

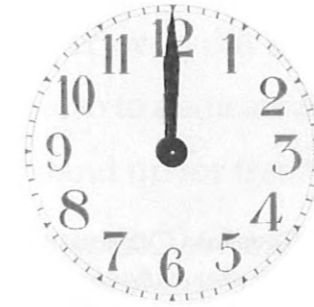
— 1853 —

24 Hours in the Fight for Freedom



Written and illustrated by the fourth grade students of
the Genesee Community Charter School in Rochester, N.Y.

1853



24 Hours in the Fight for Freedom

Written and Illustrated by the Fourth Grade Class
of The Genesee Community Charter School

Co-edited by teachers and students



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at the Rochester Museum & Science Center
657 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

Dedication

We would like to dedicate this book from the heart to our friends: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and all the other everyday citizens who helped fight for our freedom and rights. We also to dedicate this book to all the people in the present and future who stand up for freedom and help those in need.

Thank You To...

Shawn Dunwoody & RMSC Players

Dr. And Mrs. David Anderson

GCCS teachers, staff, and parents

Mrs. Valle for her help with our artwork

Docents and staff from:

Harriet Tubman House

Susan B. Anthony House

Seneca Falls Women's Rights Museum

Rochester Museum & Science Center



A Station on the Underground Railroad

The first thing I always do before I read my special book is put my lantern in my window. This way slaves will know it is a safe house and I'm not a bad person. Then I go into my bedroom to read my special book called "How to Free Slaves." Suddenly I hear three knocks on the door. I know that means it is a slave family because it's the 3 special knocks. I slowly open the door and see a black family. They look dirty, exhausted, and scared. They are breathing hard and I let the family in. They tell me they are running away from slavery and trying to get to Canada and freedom.

I say that I'm going to help them and I'm happy to do it. I go in the front of my home and get a bath ready for them. I give them some of my old clothes. I have a bed big enough for the family, and I know it's comfortable and they'll fall asleep fast. After that I cook some of my famous stew with beef. I get 5 bowls for them and they eat really fast. They tell me they don't even remember the last time they had a hot meal with vegetables, garlic, and onions. And they love the mashed up meatballs. I give them another bowl and tell them about another Quaker at the next station on the Underground Railroad.

I explain how to follow the river north, and tell them what the next house looks like. I also give them a note to bring to the next safe house, and this will tell the conductor to help the family. Then we say good night and say our prayers.



*Narrative by Anastesia
Artwork by Erika*





Boarding a Slave Ship



*Narrative by Jonab
Artwork by Jason*

After many days of walking, we finally reach shore. My kidnappers take me in a rowboat to a larger ship. One person says to me, "Lay down."

And I say, "Why can't I sit down?"

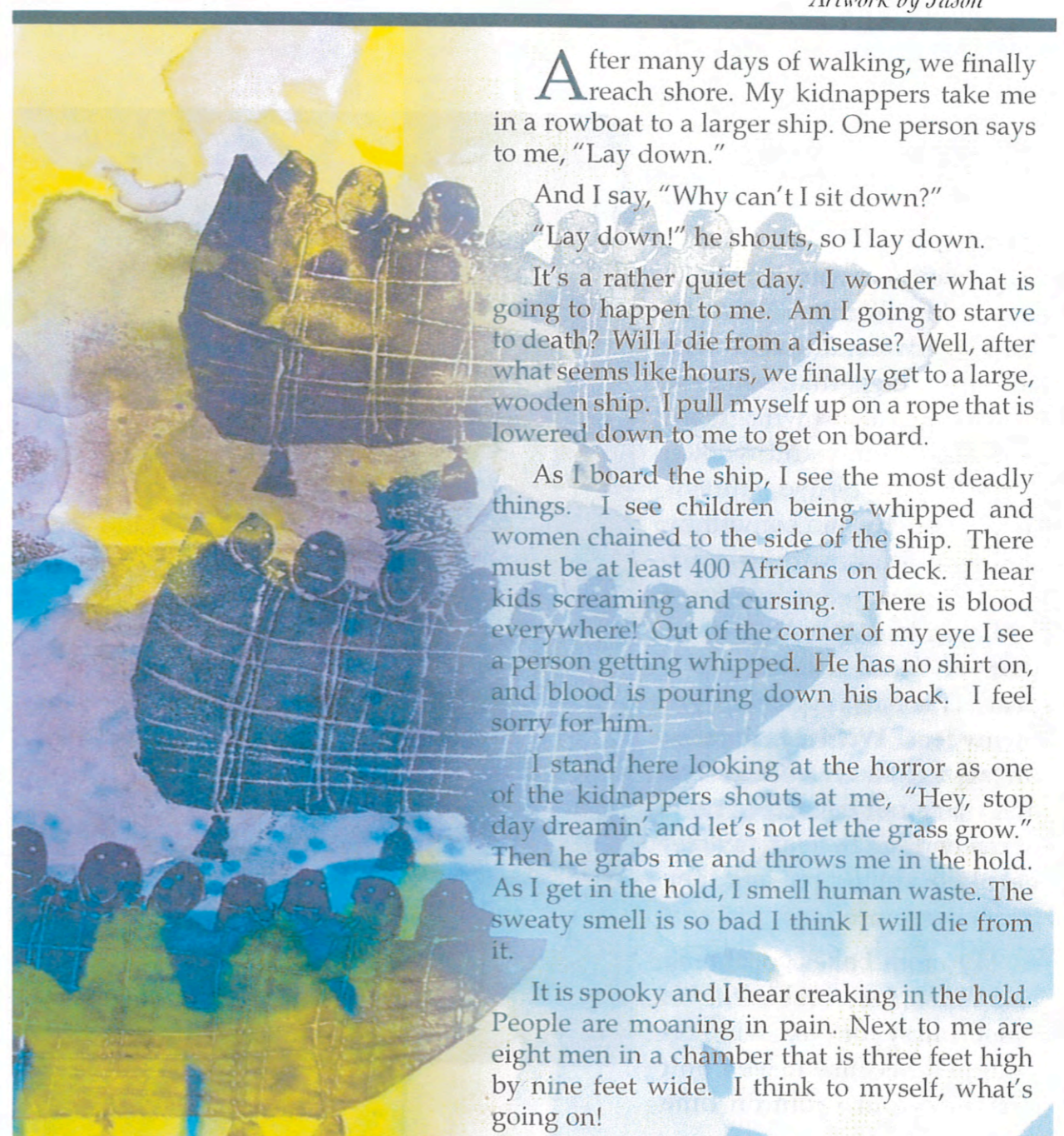
"Lay down!" he shouts, so I lay down.

It's a rather quiet day. I wonder what is going to happen to me. Am I going to starve to death? Will I die from a disease? Well, after what seems like hours, we finally get to a large, wooden ship. I pull myself up on a rope that is lowered down to me to get on board.

As I board the ship, I see the most deadly things. I see children being whipped and women chained to the side of the ship. There must be at least 400 Africans on deck. I hear kids screaming and cursing. There is blood everywhere! Out of the corner of my eye I see a person getting whipped. He has no shirt on, and blood is pouring down his back. I feel sorry for him.

I stand here looking at the horror as one of the kidnappers shouts at me, "Hey, stop day dreamin' and let's not let the grass grow." Then he grabs me and throws me in the hold. As I get in the hold, I smell human waste. The sweaty smell is so bad I think I will die from it.

It is spooky and I hear creaking in the hold. People are moaning in pain. Next to me are eight men in a chamber that is three feet high by nine feet wide. I think to myself, what's going on!





As I lay on my blankets a beam of light hits my eyelids and I can tell it is time to get up. I smell the dusty dirt. I see my mom, dad and two sisters sleeping on ripped, dusty brown, black and yellow blankets. I see the cracks between the cabin logs and the lines that separate the shades of brown. I put on a coarse shirt and woolen pants. The coarse shirt is itchy, scratchy and something you would not want to wear. The woolen pants feel soft and comfy. We only get one pair of leather shoes each year. This pair is getting tight on my feet. When I take them off at night my feet are red and that's not usual, but now, at the end of the year, my feet get almost blood red and they hurt even more.

My mom bakes cornbread and mush for breakfast. We must hurry or we will get whipped because if we don't get out of our cabin on time



the overseer might whip us. So, we eat our food fast. We all get a small pouch and put in corn, half an apple and some cornbread for our lunch time. We leave our cabin and walk outside to our master's yard and he tells us where to work. My master has two fields and he points me and my family to the closest field but we will be working in different areas. I slowly walk out of my master's yard step by step like I am on a log. I don't feel like I have the energy to pick cotton all day. If I stop, even for a minute, I will probably get whipped. The sun burns on my back like a slap from my mom. My arms ache and my feet also ache because of the small shoes. I pass my cabin on the way to the fields and get my bag near the door. I start walking the short distance behind my master's house to the fields and start picking cotton. I hope I survive the day of hard work and don't get whipped.



Escaped Slave Reaching a Safe House

I am walking in the woods near a stream. Even though it is about 5 am, it is still dark and there is a slight breeze. It has been a long time since I heard the slave catcher's dogs. I feel happy to have gotten this far! I think I'm getting closer to freedom and this makes me extremely excited.

As I am walking I see a cornfield. I walk slowly to it. I see a person in the house. I don't think it is a plantation family's house because it is pretty small and it has a lantern in the window. I remember my grandma taught me a lantern in a window would mean it's a safe house and it's safe to go in.

I decide to walk really slowly to the door of the house. I am feeling so nervous. I knock on the door once, then twice, and a little old lady opens the door. She says to come in. I am a little speechless as I enter.

She sits me down and asks me if I want any food. I just stare at her and nod quickly. The lady makes some corn, beans, and pork. She is very nice and she helps me go to the table by the fire to warm up. I eat the food so



Narrative by Grace
Artwork by Shalonda

fast because it's the best food I've had since I was captured from Africa. The lady asks if I'd like to take a bath. I take one and the water feels so good I don't want to get out. She makes me a bed and I already feel the comfort of those warm, cozy blankets.

