



BEFORE FREEDOM

The Story of Willis - The Fugitive Slave

Workshops With Schools / Resource Pack 2016
Funded by Awards for All Wales and City & County of Swansea.

BEFORE FREEDOM; INTRODUCTION AND TEACHERS NOTES.

This Resource pack is for Primary Schools.

It tells the story of Willis, a slave who arrived in Swansea on the 2nd of February 1833, and was freed. Placing the story in the context of the Slave Trade and the Welsh and other people who helped to end it, it becomes relevant to today's children.

The Pack provides a time line, a book list, website references, photographic resources of where slaves came from, how they were transported, their new lives, songs about their freedom, and how they escaped on the 'underground railroad', etc.

9 schools have already used these materials and here are some of the children's comments

'The play was excellent and taught me a lot about the slave trade. When the actor called Willis came in I jumped out of my skin, he was a great singer. Some parts made me feel like crying. I'm glad the slave trade is abolished'

'I liked it when Derek put the pictures up and we were singing and doing actions'

I think the story helped me understand about the way they treated black people. I loved the music'

TEACHERS NOTES;

These resources stand alone, and we would be grateful if Jazz Heritage Wales is acknowledged when they are used, and that completed evaluation forms are sent to the email address below.

The pack is also designed to prepare the children for a Performance, which tells the story using words, songs and pictures. This can be commissioned separately. Again, please contact us.

For any other information, please contact JazzHeritageWales@uwtsd.ac.uk

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SYNOPSIS

Britain became involved in the slave trade since the early 1600s, capturing Africans, loading them aboard ship as tethered cargo, and landing them (if they were still alive) in America or the West Indies. Some captured Africans were brought to this country. Some Welsh people, owning tobacco or sugar plantations in the West Indies, kept hundreds of slaves, building their castles in Wales on the backs of slavery, like the wealthy Pennant family of Penrhyn Castle, near Bangor. The eminent Swansea family De La Beche owned plantations and slaves in Jamaica. Thomas Eaton was another notable slaveowner. Swansea streets are named after them.



This is the story of how a young man, born a slave on a faraway plantation in America, found himself in Swansea. He had no way of knowing that Swansea had one of the largest and most committed Anti Slavery Societies in Wales.



Willis the slave, not his own name but the name of his owner, was born in 1813. We know nothing of his early life except that he was a slave on one of the southern cotton plantations, probably Kentucky or the Carolinas. The south meant slavery for African Americans, the north was freedom. For those slaves brave enough to try to escape, freedom meant crossing the vast, fast flowing Ohio River which separated Kentucky the slave holding state (the south), from Ohio and the northern freedom states on the opposite bank. Ohio's main town on the riverbank in Willis's day was Cincinnati with its paddle steamers carrying goods down to New Orleans. Today, Cincinnati's paddle steamers run tourist trips.

BEFORE FREEDOM

Cincinnati was also the town to which the Swansea anti slavery campaigners Anna Margareta Donaldson and Jessie (Heineken) Donaldson emigrated in 1822 and 1854. Both women (aunt and niece) ran safe houses for fleeing slaves on the Ohio riverbank in their houses called "Frandon" (after Francis Donaldson Anna Margareta's husband), "Penmaen" (Anna's son's house named after the family farm back in Monmouth), and "Clermont" Jessie Donaldson's newly built house. "Frandon" and "Penmaen" are still standing. "Clermont" has not (yet) been found.



Willis ran away from his plantation in 1832 when he was 19 or 20 and instead of heading toward the Ohio River and trying to cross it to go north, he opted to travel along the river southwards to New Orleans, a journey on foot of many months. In the bustling port of New Orleans Willis stowed away on a copper ore carrier, destination Swansea, to discharge its cargo for the copper works at Landore.

Today Cincinnati is proud to have the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (opened 2004) on its riverbank, telling the stories of plantation life, and the slaves who helped build America. Willis, Jessie and Anna Margareta's stories are now part of the archives at the NURFC.

TIMELINE

1799

Jessie Heineken is born, the daughter of lawyer Samuel Heineken; an anti slavery campaigner. Opens school at 32 Wind Street, Swansea in 1829

Willis is born to a slave mother on a Kentucky Plantation.

1813

1822

Anna Margareta & Francis Donaldson (Jessie's Cousin) emigrate with 7 children from their farm "Penmaen" in mid-Wales to Cincinnati, Ohio. They run a Safe House for runaway slaves at "Frandon" on the riverbank.

Anti- Slavery meeting held at Swansea Town Hall. Welsh Slave owners are discussed.

1823

1824

Thomas Clarkson, Anti-Slavery campaigner, visits Swansea Anti Slavery Society, the largest and most committed society in Wales.

Willis, the slave, runs away from his plantation and stows away on a copper ore carrier called the St. Peter in New Orleans.

1832

BEFORE FREEDOM

TIMELINE

Willis arrives in Swansea Docks.
Mr. T. Edwards, the Portreeve (Mayor) is sent for by the captain. He sets Willis free.

1833

1836

Anna Margareta's son, Thomas, runs a safe house called "Penmaen". Mobs threaten Anna Margareta at "Frandon". Shots are fired.

Jessie, aged 41, marries her cousin from Cincinnati, Francis Jnr.

1840

1845

Frederick Douglass, freed slave, publishes his autobiography. Undertakes speaking tour of the UK. Visits Swansea?

Jessie, aged 57, and Francis emigrate to Cincinnati and build the third welsh Safe House, "Clermont". They stay at "Penmaen" while their house is built.

1854

1861 - 1865 The American Civil War

TIMELINE

1863

Ellen and William Craft, freed slaves, Lecture at Mount Pleasant Chapel, Kingsway Swansea.

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, opens "for the education of Free Slaves and their children"
Jessie, aged 69, and Francis, return to Swansea.

1866

1874

Fisk Jubilee Singers arrive in Swansea.
Willis is aged 61. Jessie is aged 77.

Jessie Donaldson dies, aged almost 91, in Swansea.

