
Fugitive Slave Act	(1850) A law demanding that citizens help slave owners track down escaped slaves
Hartford Female Seminary	Stowe’s sister, Catherine Beecher, founded this school. Despite the word seminary in its name, it did not train women for the ministry. Women weren’t permitted to be ministers. The term “seminary” was another word for a private school for young women. The school was first located on a single floor above the White Horse Harness Shop. It later moved to 100 Pratt St, which is close to the modern-day Civic Center.
Plantation	An agricultural estate usually worked by resident labor (north or south).
Slavery	The status or condition of a person over whom the right of ownership is exercised, including through forms of violence.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher	Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) is best known today as the author of <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> , which helped galvanize the abolitionist cause and contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War.
Underground Railroad	As Charles H. Blockson describes in his <u>National Geographic</u> article "Escape from Slavery: The Underground Railroad," (1984) "it was a network of paths through the woods and fields, river crossings, boats and ships, trains and wagons, all haunted by the specter of recapture. The slaves' flight to freedom was made possible and facilitated by the courageous men and women who believed in the right of all humans to be free from human bondage.”

## Additional Resources

### Websites

*Note: Website addresses and content change frequently. We recommend that you use a search engine to find additional sites on Harriet Beecher Stowe, slavery, and Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

[www.HarrietBeecherStoweCenter.org](http://www.HarrietBeecherStoweCenter.org) -- Website of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center and Library in Hartford, CT, featuring information on the life and times of Harriet Beecher Stowe, teacher and student resources, membership information, related links and much more.

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/) -- PBS site chronicles the history of American slavery through images, documents, stories, biographies, and commentary. Includes teaching materials.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA97/riedy/hbs.html> -- Mothers in Uncle Tom's America – this site contains representations of mothers and motherhood circulating in the popular press in the period 1830-1870, roughly two decades on either side of the 1852 publication date of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/> -- Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture. The website links you to archival materials, photographs, and other resources related to the book and its impact.

<http://209.10.16.21/TEMPLATE/FrontEnd/index.cfm> -- National Underground Railroad Freedom Trail website, which has information on slavery and the underground railroad.

<http://www.iabolish.com/> -- **The American Anti-Slavery Group** is a human rights group dedicated to abolishing modern day slavery worldwide. Based in Boston, Massachusetts it works to extend the wave of emancipation to the millions of people trapped in bondage. Its efforts center around building public awareness, leading advocacy campaigns, and empowering survivors and activists.

### Books

Ammons, Elizabeth and Belasco, Susan eds. Approaches to Teaching Uncle Tom's Cabin. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2000. *Essays by high school and college teachers express a variety of perspectives on interpreting the novel and approaching it in the classroom.*

Gossett, Thomas F. Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture. Dallas: Southern Methodist UP, 1985.

Hedrick, Joan D. Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life. New York: Oxford UP, 1994. *Pulitzer-prize winning biography of Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

Hedrick, Joan D., ed. The Oxford Harriet Beecher Stowe Reader. New York: Oxford U P, 1999. *A focused selection of Stowe's writing from the 1830s through the 1860s. Particularly suited for courses in nineteenth century American Literature, Women's Literature and American History. Divided into three sections: Early Sketches, Anti-Slavery writings, Domestic Culture and Politics.*

King, Wilma. Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth Century America. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998. *Using sources such as personal papers and U.S. government interviews with former slaves compiled in the 1930s, this book documents the effects of slavery on enslaved children.*

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin. Ammons, Elizabeth, Ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994. *The Norton edition includes a thorough introduction, an unedited version of the novel and a significant collection of responses to the novel. Appendices include maps, slave sale announcements, illustrations, a letter from Stowe, excerpts from slave narratives and critical reviews from the nineteenth and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin. New York: Anro P, 1968. *Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon Which the Story's founded. Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Word (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books). Stowe wrote this in defense of those who questioned the truth of her novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Includes a comprehensive collection of her research material.*

### Essay

Peterson, Mary Jane. "Raising a Passionate Voice. Teaching Uncle Tom's Cabin to Less Experienced Readers." In Ammons, Elizabeth, and Susan Belasco, eds., Approaches to Teaching Uncle Tom's Cabin. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2000. *Written by an 11<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who believes that teaching Uncle Tom's Cabin can enable students to find their own 'passionate voices.' Includes reading, writing and discussion activities and student responses.*

## Writing Prompts

Choose the prompts that match your students' abilities and interests:

### Expository Writing

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe was a writer, wife, and mother. How was she able to manage doing these three jobs at once? Describe the responsibilities your parents have. How do they manage to do all of those things? How do their responsibilities compare with Stowe's?
2. List three effects that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had on people who read the book and on the United States. List three reasons why the book had such a big impact.