The little old lady takes a note out of her pocket and reads it to me. I'm supposed to hand it to the person at the next house on the Underground Railroad. It says, "Can you please help this friend of mine?" I go and lay down on the comfy new bed. I thank her and she walks away. I fall half way asleep and I think about all the experiences that have happened today.

I remember the slave catcher's dogs and the wind and the birds. I feel the warm blankets brush against my back. In my mind I can see the trees and the rain on those lonely days while I was running away. I fall fast asleep feeling clean, fed, and I feel happy like I haven't been in a long time! It has been a good day so far and I dream about being free in Canada.

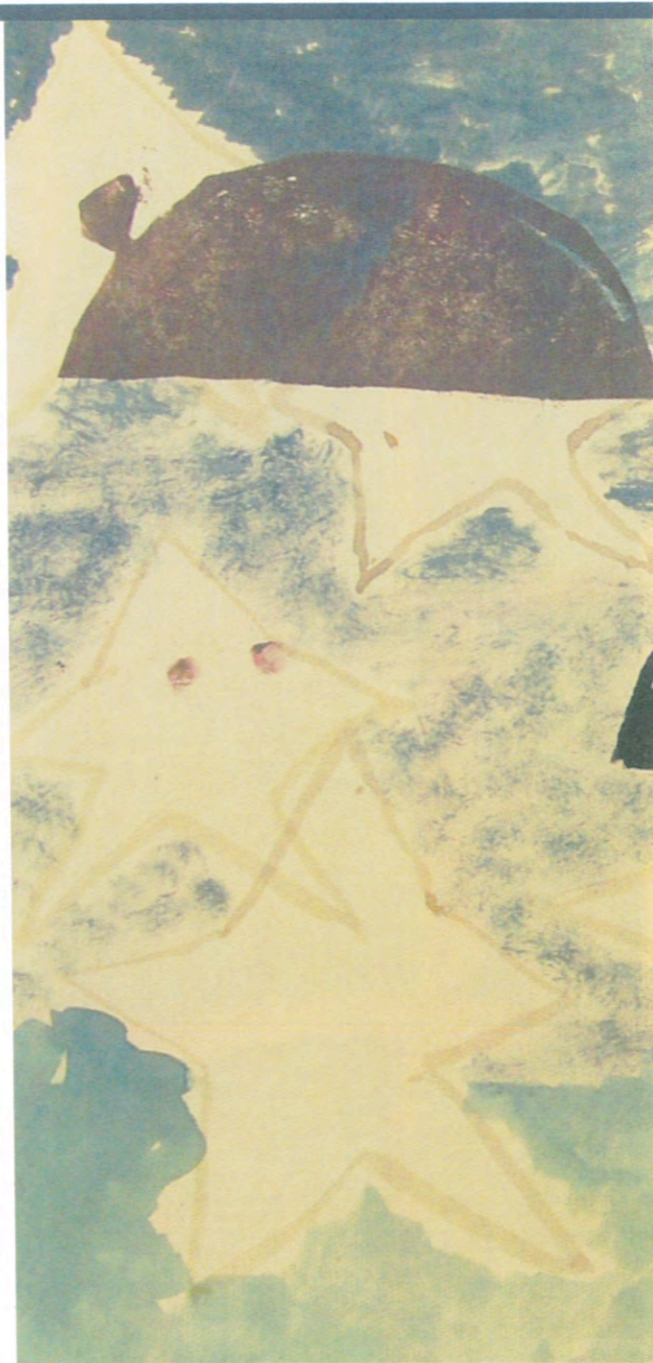


Hiding at a Safe House

I have been running for days in the woods to find freedom in the North. I am hoping to find a safe house so I can hide and have food and wash up. I finally arrive at a house with a white chimney. I know it is a safe house because other slaves told me that a white chimney means it's a safe house.

I walk over to the house and knock on the door. I am greeted by a woman who hates slavery and wants to free as many slaves as she can. She asks me to come in and gives me cornbread, corn, chicken and water. The water is cold and tastes good. I eat all of the food and I am full. I have been hungry for days. The woman gives me a bucket of hot water to wash up because I am real dirty. She also gives me clean clothes to wear.

The woman takes me to the basement so I can hide until morning. The basement is dark. It has no windows but it feels good to me to be inside the house. The basement is cold. It has a dirt floor, and it smells moldy. I am hiding behind boxes in the corner. The Quaker woman brings me a candle and a blanket. I wrap myself in the blanket to sleep on the floor by the boxes in the corner. It took a long time to get to the safe house and I am tired.



*Narrative by ShaMiab
Artwork by Fiona*





An Abolitionist Getting Arrested

I am in the kitchen when there is a knock at my front door. I open it. When I first see this woman I gasp. She is a runaway slave. I am so happy. I am thinking she is a slave by the way she looks. That is when she gives me this note. I open it and it says, "Please help this friend." I notice she has a cut on her face. I ask her what it is from. She says a tree branch scratched her. I clean it up for her and make her some food. She eats it like a farm animal. Poor thing, I think she must be so hungry. I ask her if she would like to take a bath. I can tell by her eyes that she is excited. After her bath I give her some clean clothing and show her where to hide. I have a secret wall in my living room that she hides behind. The space is very narrow with one lantern. I give her some blankets and tell her, "Don't be scared, and don't make any noise."

Then all of the sudden there is a pounding at my door. The voice says, "OPEN UP NOW." Then a man kicks the door and says, "Open up!" So I open it up slowly and the door creaks. The man says he needs to ask me some serious questions. "Did you let a slave into your home?"

"No," I say. He searches all my rooms, in my attic, and the basement under the house. I pray to God that she won't get caught. Then he reaches for the wall. My heart stops like God isn't on my side.

Just then he opens the wall and pulls out the frightened slave. He throws her to the ground and gives her ten lashings. Then he takes her to the carriage and locks her up. There is some blood on the floor. I can tell that this slave is going to have a rough time.

As the slave catcher drives away the police come towards me. I try to run but the policeman runs after me. He catches me too! He grabs my arms to put the handcuffs on and tells me that I am going to be fined \$1,000 and put in jail. I am feeling proud but scared. As he puts the handcuffs on I feel the coldness on my wrist. If I get out of jail I will definitely help runaway slaves again. He is still talking to me but I am not listening. I am thinking about how my family is going to react when they hear that I am in jail. He says, "O.K. Let's go," in a nasty voice. He shoves me in the carriage and we drive off. I'm scared. What is jail going to be like?



*Narrative by Alison
Artwork by Cobey*



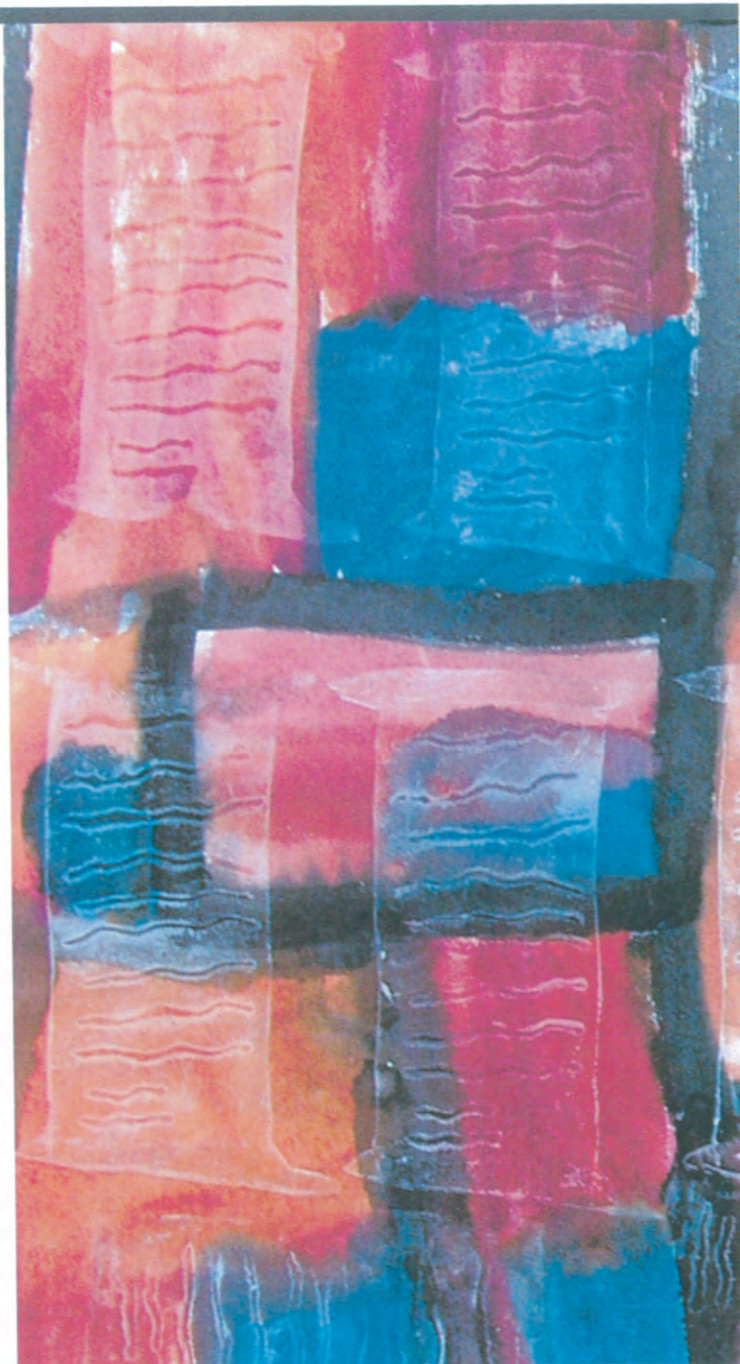


Plantation Owner's Child Going to School

I wake up at 8:00. Oh no, I am already late. I need to be at school at 8:30, and it is a two-mile walk to get there. I run down the cold wooden stairs and yell, "Papa." He comes with my good friend Patrick. Patrick is my slave, but I think of him as more of a friend than a slave. Patrick is the same age as me. He is ten years old. When I am not in school we go fishing in the plantation's pond. We treat each other like brothers, but my papa doesn't approve.