1889

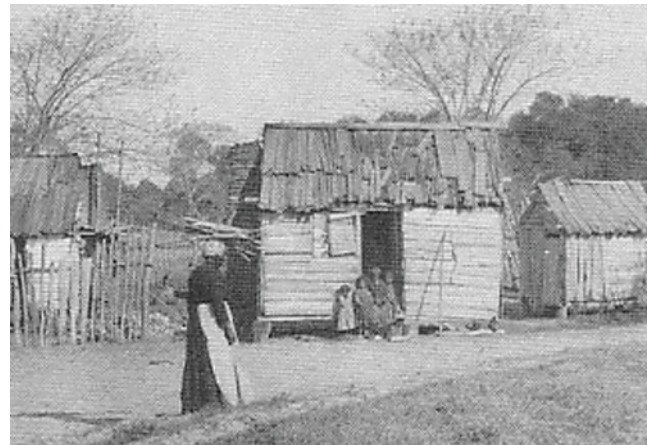
1894

The last sighting of Willis. He was sittin on a wall in Northampton Lane aged about 80.

PLANTATION LIFE

Willis the slave. Born 1813

(Willis was not HIS name, but the name of his owner.)



"SOME CAPTURED AFRICANS WERE BROUGHT TO THIS COUNTRY. SOME WELSH PEOPLE, OWNING **TOBACCO OR SUGAR** PLANTATIONS IN THE WEST INDIES, KEPT **HUNDREDS OF SLAVES**"

"Flogging; A punishment practiced in the united States, for the crime of loving liberty."



THE FLOGGING OF FEMALES.

"What!—the whip on WOMAN'S shivering flesh!"



See p. 47.

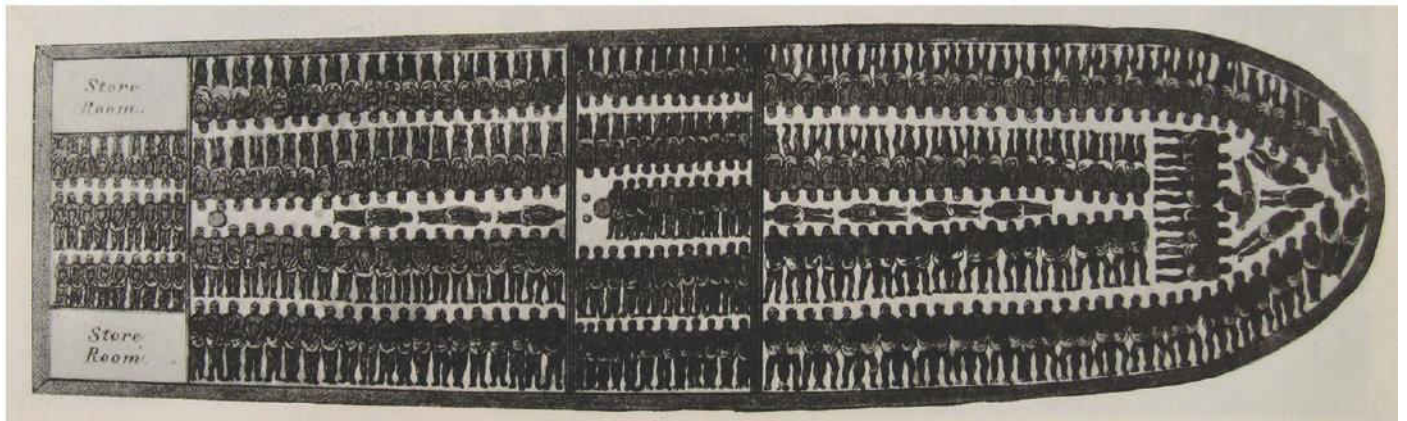
A punishment, practised in the United States, for the crime of loving liberty.

THOMAS CLARKSON

Anti Slave Campaigner Visited Swansea in 1822

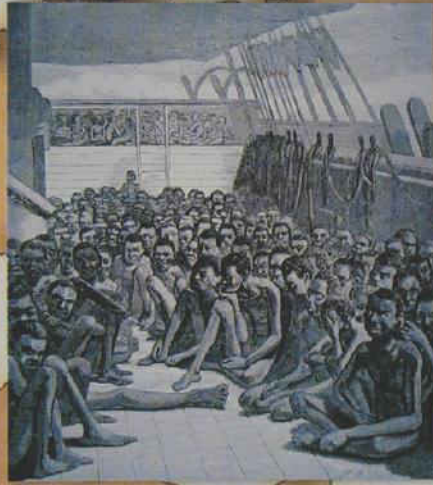


"BRITAIN BECAME INVOLVED IN THE SLAVE TRADE SINCE THE EARLY 1600s, CAPTURING AFRICANS LOADING THEM ABOARD SHIP AS TETHERED CARGO AND LANDING THEM (IF THEY WERE STILL ALIVE) IN AMERICA OR THE WEST INDIES."



BEFORE FREEDOM

TO THE NEW WORLD



SLAVE SHIPS

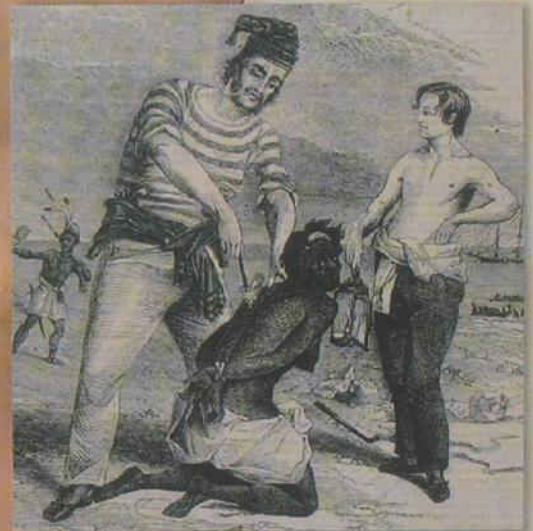
The journey was long and for men and women who had probably never travelled by ship it must have been terrifying. Many people died without ever making it to their new 'homes'.

TOGO
NIGERIA
CAMEROON
GABON

WEST AFRICAN LANGUAGES

are now called Benin, Republic of Congo, Gabon, West African Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, and Togo.

DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF
CONGO



CAPTURING AND BRANDING

The inhuman treatment began as soon as the slaves were either captured or sold to the slave traders.

WEST AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The languages of the region are tonal and their vocabulary is based on variations in the vowel sound.

THE ESCAPE

1832 - Willis, Aged 19, runs away.