### Persuasive Writing

1. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a book that pointed out how harmful slavery was to Americans, Christian Americans, and the country as a whole. The book was a best seller, and it was also very controversial. People who believed that slavery should continue made threats against Stowe, but she was lucky: No harm came to her. Should she have considered the harm that might come to her family as a result of the book's publication? If so, should the potential for harm have stopped her from publishing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Why or why not?
2. Slavery continues in the United States today. Immigrants from countries such as Mexico are brought to this country and are forced to work on farms with no pay, and under harsh working conditions. Recently, in New York State, a group of farm slaves were discovered and freed by government officials.<sup>2</sup> Some of the slaves consisted of entire families (parents with children). Should someone help these former slaves create a good life in the United States? If so, how should they be helped? If not, what do you think should happen to them?

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<sup>2</sup> "Uncle Tom's Cabin in Upstate New York." New York Daily News, 24 Jun. 2002.

## Preparing for Your Visit

### Before Going to the Stowe House

#### Questioning

Use information from the study guide to explore the following questions before, during, and after your visit to the Stowe house.

1. What education did Stowe experience while growing up? How does this compare to your own?
2. Why did Stowe write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?
3. How did Stowe learn about slavery?
4. What was the impact of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* during Stowe's time?
5. As you walk through Stowe's house, what evidence can you find that she was a writer?
6. There are several objects related to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the back parlor. What are they? Why were they made?
7. How did Stowe feel about her children? How did she express those feelings to them? Did she express them the way your parents or grandparents do to you?

#### Online

Have your students visit the Stowe Center website:

[www.HarrietBeecherStoweCenter.org](http://www.HarrietBeecherStoweCenter.org).

1. Click on "Visit Us," the "Stowe House." Look at photos of the house, the interior and some background on the house and Stowe.
2. Click on "Gardens." Here, students will learn more about Stowe's love for gardens and see those gardens in bloom.
3. Click on "Harriet's Life and Times." Scan this page with students, and tell them that they could read more about Stowe by going to this page at a later time.

## Program Evaluation

**Please complete and return this form to the Stowe Center** following your visit. Your information will be used to improve the tour and Guide for future visits. The results of all evaluations will be summarized and communicated to our funders.

This form consists of two pages.

<b>Teacher's Name</b>			
<b>School</b>			
<b>School Address</b>			
<b>Email</b>			
<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>Calling on the Stowes</b>	<b>In Harriet's Garden</b>	
	<b>Nook Farm Walking Tour</b>	<b>Paths to Change</b>	
	<b>Stowe and Twain: Effecting Social Change</b>		
<b>Grade</b>		<b>Date of Visit</b>	
<b>No. of Students</b>		<b>Phone</b>	

**Please answer each question using the following scale:**

**1 = poor; 2 = needs improvement; 3 = average; 4 = very good; 5 =outstanding**

1. How was your experience with the program? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

2. Was the study guide helpful for preparing your students? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

3. Please rate the quality of your museum educator. 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

4. How was your experience with the reservation process? How can it be improved? 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

*Page two of evaluation form*

**Please respond by circling “yes” or “no.”**

5. Would you recommend the program to other teachers? If not why not? Yes No
6. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group of teachers to discuss tour improvements? Yes No

**Other Comments:**

**Please return this form to:** Education Department, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 77 Forest St., Hartford, CT 06105.

## Letter from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Frederick Douglass: Transcript

**Note:** This is an exact transcription. It includes the grammar, punctuation, and spelling of the time. It also reflects the informality we all use when writing letters and emails. English grammar and spelling have changed over time and will continue to evolve. The rules are never final.

Frederick Douglass Esq.