My dad tells me that God put blacks on this earth to serve white people. My mama doesn't agree with him. She thinks that God put humans, both black and white, on this earth to enjoy life and not be treated like cattle. When she tells him this, my papa gets very angry and yells at her like a mad man.

Patrick is told to get my books and carry them to school for me. While he is getting my books, I am eating bacon, eggs, and a muffin that my black nanny prepares for me. The eggs, bacon and muffin taste like a sweet honey. When I finish eating Patrick comes down with my books and we set off for school. As we walk down the dusty Kentucky road my eyes begin



Narrative by Antonio
Artwork by Emma



to water and itch from the dirt hanging in the air! Patrick asks me what school is like. I tell him I like school, especially when we read adventure stories about heroes in foreign lands. Patrick asks, "Can you tell me one of them?" I tell him about one of the knight stories we read in class.

We hear the loud school bell ringing, so we start to run towards the school. Finally we get there, but Patrick has to wait outside for me because it is against the law for enslaved people to learn how to read and write. The school looks like a small house in a big prairie. Inside there is only one room full of kids. Their ages range from six to twelve.

My friend Patrick peeks inside and smiles. I smile back. My teacher starts talking about math but I don't pay attention to him. I'm thinking about Patrick and how unfair it is that he can't learn in school. Slaves should be cared for, not owned by others. Suddenly the school bell rings. I run out to Patrick and on our way home I start to teach him letters so he can learn to read and write. His smile tells me that he feels happy to learn.



I am only at the safe house for a day when the lady tells me a conductor will drive me to the next stop, which is a boat. But she says it will be a long journey.

My journey begins as the conductor sneaks me onto the wagon. Straw needs to be moved so we can find the door to the false bottom. When the doors are open there is a big false bottom with straw. There are also four slaves laying there. I climb in and lay down so the doors can be closed.

It is so dark--pitch dark. I cannot see myself but I feel straw scratching and probably making red marks on me.

The wagon has horses to pull it. It makes a thumping noise. I bounce up and down hitting my head on the top of the false bottom. The other slaves are hitting their bodies too! I hear the thumping of the horses trotting to the next stop.

We stop and I hear people talking and what sounds like loose vegetables being dropped into the wagon. I can taste straw and dirt. It feels like a while before the wagon comes to a stop and two more slaves squeeze into the false bottom. We keep going. I start to smell water and the conductor whispers, "Five more minutes until we get there." Five minutes pass and we come to a stop. One slave at a time pops out of the false bottom. I know I am in Rochester now and a boat will be waiting to take me to Canada and freedom.



Secretly Learning to Read

I run through the woods on this bright, sunny day in Maryland. The pine trees tickle my face and their sweet smell fills the morning air. All of the sudden I hear voices behind a thicket. I press my head against it. It's a woman and two of the children from the big house. I know them. They are my friends ones six and the other seven. Anna's six and Jane is seven. Jane bosses Anna around but Anna always stands her ground. But the question is, who is the women? Suddenly I fall through the thicket and land on the ground with a thud.

"Ah!" Anna cries with a big smile on her face. I glance at the women but she stares straight at me and a smile comes over her face. I stand up and find myself backing away. "No, No, don't be afraid of me I'm a Quaker, I help slaves," the Quaker lady says. I stop. "Join the lesson," she says. Anna pats a place on the ground next to her so I sit there. Fresh air whirls around me. My eyes wander, the trees make a canopy over my head. The sun shines through the leaves making bright patterns on the ground.

Then the teacher talks. She says, "Hello, I am Miss Clara. Have you ever heard of reading or writing?" In return I gave her a questioning look. She said with a warm smile, "Writing



Narrative by Maude Hall

Artwork by Alison

is when a letter makes a sound, which makes a word. Reading is when you read the sounds that make words of the page. Here this is a book and these are letters." I look at the book, paging through it. Letters are black things that trail across the page. She shows me the letter A. It makes an Ahh sound. She has me practice writing it. It has two long slanting sides and a dash in the middle. It almost makes a triangle. Then she has me say the sound it makes.

The day seems to be flying by. The teacher tells me A is it's own word. I now know how to read the letter A on a piece of paper. A while later the teacher tells us it is time to leave. She tells Jane and Anna to keep quiet about me. They shrug their shoulders and say they will. I wonder why she told them to do that? Will someone get mad at her? I guess I'll never know.

I run back to the quarters with Anna and Jane. Jane says, "You can come again tomorrow, if you want to that is."

"I'll be there," I answer. Things fly through my mind like a whirlwind. I hope I won't get in trouble for learning to read and write. But I will learn, that I promise myself.





Bidding at a Slave Auction

On the way to the auction the road is bumpy and I bump up and down. I am trying to decide if I want to buy one slave or a family. It is raining out and windy. The auction is being held in a barn and I am glad.

I arrive at the barn where the auction is taking place. I run to the barn doors because the rain is coming down hard. The first thing I do is get a number. Then I walk around looking at the slaves in horse stalls. I find a family that I want and I check them out to see if they are healthy.

There are five slaves in the family: the dad, mom and three little kids, six, nine and ten years old. I check each person's teeth to see if they are healthy. I check their muscles to see if they are strong. I decide I will bid on the family. I wait for the family to come out



*Narrative by Collin
Artwork by Gena Driscoll*



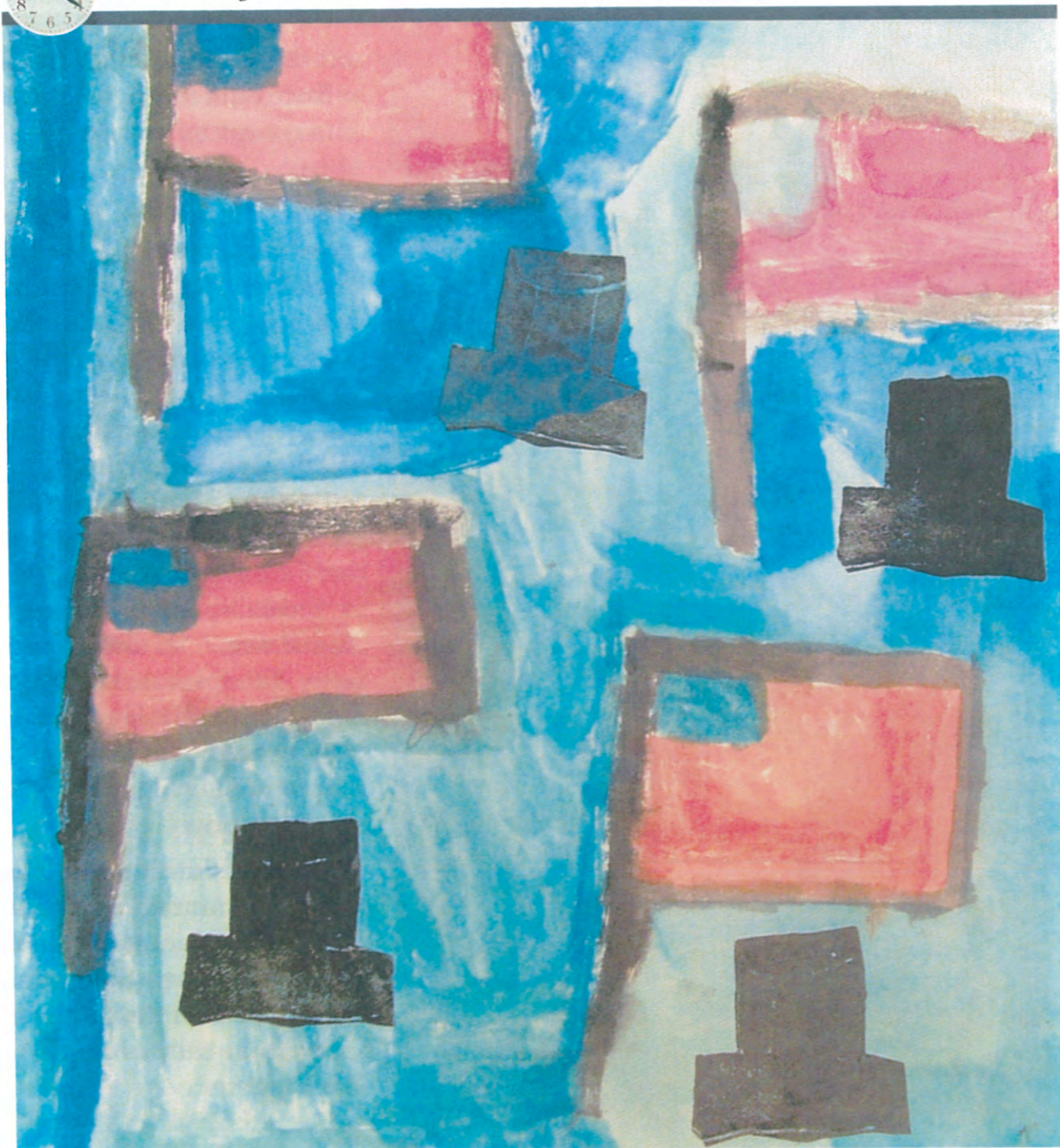
on the auction block. I wait a little while then the family comes out to be sold.

The slave seller starts at a low amount then the price goes higher and higher until it reaches \$400. It is just me and someone else bidding. I can not go any higher than \$400 because I do not have the money. I hope the other plantation owner will not put up his card because I really need this family to help on my plantation. I put my card up and he keeps his down. I don't know why the plantation owner didn't want the slave family anymore, but he did buy a couple of slaves to work on his plantation.