100 DOLLS. REWARD.

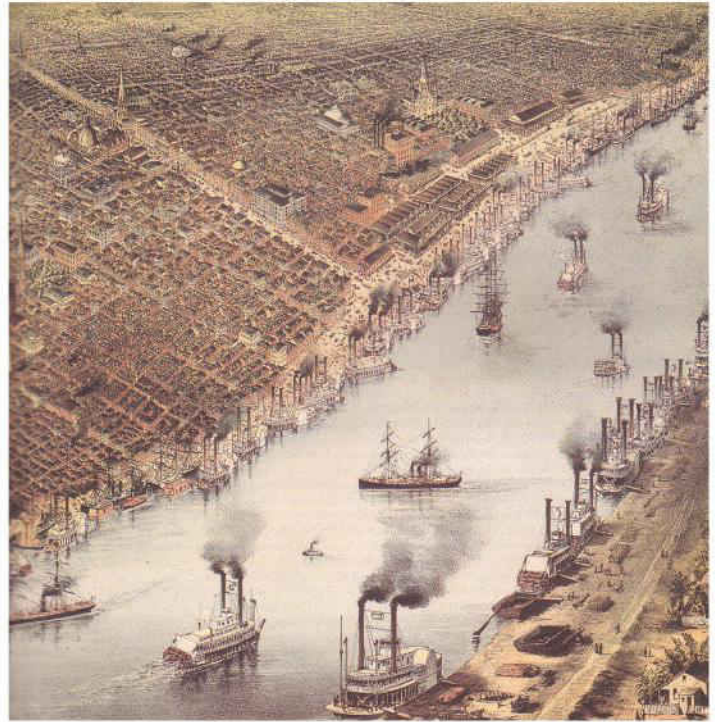
RAN AWAY

From me, on Saturday, the 19th inst.,

Negro Boy Robert Porter,
aged 19; heavy, stoutly made;
dark chesnut complexion;
rather sullen countenance,
with a down look; face large; head low on the
shoulders. I believe he entered the City of
Washington on Sunday evening, 20th inst. He
has changed his dress probably, except his
boots, which were new and heavy.

I will give \$50 if taken and secured in the
District of Columbia; or \$100 if taken north
of the District, and secured in each case and
delivered before the reward shall be good.

Dr. J. W. THOMAS.
Pomunky P. O., Charles Co., Md.



New Orleans Harbour

FOR THOSE SLAVES BRAVE ENOUGH TO TRY TO ESCAPE,
F R E E D O M
MEANT CROSSING THE VAST, FAST FLOWING OHIO RIVER



Sign commemorating the safe passage route,
Kentucky



RUNAWAY SLAVES

Rebels on the Plantation

JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN
and LOREN SCHWENINGER

Winner of the 2000 Lincoln Prize

SWANSEA ABOLITIONISTS

Anna Margaretta and Jessie Donaldson emigrate to Cincinnati, U.S.A. and run safe houses for runaway slaves.



BOTH WOMEN (AUNT AND NEICE) RAN SAFE HOUSES FOR

FLEEING SLAVES

ON THE OHIO RIVERBANK IN THEIR HOUSES

C. DONALDSON & CO.
 IMPORTERS AND DEALERS IN
HARDWARE & CUTLERY,
 STEEL, BRASS WARE AND SADDLERY,
 In all their varieties.
 NO. 34 MAIN STREET, BETWEEN FRONT AND SECOND,
CINCINNATI.

(Donaldson Christian, (C.D. & Co.) resides Mt Ephraim
 Donaldson William, (C. D. & Co.) resides Mt Ephraim
 Donaldson Andrew, (D. & Brown,) boards Mansion House
 Donaldson Alexander, finisher, Front bet Parsons and Congress
 Donaldson Thomas, carpet weaver, boards L. McDiarmid
 Donovan Mrs. Mary, Bauman's alley
 Donegan Bernard, laborer, cor North and 7th
 Doney Mrs. Maney, London bet Western Row and John
 Donnavan, Lewis & Co. publishers Message, 3d bet Main & Syc
 Donnavan Corydon, (D., Lewis & Co.) 7th bet Main and Syc
 Donnellan Nicholas, stone cutter, Vine bet Canal and 12th
 Donnelly James, laborer, cor Race and Cherry alley

**ABOLITIONISTS
 BEWARE.**

THE Citizens of Cincinnati, embracing every class, interested in the prosperity of the City, satisfied that the business of the place is receiving a check from the wicked and unguided operations of the abolitionists, are resolved to arrest their course. The destruction of their Press on the night of the 12th Instant, may be taken as a warning. As there are some worthy citizens engaged in the unholy cause of annoying our southern neighbors, they are appealed to, to pause before they bring things to a crisis. If an attempt is made to re-establish their press, it will be viewed as an act of defiance to an already outraged community, and on their heads be the retribution which will follow.

Every kind of exposition and excommunication has been resorted to in vain—longer patience would be criminal. The plan is matured to eradicate an evil which every citizen feels is undermining his business and property.

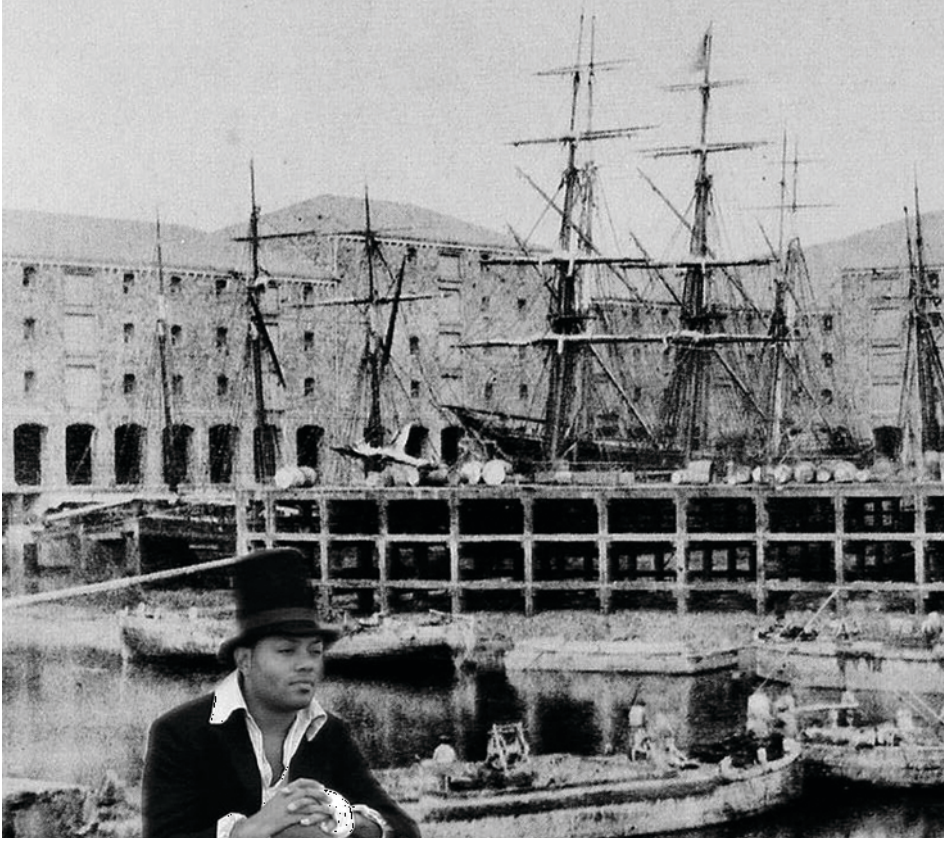
CAMBRIAN INDEXING PROJECT

Swansea Reference Library. 2. 2. 1833. The News article of Willis's arrival.