(1851)

Sir –

You may perhaps have noticed in your editorial reading of a series of articles that I am furnishing for the *Era* under the title “Uncle Tom’s Cabin or Life among the lowly” – In the course of my story, the scene will fall upon a cotton plantation – I am very desirous here to gain information from one who has been an actual laborer on one - & it occurs to me that in the circle of your acquaintance there might be one who would be able to communicate to me some such information as I desire – I have before me an able paper written by a southern planter in which the details & *modus operandi* are given from *his* point of sight –

I am anxious to have some more from another standpoint – I wish to be able to make a picture, which shall be graphic & true to nature in its details. Such a person as Henry Bibb, if in this country might give me just the kind of information I desire. You may possibly know of some other person – I will (subj - ) (?) to this letter a list of questions which in that case, you will do me a favor by enclosing to the individuals with a request, that he will at earliest convenience answer these –

For some weeks past I have received your paper thru the mail & I have read it with great interest – desire to return my acknowledgements for it – it will be a pleasure to me at sometime, when less occupied to contribute something to its columns –

I have noticed with regret your sentiments on two subjects – the church - & African colonization - & with the more regret, because I think you have a considerable share of reason for your feelings on both these subjects – but I would willingly if I could modify your view on both points.

- In the first place you say the church is “pro slavery – There is a sense in which this may be true – The American church of all denominations rather as a body comprises the best and most conscientious people in the country – I do not say it comprises *none but these* – or that none such are found out of it – but only that if a census were taken of the present and most highly principled men & women of our country the *majority* of them must be found to be professors of religion in some of the various Christian denominations-- This fact has given to the church great might in this country – the general & predominant spirit of intelligence & probity & piety of its majority has given it that degree of weight that it has the *power* to decide the great moral questions of the day – Whatever it unitedly and decidedly sets itself against as a moral evil it *can* put down –

In this sense the church is responsible for the sin of slavery – Dr. Banus has beautifully and briefly expressed this on the last page of his work on slavery when he says, “not all the force *out* of the church could sustain slavery an hour, if it were not sustained *in* it –

It then appears that the church has the *power* to put an end to this evil and does not do it – In this sense she may be said to be pro slavery – But the church has the same power over intemperance & Sabbath breaking – and sin of all kind – no doubt if the moral power of the church were brought up to the N Testament point of view it is sufficient to put an end to all these too.

But I would ask, would you consider it a fair representation of the christian church in this country to say it is pro intemperance – pro Sabbath breaking & pro everything else it might put down if it was in a higher state of moral feeling?

If you should make a list of all the abolitionists of the country I think you would find a majority of them in the church – certainly some of the most influential & effective ones are ministers –

I am a minister's daughter – a minister's wife & I have six brothers in the ministry – (one is in Heaven) - & I certainly ought to know something of the feelings of ministers – I was a child in 1821, when the Missouri question was agitated & one of the strongest & deepest impressions on my mind were my father's sermons & prayers - & the anguish of his soul for the poor slave at that time – I remember his preaching drawing tears down the hardest faces of the old farmers – I remember his prayers night & morning in the family for “poor oppressed bleeding Africa” that the time for her deliverance in the family might come – prayers offered with strong crying & tears which indelibly impressed my heart & made me what I am from my soul the enemy of slavery – Every brother I have has been in his sphere a leading anti slavery man – (one of them was to the last hour of his life the bosom friend & counsellor of Lovejoy & all have known & heard of the man - ) As for myself and husband we have lived on the border of a slave state for years & we have never for years shrunk from the fugitives – we have helped them with all we had to give – I have received the children of liberated slaves into a family school & taught them with my own children - & it has been the influence that we found *in the church* & by the altar that has made us do this – Gather up all the sermons that have been published on this offensive & unchristian law & you will find that those in its favor against it are numerically more than those in its favor - & yet some of the strongest opponents have not published their sermons – out of thirteen ministers who meet with my husband mostly for discussion of moral subjects only three are found who will acknowledge or obey this law in any shape.

After all my brother, the strength & hope of your oppressed race does lie *in the church* – In hearts united to Him of whom it is said, He shall spare the souls of the needy - & precious shall their blood be in His sight – Everything is against you – but *Jesus Christ* is for you - & He has not forgotten his church misguided and erring tho it may be – I have looked all the facts over with despairing eyes –

*I see no hope except in Him – This movement must and will become a purely religious one – the light will spread in churches – the tone of the feeling will rise – christians north and south will give up all connection with & take up their testimony against it and thus this work will be over.*

(Harriet Beecher Stowe)

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