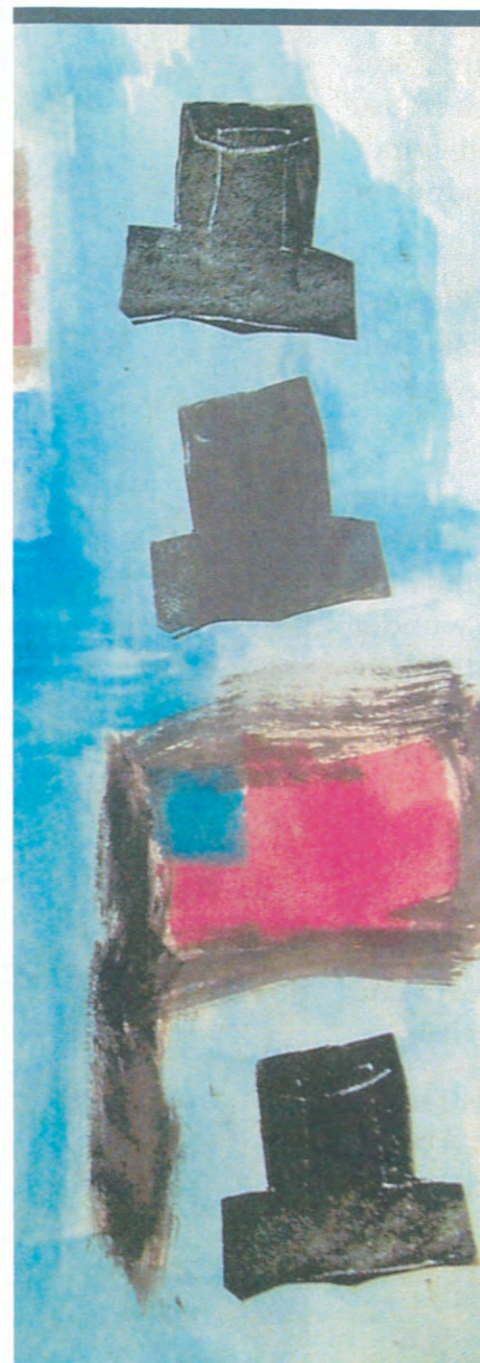
I leave the auction and bring my family of slaves back to the plantation. I am glad I purchased the family and I hope that the family is happy that they are able to stay together.



Attending an Abolitionist Meeting



Narrative by Jason
Artwork by Mikael



I wake up at 10:20. Oh my gosh! The abolitionist meeting is about to start at 11 O'clock. I get right out of bed, I rush downstairs, and right out the door. I begin walking fast to the abolitionist meeting, which is at Isaac and Amy Post's house in downtown Rochester.

I can't wait to get there. Lots of people are going to be there, like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Isaac and Amy Post, and other abolitionists I haven't met yet. We'll talk about the incident that happened last week. A local abolitionist was fined \$1,000 for helping a slave and he might even go to jail. This is because of the Fugitive Slave Law, which lets masters catch their slaves in the north. It also says slaves can only be free in Canada so now it's even more dangerous working on the Underground Railroad. This law made the Southern States really happy.

The people that have worked on the Underground Railroad for a while have to teach the new people how to be more careful when helping slaves. If we are caught we could be put in jail or be killed.

I walk and walk and walk, and I finally get to Isaac and Amy Post's house. I knock and someone opens the door. It is Amy. She says come in and I see lots of people. There is Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Isaac, and other abolitionists I haven't met. Everyone is sitting at one big table talking and waiting for the meeting to start. Amy says sit and I do. I look at a clock and it is 11:00. Isaac stands up and says, "Let the meeting begin."



A House Servant Preparing a Meal

I see the field slaves getting whipped, sweating, and working too hard. I feel so grateful that I'm a house servant and not a field slave. Suddenly the overseer comes up to me and says, "What you want?" and whips me for not being in the kitchen cooking the meal.

I ask my master what he would like for lunch. He says with a little anger in his voice, "Pig roast, broccoli, cake and rice." I take a different route back to avoid the overseer, and I start to cook after I get the rice.

As I walk out I realize that my son Jake is getting whipped. I feel so sad. I think about my other children and how we got separated at an auction. Jake was the only one who came with me to this plantation. I start to wonder if my other children are O.K. I feel like I should escape with Jake, but what if we got caught and got sent back, or whipped, or maybe even killed? So I don't tell anyone. I just keep it in my own mind.

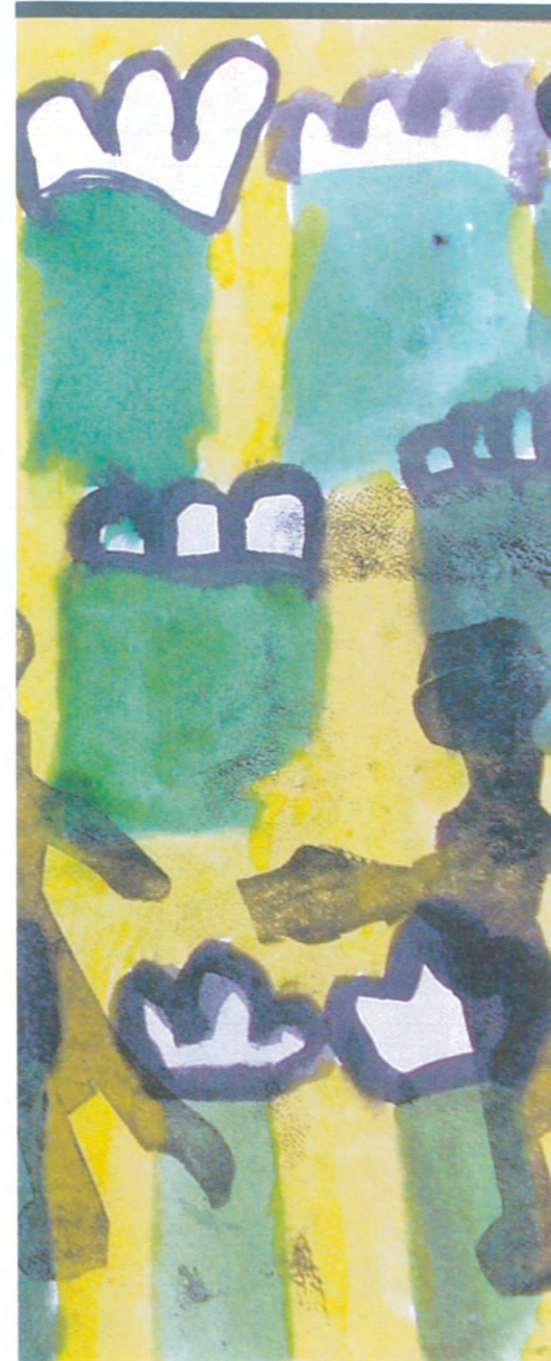
It's already 10:30! It will take me at least one hour to make the cake so I begin. Before I do that I prepare the pig roast. I stick the cake in the stove and let it bake. While the cake is baking I cook the rice. I put the chinaware and silverware on the table as well as the food.

I tell my master the meal is ready. He and his family come and enjoy their food while I give their baby Abigail her meal. And when they finish I bring out the cake and they enjoy that too. After they finish the cake I clear all the dishes and clean them as well. And they all go back to relaxing while I do my other chores.



*Narrative by Alice
Artwork by Grace*





The sun is coming up and I hear the bell ringing to wake us up so we can go to the field. We walk to the field with our tools in our hands and the overseer is leading us to where he wants us to pick the cotton for today. I have to pick fresh, clean cotton to fill my bag. It is hot out here in the field at 9:00 in the morning. It must be 100 degrees outside where I am.

Man, I am looking at my hands and they are getting red and they kind of hurt. My back hurts and I am getting very hot again. Man, I can't take it anymore from this heat out here. I think that I hear the overseer calling us for break time. I always say to myself, "Why do we not have a longer time for break?" We have some of the corn from the field for food. It feels like the heat is cooling down as I get up from the ground. I taste the cotton in my mouth. I hope this wind cools it down. Now the sun is getting hot again.

Man, I wish that the overseer would be quiet. I can't take it anymore! I wonder who is getting yelled at. Let me try to see who it is. It looks like it's a woman and I look again and it is Mary from the other quarters across from me.

Well, I'm looking up at the sky and it looks like the sun is going down. I am tired and worn out from picking cotton all day. We must walk in from the cotton fields because it is almost time for us to go and weigh the cotton.

Now it is my turn to get my cotton weighed. I wonder if I picked enough cotton today. I am so glad I picked enough cotton, because I didn't want to get whipped.



Escaping

As I am out in the fields picking cotton, my fingers hurt so much! I'm just thinking about freedom. I really want to escape because this slavery is so much pain because if we slaves slow down or not do our job we are whipped. We only get Sunday off. That means we have six days to work in the heat with fingers and back hurting, too. I wake up around the time the sun comes up and my day ends when the sun goes down. I only get ten to twenty minutes for lunch. This is why my stomach hurts so badly. I have heard that freedom is where there is peace and love and no slavery and I am going to get it!

So, I sneak, sneak and then go! I hope the slave catchers do not see me. Oh no! I think they do! I hide in a bush with leaves all over me so they can't find me. I hear the dogs' barking fade away. I hope the slave catchers don't go back to tell my master that I have escaped.

After awhile I realize I am so hungry! Oh no! I think I hear some dogs. I should go in that creek by those trees so the dogs won't smell my scent but I am too scared to move. I don't hear the dogs anymore so I run silently to the creek and it feels really good to have the water on me. I start walking through the creek and see a berry bush. I run over to it and pick some berries and start shoving them into my mouth until my stomach hurts. There is berry juice on my face and I wash it off with my hand. I start to get tired and while I am still walking in the water I look for a hiding spot. I think I've been in the water long enough for me to get out of this water. Oooooo! I think I see a cave. Yeah! It is! Maybe I should sleep there until night comes so nobody can catch me. I run over to the cave and crawl in.