en	EMANCIPATION OF A SLAVE AT SWANSEA.—A short time	D
he	since, the <i>St. Peter</i> (H. Mickle, master), a large American ship,	sol
ias	arrived at this port from Cobija, in Chili; with copper ore; and	of
ed	on Thursday the 24th ult., a very fine young negro, about 20 years	R.
en	of age, of the name of <i>Willis</i> , applied to T. Edw. Thomas, Esq.,	M
of	Portreeve, stating that he was a slave acting as cook on board the	of
is-	<i>St. Peter</i> ; that he had accidentally heard, that if he could but	of
ng	put his foot upon British ground, he would then be free, and re-	
as	quested advice upon this point. Mr. T. instantly sent to the ship	
to	to ascertain whether Willis really had been a slave on board such	H
in-	vessel, but as the Captain was not to be met with at the instant,	th
ke	the worthy Magistrate lost no time in assuring the poor fellow,	M
rs,	that by the laws of this happy country, he was emancipated—that	Ar
to	he was no longer a slave!!! This gratifying information natu-	te
e-	rally gave the most heartfelt delight to all present, but more	A.
is	especially to Willis, who for the first moment of his life, felt that	to
ia-	he was a free man!!! The following morning, as he would not	of
y,	return on board, he had a written discharge from the ship, and as	th
Vo	he was not entitled to any wages, the Captain generously gave	Je
	him two sovereigns. Willis belonged to the ship owners, and it	M
	will be gratifying to the friends of humanity to learn, that during	
	the nine years he had served in the bonds of slavery, he had no	
	complaint to make against his former or his present master, but	
	that, on the contrary, he had experienced every indulgence and	
	kindness compatible with his situation. Notwithstanding (and	
	his good condition and well-dressed appearance, bespoke the	
	truth of his statement) he was anxious to be free.	

BEFORE FREEDOM

WILLIS IN SWANSEA

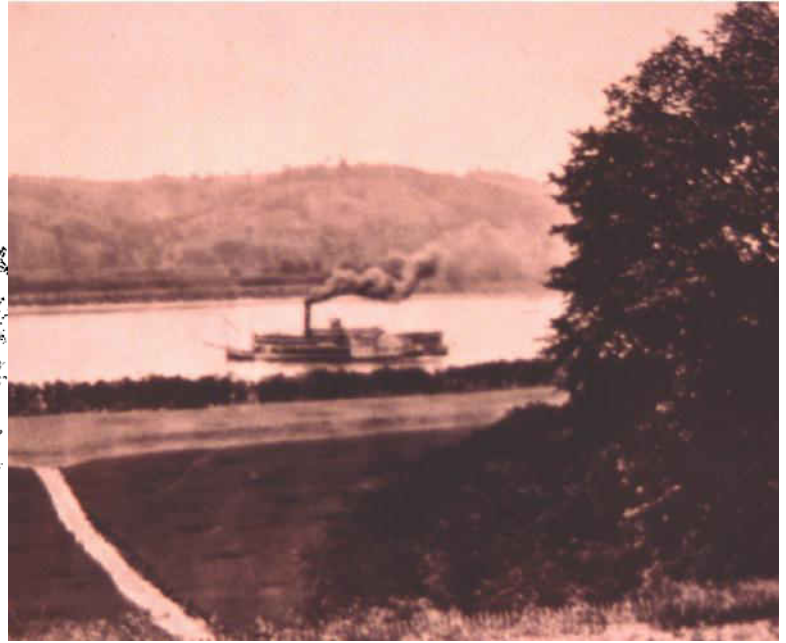


WELSH SAFE HOUSES

Penmaen, Frandon and Clermont were three safe houses for run away slaves.