Narrative by Maya
Artwork by Marcus





Master at an Auction



*Narrative by SbaMar
Artwork by Aurora*



It is a sunny day and as I travel down the road I see other plantation owners getting ready to go to the auction. I see a plantation owner and ask him what he thinks the auction is going to be like. He says he doesn't know.

I arrive at the auction. The auction is held in a cornfield. While the slaves are waiting to be sold they are waiting in horse stalls. Many slaves are squished into the horse stalls. They look sad and angry and some are anxious to be sold. I hear some slaves having a secret conversation about how the slave owners look.

I am selling one hundred slaves, fifty girls and fifty boys. When the slave auction starts the slave seller calls out the slave's number and occupation. I stay outside watching the slaves being sold. I am anxious to get rid of these slaves because I need the money. I hope I get a good price for them.

I meet with the slave seller at lunch to see how much money I made. I don't like the amount he tells me and hope I make more money in the afternoon. We meet again at the end of the auction and I ask him how much money I made. He says \$1500 and I am happy. I get in my carriage and go home.



On a Slave Ship Crossing the Atlantic Ocean

As I open my eyes I can almost see the blur of people in the dark, hot slave hold. I can't stand up because it is only three feet tall and my body is shivering with fear as I think about what's going to happen to me. I can feel the heavy breathing of people around me, the moaning ringing in my ears, and the crying of the other slaves. The slave hold echoes every sound. The door creaks as the slaver comes to feed us. I don't feel like eating today.

Many of us slaves don't want to eat. Some of us would rather die. Most slaves think that if they die they will go back home to see their families. The slaver comes up slowly to a woman to shove food in her mouth. She swallows with tears of pain running down her



Narrative by Sholanda
Artwork by ShaMiab

face. Now it's my turn. I open my mouth but then shut it real tight on his finger. He cries out in pain and then whips me on my back. This time he shoves the food in my mouth forcefully. He tells me he's not going to let me die because "slaves equal money." He then continues to feed other slaves.

As he walks around I hear the floorboards creak. The sick people around me are coughing and throwing up. Some have even died. The smell is disgusting and makes me nauseous. I also feel sick from the rocking of the boat. It feels like I've been on this boat for months. I'm so uncomfortable and scared. Why is this happening to me? I wish I was back home.





Making a Sign for a Protest

It's so hot in Rochester! But I must get to Mr. Post's Pharmacy to purchase a big, plain white sign. I walk across the Genesee River on the bridge and see Mr. Brown steering that boat. Since his wife died he just steers that boat. Everybody misses her.

Anyway, I see little Johnny Brown sweeping the front entrance of the pharmacy. I say, "Hello Johnny," and walk in and ask Mr. Post for a big, plain white sign. I pay and leave.

I walk across the street to the Reynolds Arcade and meet my friend Jane Hunt. She is taking me, in her carriage, to Mrs. Post's house. We are getting together to make signs for the women's rights protest tomorrow. I have been involved with the women's rights movement for many years. We have participated in conventions, speeches, meetings and signed petitions, and we want freedom as much as slaves! We want the right to vote, own property and to equal wages but tomorrow we will have a protest about getting the right to vote.

So many people are here today! Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass and Amy Post! After about twenty minutes, Amy serves us tea. We talk about our protest and make the signs. The signs say "We Won't Pay Taxes Until We Can Vote!" The signs are red, white and blue, the best color we can ever have on a sign. I can't wait until the protest tomorrow.



Narrative by Dakota Lawhorn.
Artwork by Dakota Lawhorn.





Slave at an Auction

It is early morning and I am on my way to the slave auction with my master. The road is bumpy because the rain made potholes and the wagon is not comfortable. I can see trees, I smell moist air, and I see a cloudy dark sky. I think it is going to rain.

When we get to the slave auction it begins to rain. Slaves are being sold. It makes me very sad. I feel like I want to cry. My stomach is upset and I feel scared and nervous. I don't want to be sold!

My master takes me to the horse stall where it smells like horses and hay. I wait there until I am called to the auction block. There are so many other slaves in the stall that I am squished by other people. I can smell my own body odor and feel my back pressed against the wall. As I stand in the horse stall I see the sad, angry and upset faces of other slaves being sold or separated from their family. While I am in



Narrative by Cobey
Artwork by Alice



the horse stall an old lady in a blue dress makes eye contact with me and comes up to me, checks my teeth and my muscles, and then smiles at me. She goes up to the slave seller and the slave seller calls my number and I go up to the auction block. The slave seller starts calling out amounts of money to see who will pay the most amount of money for me. The slave seller says, "\$1,260 for the slave," and the lady in the blue dress holds up her number. The slave seller yells, "Going once, going twice, going three times--sold to the lady in the blue dress!"

I am helped down from the auction block by my new master and I cry as she walks me to her wagon. I can't get it out of my mind: Master, how could you, you were my favorite master, I was your favorite slave. I will not let my master see my face. She tells the driver to get going to the plantation.



Visiting the Anti-Slavery Reading Room

As I walk down Main Street I see lots of buildings and people. It is mid afternoon. The sun is shining and it's brightening my spirit. I'm going to the Anti-slavery Reading Room to deliver a book that I wrote. My book is about how horrifying slavery is. It is called *Dreadful Slavery on the Fields*. While I'm walking down Main Street I wonder where I'll put my book in the Anti-Slavery Reading Room. The Anti-Slavery Reading Room of Rochester is a place that people can read about how dreadful slavery is and how slaves are treated. There is tons of information about slavery here, with books about field slaves and house servants.

I remember when I read my first book here. I learned that field slaves are treated the worst. They get whipped if they stop working for a second. I also learned that house servants would hear the master's conversations and if they repeated the conversation they would get whipped. Slavery is wrong, horrible, and I want to abolish it!

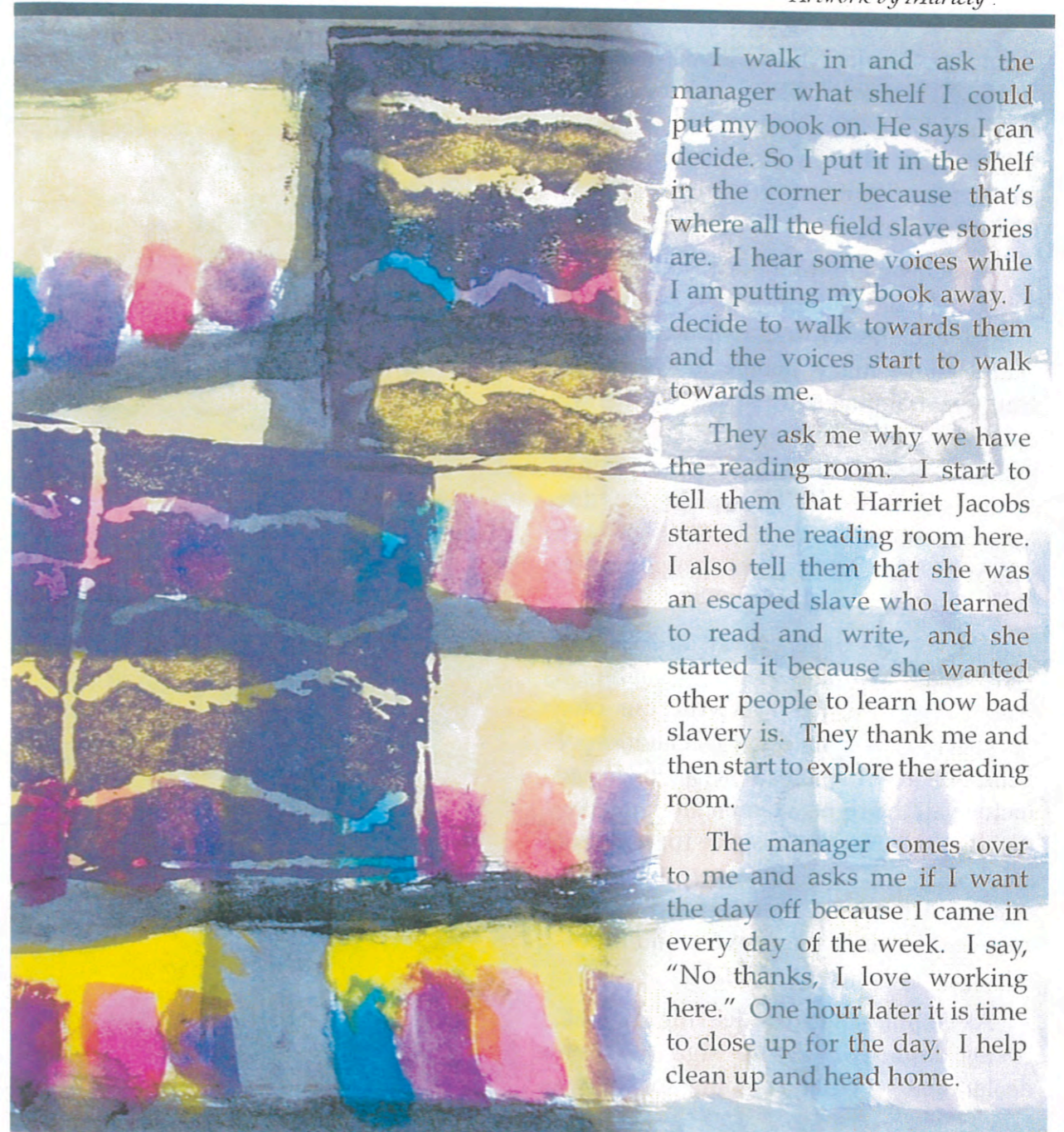


Narrative by Morgan
Artwork by Mariely

I walk in and ask the manager what shelf I could put my book on. He says I can decide. So I put it in the shelf in the corner because that's where all the field slave stories are. I hear some voices while I am putting my book away. I decide to walk towards them and the voices start to walk towards me.

They ask me why we have the reading room. I start to tell them that Harriet Jacobs started the reading room here. I also tell them that she was an escaped slave who learned to read and write, and she started it because she wanted other people to learn how bad slavery is. They thank me and then start to explore the reading room.

The manager comes over to me and asks me if I want the day off because I came in every day of the week. I say, "No thanks, I love working here." One hour later it is time to close up for the day. I help clean up and head home.





Attending a Women's Rights Convention

On October fifth, 1853 I arrive in Cleveland, Ohio, for the Fourth National Women's Rights Convention. I will be here with my sister, Sophia Hall, on October sixth, seventh and eighth at Melodean Hall.

As we walk to Melodean Hall, Sophia and I talk about the possible signing of a new declaration and will we sign it. There aren't many people at Melodean Hall when Sophie and I arrive. When we enter the hall I am very nervous. There are men and women at the convention. Little by little the hall fills up. By the time the convention starts, it looks like there are well over one thousand people in the hall.

Frances D. Gage stands up to speak and reads William Henry Channing's letter suggesting that we write our own declaration, similar to the Declaration of Sentiments written in Seneca Falls, and include all the rights women did not have: the right to equal pay, divorce for wives of alcoholics, and the right to vote and all the others. A new declaration is written and read at the end of the convention but it is not signed to make it official.

As Sophie and I are leaving, I think, "Why didn't we get to sign the new declaration? What is going to happen now?"



Narrative by Erika
Artwork by Hannah





Kidnapped!

It's a beautiful day! We are all doing the "cucu" to celebrate my birthday! This is my favorite part of birthdays. Dancing is so fun! Wait, what's that? I tell the drummers to stop playing. It looks like a little speck that keeps growing and growing. Now it is easy to see. People! They see us and charge at us. When they get here, "Stop grabbing me--oooouuu--quit it-- mom!" is all I can hear. The people are white! I've never seen a person who's white! Just then, a white person grabs me! "This is an invasion little boy!" After he tells me this, I know this is not going to be a good birthday.

Suddenly the white people whip out a long chain. I nearly faint. The chain has about fourteen holes and is longer than ten feet. Then, the white men pull out a pair of whips, raise them and strike me all at once. The white people laugh and laugh. My back is soaked with blood. I am in so much pain. I don't realize that I am in the chain. Now I know what the holes are for. They are for sticking mine and thirteen other heads in.

After we are chained up, the white people make us walk. "Walk to shore!" "What's going on?" I ask the man behind me. I can't see him because the chains are too tight, but I know he is there. "I don't know but it's probably bad" he says back.

The next day is even more terrifying! Three people are left to die! The white people pushed them to the ground and just left them there! And still they make us walk!

Since I live in Guinea, the walk only takes two days. Guinea is around the sea. We hike up mountains and wade through water. After we get past the hills, we see the shore. I see a huge wooden ship.

"The slave ship is here!" Now the captain is handing the chief a pack of glass beads and he's taking twenty blacks. "Do not worry; we'll take good care of them!" I hear him say. But that's not true. This will be terrible!



*Narrative by Jackson
Artwork by ShaMar*





Reading a Women's Rights Newspaper

As I ride in a carriage down Main Street to Isaac Post's Pharmacy, I think about how much Rochester has grown since slavery has ended in New York. The pharmacy is on the Tallman Block and I am going to buy a women's rights newspaper.

When I get to the pharmacy, the only person I see is Amy Post. She asks me what I want and I say, "The UNA News please." As I look at the paper I see that the UNA is a newspaper written by Paullina Wright Davis to elevate women. Elevate means lift up. This first issue of the UNA is explaining the "rights, sphere, duty, and destiny of women, fully and fearlessly." The UNA is published in Rhode Island.

I read the newspaper in a soft, comfy chair. I see that there is a women's rights convention happening in Ohio. Some people I know about might be there, like Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

I start to talk to Amy about the convention and the people who will give speeches. Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Amelia Bloomer will talk about women voting, women keeping their own money, equal pay, ownership, education, and social status.

So I say goodbye to Amy while thinking to myself that I hope the convention is as good as it sounds, and I hope there aren't any protesters. I really want to go but can't because it takes three to four days to get there. I decide to make women's rights signs right here in Rochester. Making signs and using them is fighting for women's rights too and I'm going to do as much as I can to help women get the rights they've been fighting for.



Narrative by Julia
Artwork by Julia





Arrival in the New World

I have been on this ship chained up for many weeks. I am weak, hungry and exhausted. I have seen bloodshed from slaves and the crack of the whip on their backs. I have seen slaves being thrown into the sea because the captain of the ship knew they were not going to survive the trip. I have seen people covered with scars and I have seen human waste all over the hold. Some slaves wanted to kill themselves. They thought that God was going to let them visit their families again. I am homesick and really miss my family but have decided not to think about it and hope that I will see my family again.

I am on the deck of the ship exercising my legs, which they make us do. I am sore and seasick when suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I spot a piece of land that I have never seen before. I am amazed by the trees, birds, grass, rocks, wagons and people. My heart is pounding because I just remembered a rumor I heard

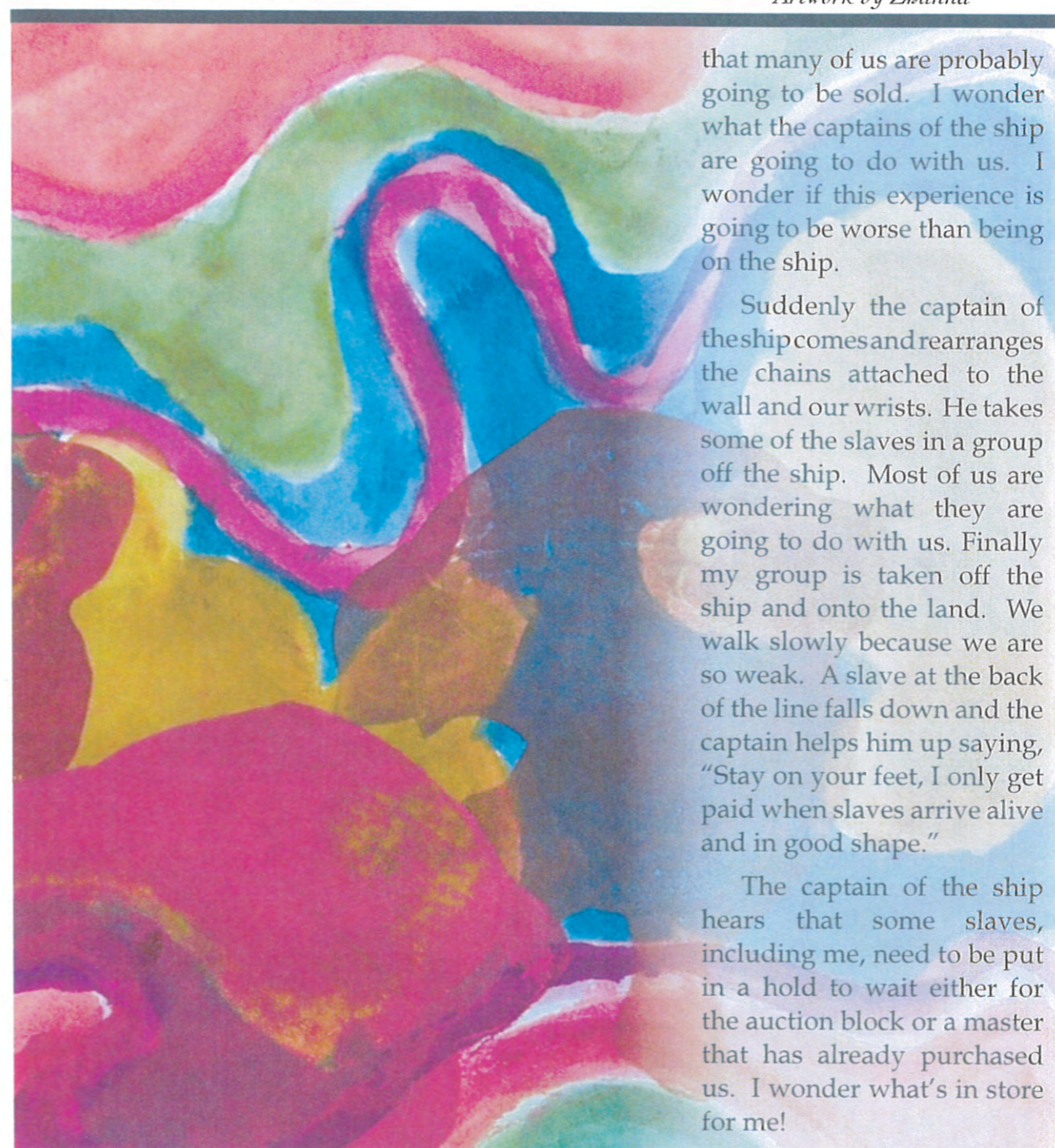


*Narrative by Mikael
Artwork by Zhanna*

that many of us are probably going to be sold. I wonder what the captains of the ship are going to do with us. I wonder if this experience is going to be worse than being on the ship.

Suddenly the captain of the ship comes and rearranges the chains attached to the wall and our wrists. He takes some of the slaves in a group off the ship. Most of us are wondering what they are going to do with us. Finally my group is taken off the ship and onto the land. We walk slowly because we are so weak. A slave at the back of the line falls down and the captain helps him up saying, "Stay on your feet, I only get paid when slaves arrive alive and in good shape."

The captain of the ship hears that some slaves, including me, need to be put in a hold to wait either for the auction block or a master that has already purchased us. I wonder what's in store for me!





A Letter from Susan B. Anthony



*Narrative by Nicole.
Artwork by Maude Hall.*



What a sunny day! Too bad I still have to finish my chores. I better get the mail. I walk out into the nice warm sunlight to my old wooden mailbox. I open it. I flip through the mail--not for me--not for me--not for me--as usual! "Hey, what's this?" I left a letter in my mailbox. Wow! It's a letter from Susan B. Anthony! And it's for me! I can't believe Susan B. Anthony mailed me a letter. We met at a women's rights meeting and we have spoken together at these meetings. I wonder why she is writing me. I read the letter out loud to myself.