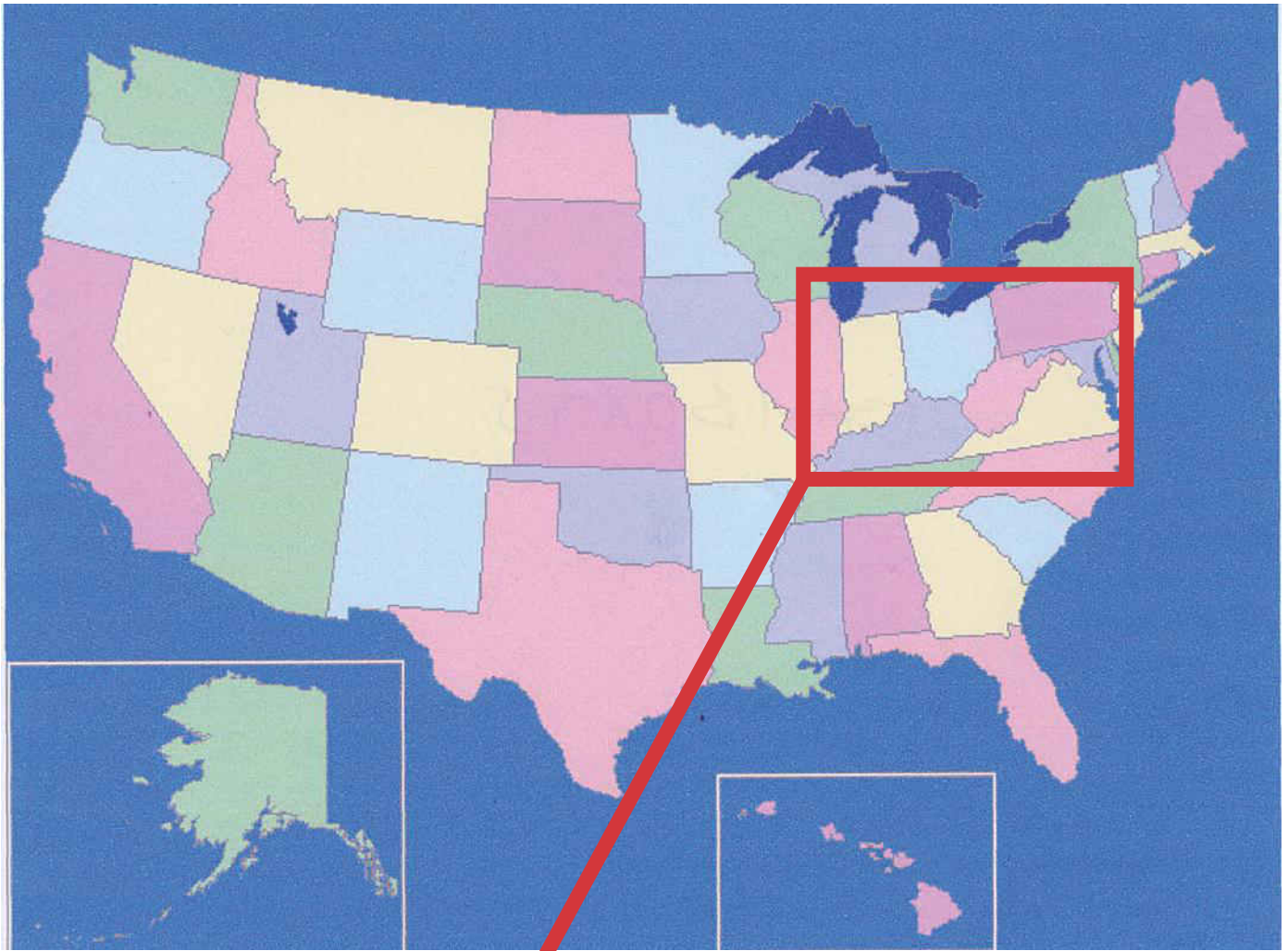


FRANDON, New Richmond
Anna Margareta's House



PENMAEN TODAY

MAP OF THE USA



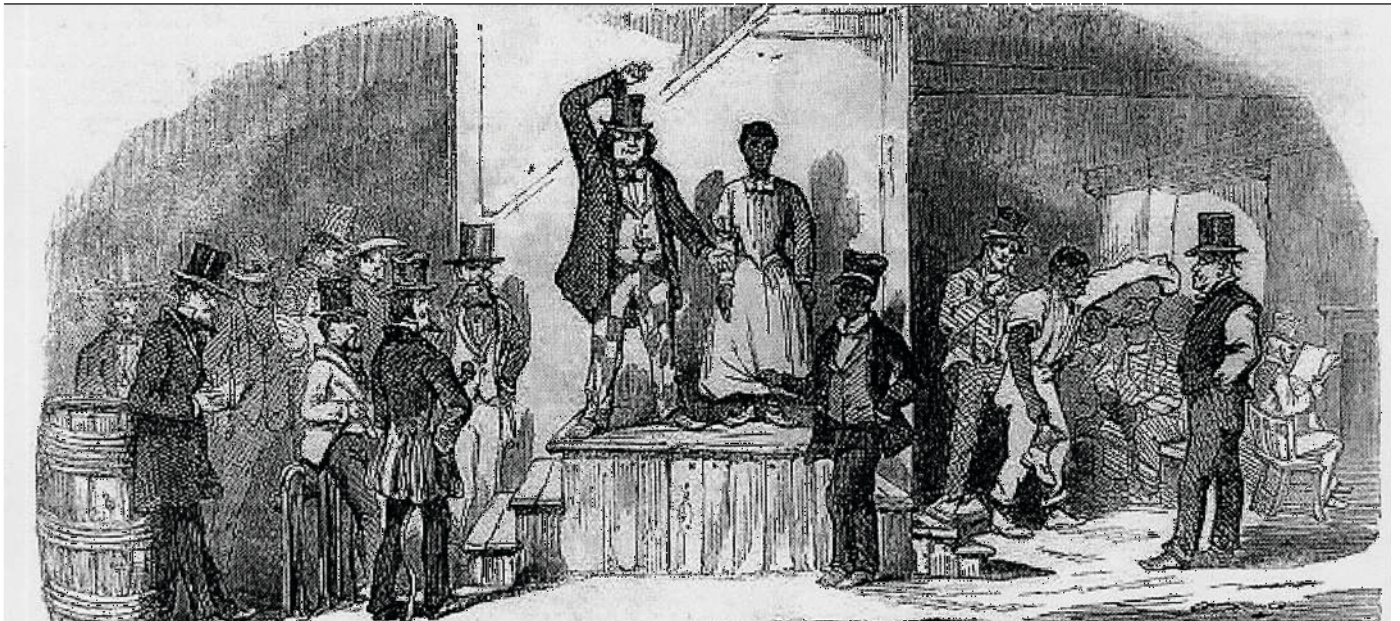
INSTEAD OF HEADING TOWARD THE OHIO RIVER AND TRYING TO CROSS IT TO GO NORTH, WILLIS OPTED TO TRAVEL ALONG THE RIVER SOUTHWARDS TO **NEW ORLEANS**

BEFORE FREEDOM

SLAVE AUCTION HOUSES



COURT HOUSE STEPS
Old Washington, Kentucky



\$1200
TO
1250 DOLLARS!
FOR NEGROES!!

THE undersigned wishes to purchase a large lot of NEGROES for the New Orleans market. I will pay \$1200 to \$1250 for No. 1 young men, and \$850 to \$1000 for No. 1 young women. In fact I will pay more for likely

NEGROES,

than any other trader in Kentucky. My office is adjoining the Broadway Hotel, on Broadway, Lexington, Ky., where I or my Agent can always be found.

WM. F. TALBOT,
LEXINGTON, JULY 2, 1852.