Dear Friend,

I am Susan B. Anthony and, as you may have heard, I am in the fight for women's rights. We are having a petition signing at the Post Pharmacy for women to get their rights. It is Saturday at Four O'clock in the PM. We will be expecting your visit in a couple of days.

Susan B. Anthony

Wow! I am going to help women get the right to vote, keep the money they earn, own property and the other rights we don't have...yet. Right now we don't have many rights but I bet in a couple of years we'll have the rights we deserve. I am going to sign the petition to help women get their rights!



Captured Under the Fugitive Slave Law



*Narrative by Zbanna
Artwork by Aurora*

As I walk into the store to buy wood and lumber, I think about my job. I need materials to make a table to sell in my store. My wife is in the wagon waiting for me to come out.

As I leave the store, two men hop out of their wagon and run towards me. Suddenly I remember about the Fugitive Slave Law. I remember Bob got captured and we never saw him again. Thoughts rush through my mind. Free blacks can be sent back to slavery, so I begin to think about what they are going to do to me. I'm frightened as the slave catchers come my direction. I think to myself, this is a free state! I was born here and I've never even been a slave!

My wife looks on in horror as I am tackled. She screams at them and yells that I am a free man. They tell her to shut up as they step on my back harder and harder. It feels like I am being cut open. They kick my face and throw a rope around my hands and pull it tight. My heart is beating faster and faster and I scream that I don't want to go. They finally drag me inside the wagon and chain me up with the other captured blacks.

As I look around I see 6 other, used-to-be free blacks in the wagon. They have chains around their necks and their feet are shackled too. They all look frightened and none of us speak. We just stare at our shackles. We all know what's waiting for us.



Woman Learning She Won't Receive Her Husband's Inheritance

I shut the door from getting home from work. I can hear the falling rain against the rooftop like the needles falling from the sky. My arms are squeezing my coat around me. I let go of my coat and hang it on the back of my chair.

I sit on the chair and gaze up at a picture of my husband. He died this morning of cancer. Tears roll down my face as I lift my hand and wipe my tears away from my face. "What will I do?" I say to my self in a whisper voice.

I walk up the stairs. I hear the creak of the stairway as I walked up. I curl up on my bed thinking about my husband's death this morning. Before long I fall asleep, the rain rocking me to bed. Hours pass when I hear a knock on the door. I get up quickly and go down the stairs. I walk to the kitchen and step onto the very tip of my toes and look out the window. Amy, who is one of my best friends, is waiting for me on the front step. I lower my heels and open the door. I let her inside and hang her coat up for her. I asked her if she wants something to drink. She shakes her head as she responds, "No thanks." Amy looks up at me and says, "It must be so hard knowing that you have to give all of your husband's inheritance to Jacob." Jacob is my oldest son. I look at her in a confused way.

Give my husband's inheritance to Jacob? What is she talking about? "What do you mean?" I ask her, still very confused. "Shouldn't I get his inheritance? I mean I'm the adult, I'm the mother, I'm the one who knows how to spend the money in a non wasteful way!"

"Yes but you're a women. These days people think only men and boys can keep the money of the family," says Amy. Now I am looking at the floor in an angry way.

"Why does this have to be the law? It is not fair!" I tell her.

"I agree, but there is a women's rights convention tonight in Ohio and they're going to talk about changing the law."

"Ohio! That's at least three or four days of traveling!" I exclaim.

"I'm sorry. I knew you wouldn't be able to go since we live in Rochester." Amy looks on and sees tears coming down my face. She takes my hand and says, "If you ever want to talk just come over. But I must be leaving now or I won't have any

Narrative by Fiona
Artwork by Maya

supper for my husband when he gets home." She hugs me and she leaves without a sound. When she shuts the door only silence is left in the house.

I start to think of the convention. I have heard that Susan B. Anthony speaks at conventions and she tells great speeches about how women do deserve the rights they don't have right now. But the kids really do need me at a time like this and I think it's for the better that I'm not going anyway. I hope that women get their rights.





Giving a Paycheck to Her Husband



Narrative by Gena Driscoll

Artwork by Morgan



As I walk into the house I'm happy I'm the only one home. I realize it's so much more warm and cozy without my husband. Being a teacher is hard and it's nice to come home to a warm house after work. My husband will be home soon and I don't want to give the money to him. I dread when I have to give my paycheck to my husband. He will also want some clean clothes for work tomorrow. As I start to wash the clothes I think about what it would be like to be a man and be in charge. Would it be hard? The sound of thunder snaps me out of my fantasy world.

My husband comes in the room with his face looking greedy. He asks for my check as soon as he comes in. I give it to him but I hand it over slowly, like I'm trying to stop the moment. I don't like the way things are with men being in charge of everything.

Rain starts to pound on the ground outside like rocks. I'll go outside for some fresh air. The cool rain feels good, like it is washing away all my bad feelings. The air smells fresh and sweet from the rain.

I wish I could go the Fourth Women's Rights Convention and speak to people who are fighting for women's rights. I want to talk to them about giving women the right to keep their money but unfortunately the convention is in Ohio, and I have to stay home to do my housework. Maybe Amy Post, a Quaker, will be there or Lucretia Mott. But maybe I can still fight for women's rights by protesting or making a petition. If I make a petition I could get people here in Rochester to sign it. It will be about giving women the right to keep their money. I can get my friends to sign it. I can send it to the government and see if they will do anything about it. I hope they do. I can't wait to see the look on my husband's face if the petition works! I hope it does!



Coming in From the Fields

Now the day's work is done. I walk to the cotton scale where the overseer is. While I am putting a bucket of cotton on the scale he nods firmly. I am grateful that it weighs enough. The person behind me puts his bucket of cotton up, and just because it's one pound below the weight it's supposed to be he gets whipped with twenty horrible lashes. I taste a salty drip of sweat that drips down my forehead. It reminds me of how hard I worked today. Two slaves are talking about escaping tonight, but suddenly an overseer hears them and they get whipped really hard. I am scared after that happens.

Finally I walk to my quarters where my family is. I walk inside the wooden door. The fact that I am with my family warms me with good feelings. The cabin has a dirt floor that tells me I am home. I tell my family about the codes and the wonderful conductors on the Underground Railroad. We sing "Follow the Drinking Gourd," which tells us how to find the North Star, and then we sing, "Wade in the Water." This song tells us how to keep from getting captured by the slave catcher's bloodhounds. I tell them about safe houses, and people called Quakers who believe in peace and justice for everybody.

We are all getting really tired and I finally go lay down in my bed. As I close my eyes I wonder if I'll ever make it to freedom. As I think about being free, my heart feels like it's going to pop out. But I'm not free yet, and I really don't want to pick cotton tomorrow. I guess it doesn't really matter what I want because I'm still here.



*Narrative by Marcus
Artwork by Tabj*



At Kelsey's Landing

After traveling on the Underground Railroad for more than a month I have finally arrived in Rochester. But I have to be careful because someone told me it's not safe to be out here when you're a runaway slave. I met an abolitionist who said that I have to get to Canada because there's something called the Fugitive Slave Law. That means that a slave really isn't free because any black person in the United States can be captured and sent back to slavery.

It feels so weird walking out here with ripped clothes and scars. I know I need to be really careful. The person who told me to be careful also told me where I needed to go, a place called Kel—Kel—Kelsey's Landing. She also said that another abolitionist would be waiting for me and he would be hiding. I had to scrape two rocks together and he would come out. She told me one more thing. She said that he would show me the way to freedom.

After telling me everything she led me half of the way there and then she left me alone and told me where to go from here. I follow her directions and scrape two rocks together and a man comes out of a bush right behind me. He is calling me over there in a whisper. I slowly walk over to the bush and I see a boat. The man asks me, "Are you ready to go?" In my head I am thinking he must be the abolitionists plus there's a whole bunch of other people here that look like they're slaves.

The man says we have to leave soon. The man tells me we have to go up the Genesee River to Lake Ontario. I don't know if I have enough energy because I'm beaten and I'm starving but I have to keep going! It's almost night time and we have to start heading out of here. Luckily there's a boat that the abolitionist gave us to escape. Now everybody is gathering food and packing it on the boat and we are ready to leave.

We find paddles on the boat. We each take turns paddling. I have so many feelings right now. I'm nervous, excited, exhausted too! We've been on this boat for more than five hours and I'm starving. "Oh, it's starting to

Narrative by Mariely
Artwork by Nicole

get bright so everybody stay low." Someone says we should stop. I say, "We are not stopping until we get to Canada!" Now all of us are starving and we all decide that we are going to eat. The food looks fresh but smells a little rotten. It tastes so good and sweet. I see a bird come right at me and it takes my berry.

It starts to rain and the water feels so good. It feels like it is cleaning up all the dirt on my body. "Hey, I think I see something that looks like land!" "We're here!"





A Second Night on the Run

I'm in seriously big trouble. My owner is probably looking for me right now and I have to keep moving. Most slaves travel at night because the slave owner and slave catchers are asleep at night and it's hard to see.

I'm going north because north leads to Canada and Canada is freedom. I know I'm going north because I'm following the North Star. I remember my grandma used to tell me stories about the Underground Railroad. She told me how to find the North Star, and if it was cloudy you could feel around the tree for moss. Moss grows on the north side of the trees.

My belly starts aching and I know I'm really hungry. I see a farm with chickens and cannot resist it. I go and take a chicken. I run back into the woods to make a fire and I cook the chicken and eat it.