BEFORE FREEDOM

LIFE ON THE OHIO RIVER

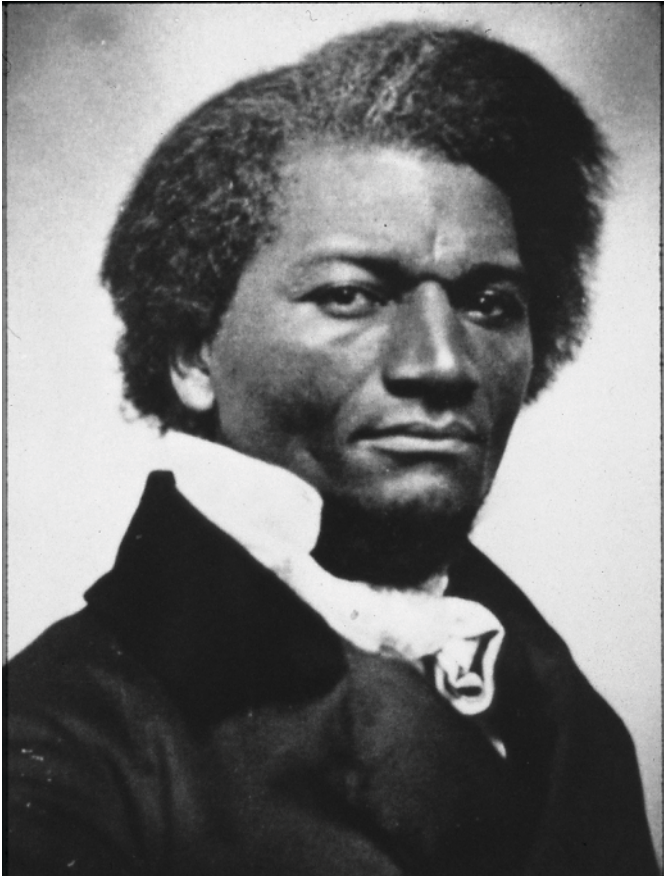


T A L L S T A C K S

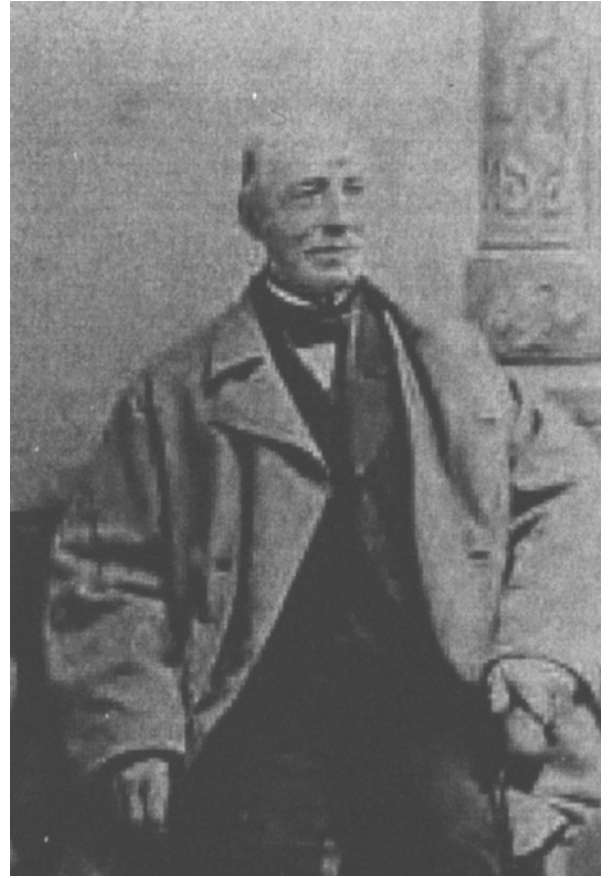
PADDLE STEAMERS USED ON
THE OHIO RIVER, CINCINNATI

BEFORE FREEDOM

THE ABOLITIONISTS



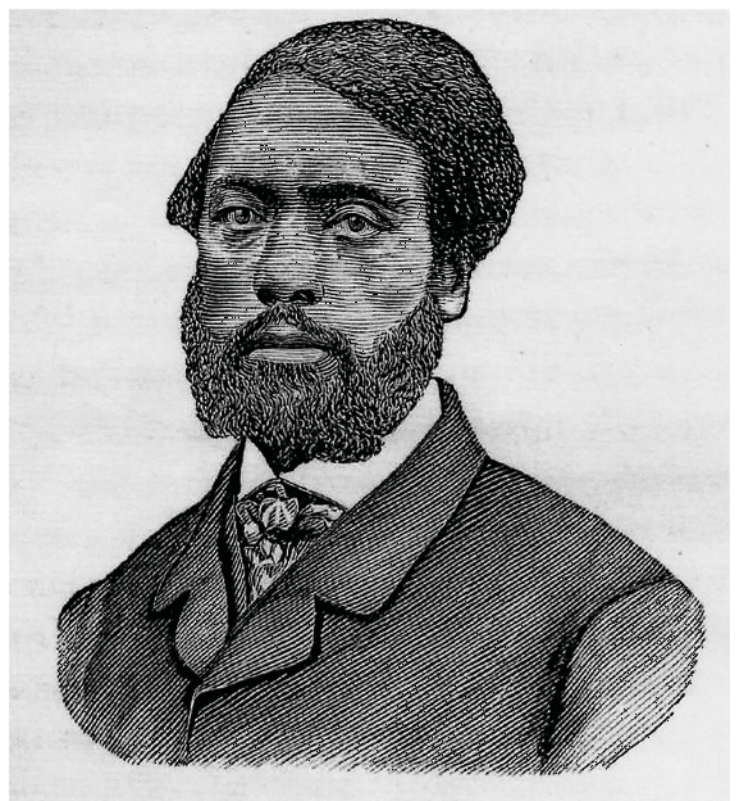
FREDERICK DOUGLASS



WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON



ELLEN CRAFT



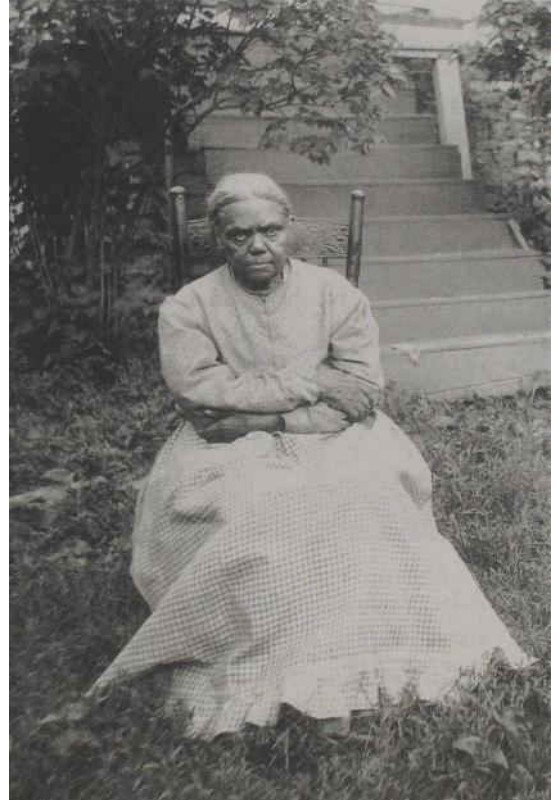
WILLIAM CRAFT

CONDUCTORS ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

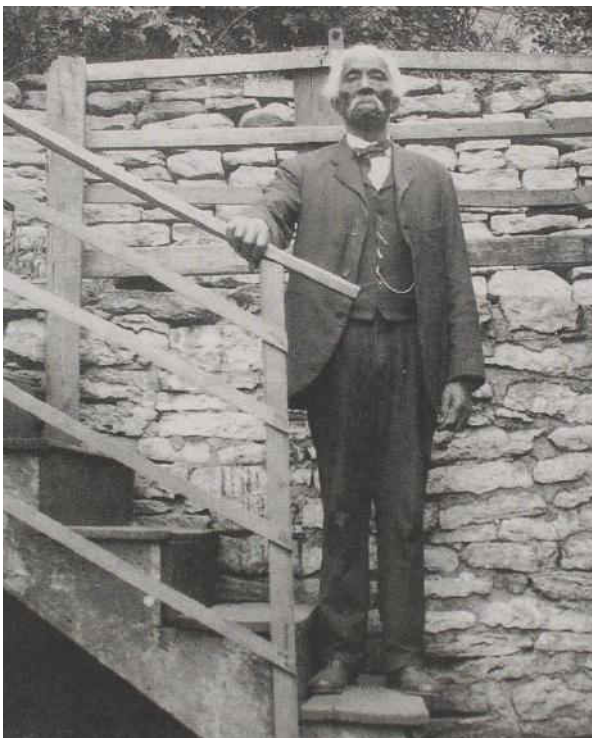
The Safe Passage Route.



HARRIET TUBMAN



POLLY ANN JACKSON CALDWELL

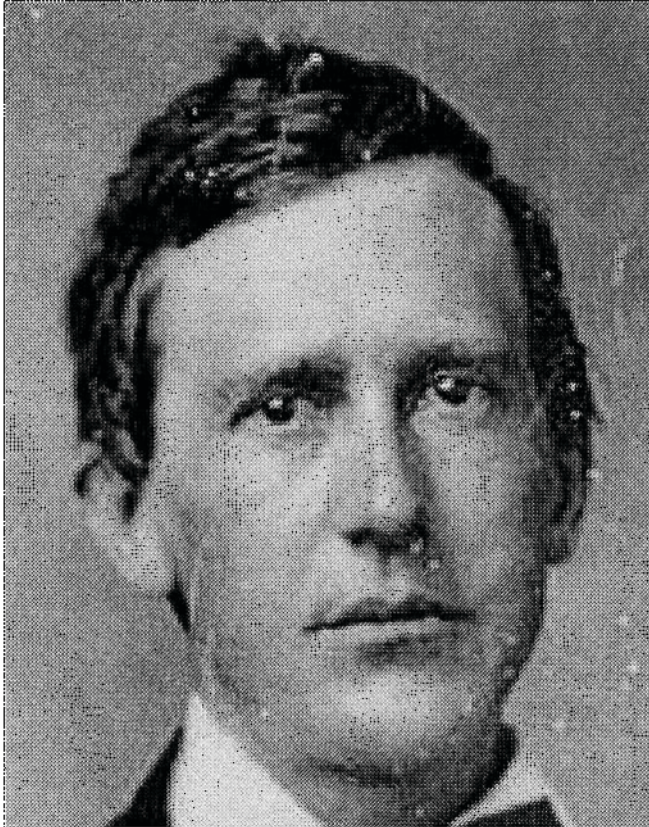


BILLY MARSHALL

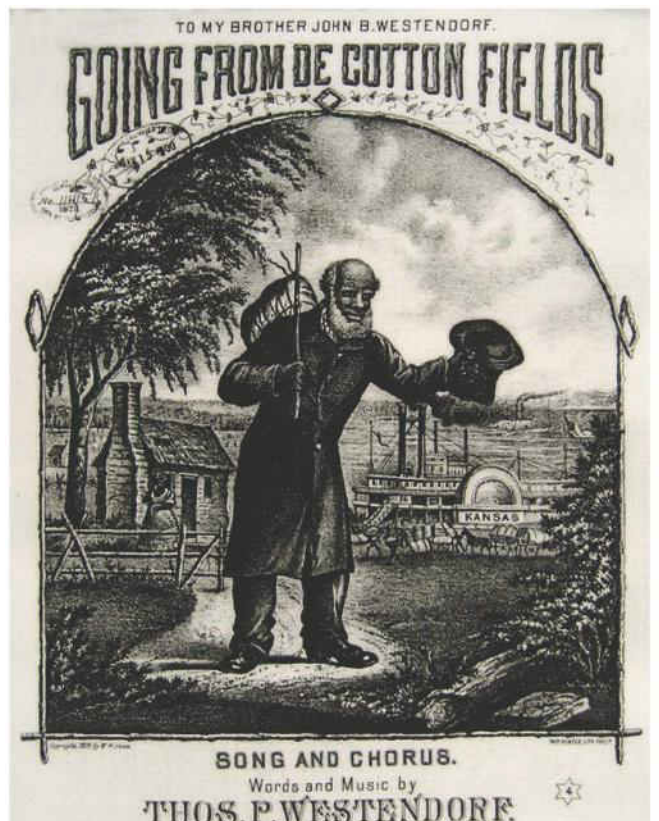
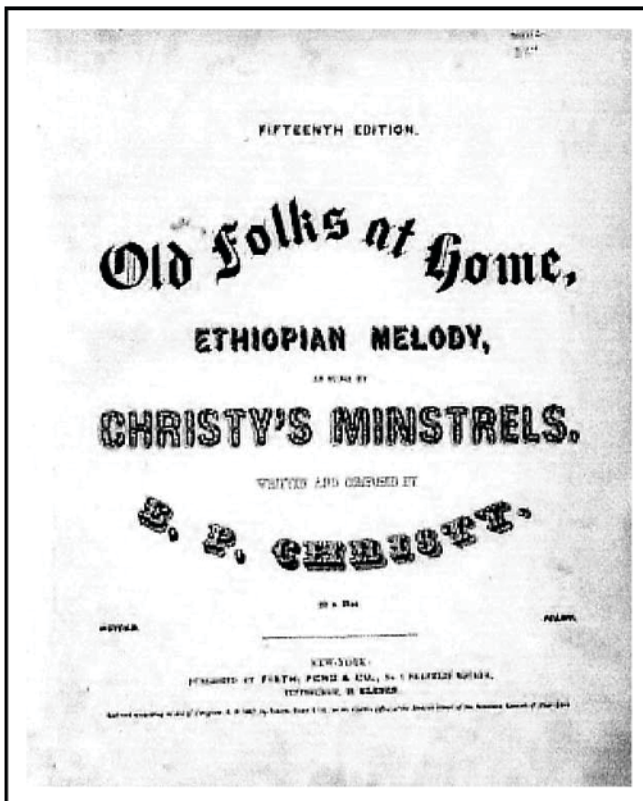


JOHN & JEAN RANKIN

ANTI SLAVERY PLANTATION SONGS BY WHITES



STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER



SINGING FOR FREEDOM



PLANTATION SLAVE SINGERS.