Now that my stomach is full I keep on moving. As I walk I hear the sounds of the leaves crunching under me. It's like the voice of God telling me to keep going. I see the darkness of the

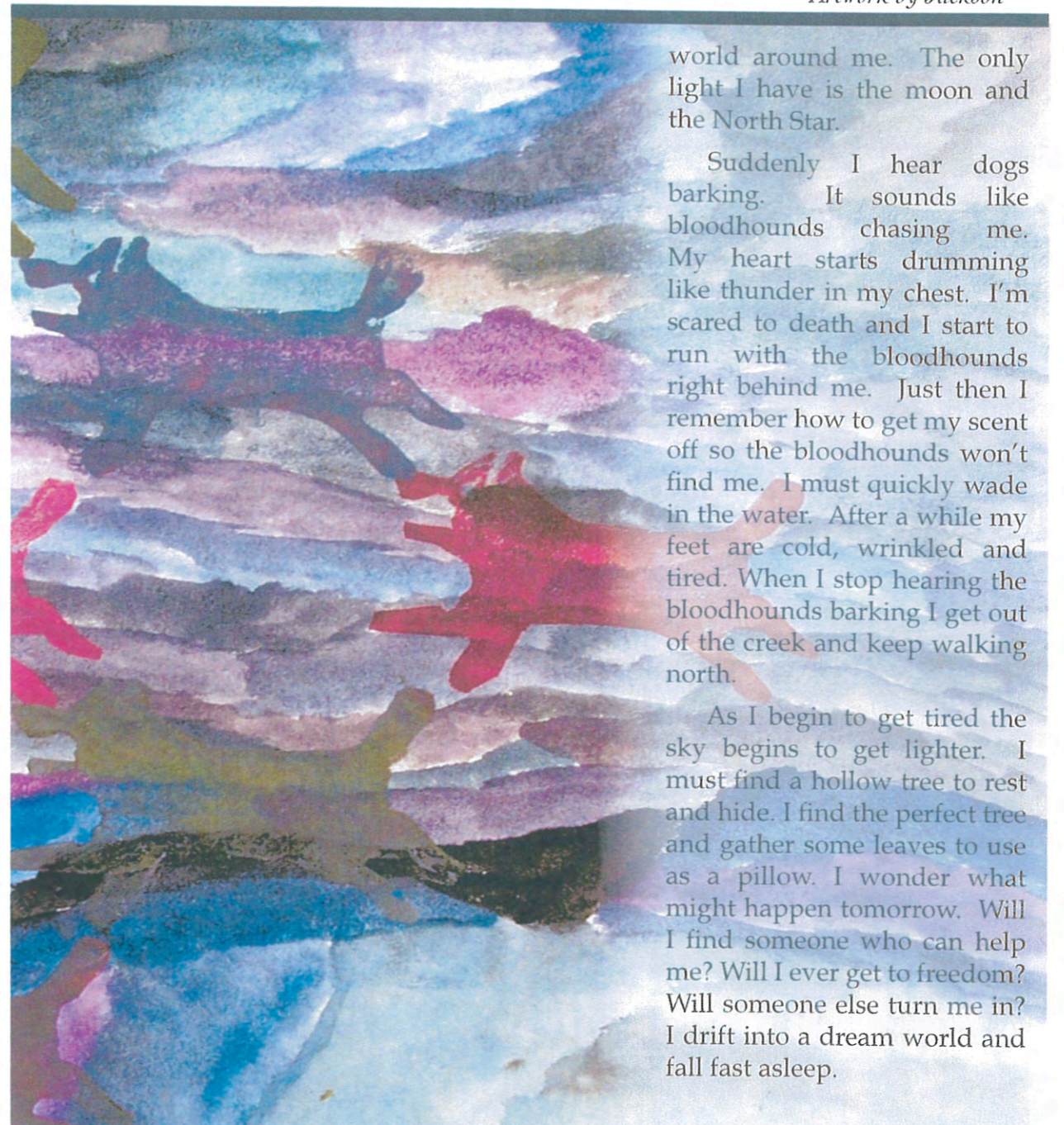


*Narrative by Aurora
Artwork by Jackson*

world around me. The only light I have is the moon and the North Star.

Suddenly I hear dogs barking. It sounds like bloodhounds chasing me. My heart starts drumming like thunder in my chest. I'm scared to death and I start to run with the bloodhounds right behind me. Just then I remember how to get my scent off so the bloodhounds won't find me. I must quickly wade in the water. After a while my feet are cold, wrinkled and tired. When I stop hearing the bloodhounds barking I get out of the creek and keep walking north.

As I begin to get tired the sky begins to get lighter. I must find a hollow tree to rest and hide. I find the perfect tree and gather some leaves to use as a pillow. I wonder what might happen tomorrow. Will I find someone who can help me? Will I ever get to freedom? Will someone else turn me in? I drift into a dream world and fall fast asleep.





A Slave Gathering



*Narrative by Amaris
Artwork by Amaris*



On Saturday night my slave family and friends from other slave quarters come with us to gather. We go far out in the woods to gather so the master can't catch us. I am looking forward to singing and dancing.

As we walk to the gathering spot we pass the other slave quarters and the BIG HOUSE! Walking past the big house is the time when we have to be very quiet. Then we pass the corn and cotton fields. I gently touch one of the corn husks and pinch a piece of corn and eat it. Then my mother picks me up and I can feel her cold hands and she softly says "SHHH..." We finally reach the woods and find a safe spot with lots of trees and prickly plants so nobody can hear us.

We caught two rabbits yesterday which we brought along with us for our slave gathering. My friends and I go into the woods and gather wood for a fire. We bring arms full of wood to our gathering spot and my dad builds a fire. The fire has orange sparks and a silver lining. When the fire is ready my dad puts the rabbit on to cook. While we are waiting we sing and dance.

The rabbit smells so strong I can almost taste it. The roast is done and it looks so perfect and brown but we have to wait a little longer for the rabbit to cool. Finally the rabbit is done cooling and we eat it. After we are done eating my dad tells some stories about when he was younger and about Br'er Rabbit. Then we sing and dance the Puttin' Juba and tap our feet on the ground to the beat of the song. My family and I tap our hands to our legs like they are drums. We sing and dance some more and we are all tired out. It is time to go home but I don't want to go home because it feels so good not to be working but we have to go, we have to go back. We leave no trace and walk back to our slave quarters.



We are the 2006-2007 fourth grade class from Genesee Community Charter School in Rochester, New York. We are an Expeditionary Learning School, which means we do a lot of reading, writing, singing, and artwork about the same subject. We call this a learning expedition. During an expedition we go on field studies, complete research, and create a product at the end to share what we have learned. This book is the product we created after learning about slavery and woman's rights!

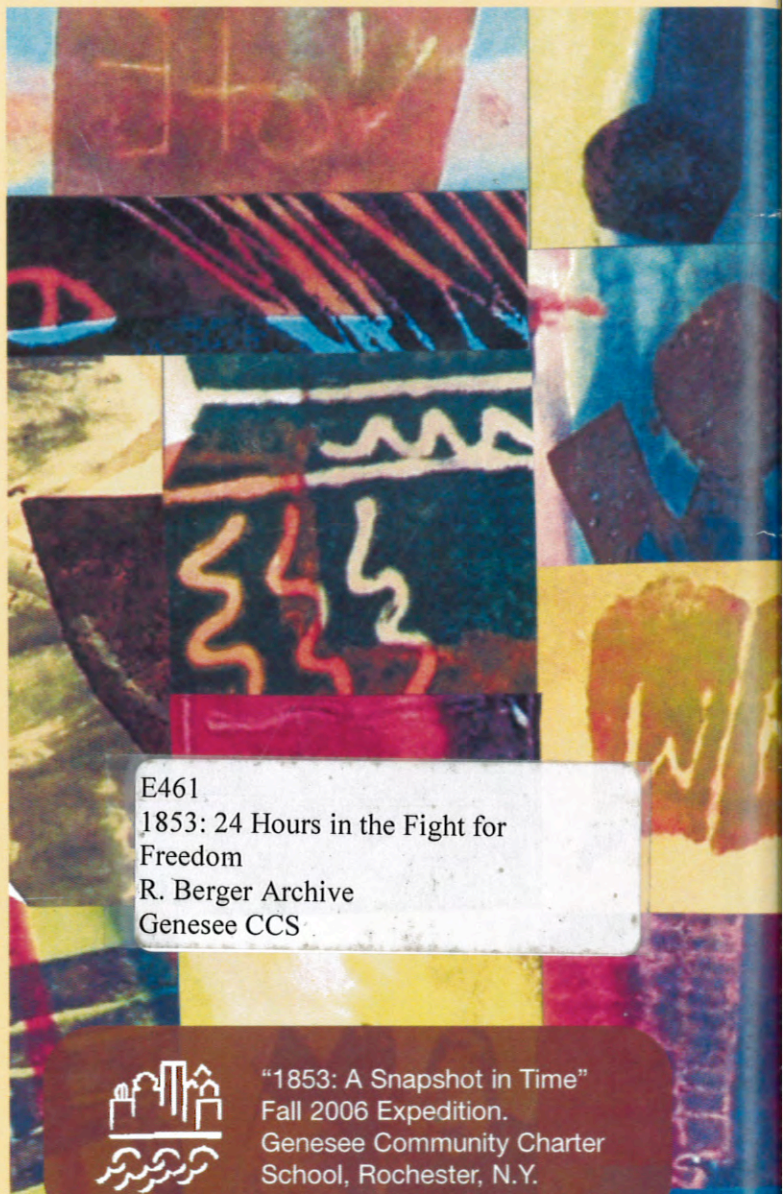
We kicked off our expedition by looking at a time capsule from 1853. Inside the time capsule were things like Frederick Douglass' newspaper, reward flyers for runaway slaves, notices about slave auctions, and pictures of important people who began the fight for women's rights. This gave us the idea to write this book. Inside you'll find 31 "snapshots" in time about a day in the life of 1853. We hope you learn new things and find yourself inspired after reading this book. If you are interested and want to learn more about Expeditionary Learning Schools, than go to www.elschools.org or visit our school's website at www.gccschool.org.

"Failure is impossible"

Susan B. Anthony

**"If there is no struggle,
there is no progress."**

Frederick Douglass



E461
1853: 24 Hours in the Fight for
Freedom
R. Berger Archive
Genesee CCS



"1853: A Snapshot in Time"
Fall 2006 Expedition.
Genesee Community Charter
School, Rochester, N.Y.