STRANGE FRUIT

Words and Music
by LEWIS ALLAN

Moderately

No. 53. I'm Troubled in Mind.

[The person who furnished this song (Mrs. Brown of Nashville, formerly a slave), stated that she first heard it from her old father when she was a child. After he had been whipped he always went and sat upon a certain log near his cabin, and with the tears streaming down his cheeks, sang this song with so much pathos that few could listen without weeping from sympathy: and even his cruel oppressors were not wholly unmoved.]

2 When laden with trouble and burdened with grief,
To Jesus in secret I'll go for relief.

Cho.—I'm troubled, &c.

3 In dark days of bondage to Jesus I prayed,
To help me to bear it, and he gave me his aid.

Cho.—I'm troubled, &c.

SLAVE SONGS AND SPIRITUALS BY FREE SLAVES



Edmund Havel, R.A., British, 1835-1908, oil on canvas, 120" x 168"

The Jubilee Singers, 1873

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, Gift of Her Royal Majesty, Queen Victoria

The restoration of this painting was made possible by the generosity of Joan and Ben Rechter, The LINKS, Incorporated, Hendersonville Area Chapter and Fisk University Art Restoration Project

THE JUBILEE SINGERS,
Ex-Slave, Students from Fisk University, Nashville,
Tennessee, will give a
SERVICE OF SONG,
CONSISTING of the STRANGE WEIRD SLAVE
SONGS, for which the Slaves in the Southern
States are so famous,
In the **MUSIC HALL,** Swansea,
ON **FRIDAY, MARCH 6th.**
Chair to be taken by **THOMAS FORD, Esq., Ex-Mayor,**
At 8 p.m.
Tickets, Numbered and Reserved, 3s.; Unreserved, 2s.;
Admission, 1s.
Plans may be seen and Tickets obtained from **BRADY
and SONS, Music Saloons, Wind-street.**

The Cambrian 1874

JUBILEE SONGS.

It will be observed that in most of these songs the first strain is of the nature of a chorus or refrain, which is to be sung after each verse. The return to this chorus should be made without breaking the time.

In some of the verses the syllables do not correspond exactly to the notes in the music. The adaptation is so easy that it was thought best to leave it to the skill of the singer rather than to confuse the eye by too many notes. The music is in each case carefully adapted to the first verse. Whatever changes may be necessary in singing the remaining verses will be found to involve no difficulty.

No. 1.
Nobody knows the Trouble I see, Lord!

No-bo-dy knows the trouble I see, Lord, No-bo-dy knows the
trou-ble I see, No-bo-dy knows the trouble I see, Lord,
FINE.
No - bo - dy knows lika Je - sus. 1. Broth-ers, will you
pray for me, Brothers, will you pray for me, Brothers, will you
pray for me, And help me to drive old Sa - tan a - way.
D. C.

2. Sisters, will you pray for me, &c.
3. Mothers, will you pray for me, &c.
4. Preachers, will you pray for me, &c.

WEBSITE LIST

Find More Stories on Runaway Slaves, the Underground Railroad, Plantation Songs, Slave Songs, the history of runaways:

Swansea and Wales Stories

jazzheritagewales@uwtsd.ac.uk

Cambrian Indexing Project (Cambrian Newspaper, Swansea)

www.archives@swansea.gov.uk

American Memory, the Library of Congress

www.memory.loc.gov

Documenting the American South

www.docsouth.unc.edu

Fisk Jubilee Singers

www.fisk.edu

Plantation Music – Stephen Collins Foster

www.pdmusic.org/foster

Negro Spirituals

www.negrospirituals.com

America's Story

www.americaslibrary.gov

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

www.freedomcenter.org

Cincinnati Historical Society Library

www.Cincymuseum.org

The African-American Experience in Ohio

www.dbs.ohiohistory.org

Interactive Maps

www.yourchildlearns.com

BOOK LIST

Runaway Slaves, Rebels on the Plantation by John Hope Franklin & Loren Schwe-
ninger, Oxford University Press, 1999 p.222 "When the slave Willis boarded a steam-
boat in New Orleans in 1832, he wore a white shirt, brown linen pants, a blue cloth
frock coat, and a black hat. He also took with him a bundle of clothing wrapped in a
sheet.". Women in Jazz Swansea library collection.

Free at last, A History of Slavery, Freedom and the Civil War by Miller, Reidy & Rowland, Blue
& Grey Press, New Jersey, 1997. WIJS collection.

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life by Frederick Douglass, Oxford University Press, 1999
(first published 1845) WIJS collection.

Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom by Ellen & William Craft, Louisiana State University
press, 1999 (first published 1860).

Thomas Clarkson Diaries (Survey of Public Opinion on Behalf of the Anti-Slavery Society,
1824). Held at National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The Story of the Jubilee Singers by J.B.T. Marsh, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1902. WIJS
collection.

Negro Spirituals or The Songs of the Jubilee Singers, W. J. Gibbs, Bromley, Kent, 1900 (? un-
dated) WIJS collection.

Negro Folk Music USA by Harold Courlander, Columbia University Press, London 1966. WIJS
collection.

Black Gospel An Illustrated History of the Gospel Sound, by Viv BroughtonBlanford press,
Dorset, 1985. WIJS collection.

Let Paul Robeson Sing, by Paul Robeson Cymru committee, Bevan Foundation 2001. WIJS
collection.

Blues Odyssey: a journey to music's Heart & Soul, by Bill Wyman, Dorling Kindersley, 2001.
WIJS collection.

The Story of the Blues, by Paul Oliver, Penguin Books, 1972. WIJS collection.

Jessie Donaldson by Jen Wilson, ch. in Minerva Volume XII, The Journal of Swansea History,
published by Royal Institution of South Wales 2004. WIJS collection.