

# Glossary

**Abolitionist** — A person who advocated the end of slavery in the United States; a person who believed that slavery should be ended and expressed his or her views publicly in writing or by actions; a person who favors ending a custom or activity, especially slavery. Examples include Levi Coffin, David Walker, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

**Abstract** — Art, including monuments or sculpture, where there is no accurate representation of forms or objects. The artist is less interested in form than in lines, shapes, colors and textures. The artist takes the object and either simplifies it or exaggerates it. Each viewer may see something different when they look at it. Abstract works often bring up powerful feelings in people, as they react to what they see.

**Allegorical** — Works of art that include figures representing ideas or themes, such as virtue, peace, freedom, justice, peace, evil or death. These works reflect what the artist thinks about the chosen idea or theme, and they often tell a story.

**Allies** — People who help and support someone else; friends.

**Antebellum** — Refers to the time and way of life before the Civil War.

**Auction** — The public sale in which property or items of merchandise are sold to the highest bidder.

**Borderlands** — The geographic area surrounding the Ohio River. The Underground Railroad operated along this region.

**Bounty hunter** — A person or group of individuals who seeks out runaway slaves, and tries to capture them and returns them to their masters to receive a financial reward; slave catcher.

**Broadside** — Single-sheet notices or announcements printed on one or both sides, intended to be read unfolded.

**Bystander** — One who is present but does not take part in a situation or event; an onlooker who takes no action.

**Cargo** — Escaped slaves were referred to as cargo when receiving help from conductors.

**Commissioner** — A person authorized by an official body to perform certain duties.

**Conductor** — Term given to abolitionists who aided freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad; a person who escorted or guided freedom seekers between safe houses or stations.

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**Cooperation** — The act or practice of cooperating; an act of working together for a common goal.

**Cotton** — Any of various shrubby plants of the genus *Gossypium*, having flowers and grown for the soft white downy fibers surrounding oil-rich seeds; the fiber is generally used in textiles such as clothing.

**Courage** — The state of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger and fear with confidence and bravery.

**David Walker's Appeal** — This pamphlet, written by David Walker in 1829, urged slaves to fight for their freedom and was one of the most provocative and radical documents of the abolitionist movement.

**Drinking Gourd** — Term referring to the Big Dipper. Slaves were said to have followed the North Star, the brightest star near the Big Dipper, to find their way.

**Editorial** — An article in a publication expressing the opinion of its editors or publishers.

**Emancipation** — The act of freeing someone from oppression, bondage or authority; the act of setting free from slavery or some form of bondage; liberation.

**Emancipation Proclamation** — Issued by President Lincoln on September 22, 1862, the proclamation became effective on January 1, 1863. It stated “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforth shall be free.” It stated nothing about slaves in the border states and areas controlled by the Union army and as a result they remained enslaved.

**Expressionistic** — Art where the appearance of things is distorted or exaggerated to make stronger the emotional qualities it is trying to communicate.

**Feature story** — A newspaper article that often spins off from a core of news events and values. Also known as literary journalism or a “soft” news story.

**Figurative** — Art focusing on human or animal forms. A figurative work may be realistic or abstract.

**Free settlement** — Communities of African Americans who were legally free. A target for runaway slaves because they knew they would be helped.

**Free states** — States that did not allow slavery, often referred to as the North.

**Freedom** — The state of being able to make decisions for oneself; being able to do what you want; liberty.

**Freedom seeker** — An African American or African who dreamed of freedom from slavery and dared to run away; someone who has escaped control or captivity; also called fugitive or runaway slave.

**Fugitive slave** — A slave who ran away from his owners as an act of resistance toward slavery and his master. Such slaves sought freedom and better living conditions. Also called freedom seeker.

**Fugitive Slave Law** — Law enacted to return runaway slaves to the South. The law stated that if any federal marshal did not arrest an alleged fugitive slave he could be fined \$1,000. People suspected of being runaway slaves could be arrested without warrant and turned over to a claimant on nothing more than the claimant's sworn testimony of ownership. A suspected black slave could not ask for a jury trial nor testify on his or her behalf. This law allowed slave catchers to cross over to free states where slavery was prohibited and capture free blacks and escaped slaves.

**"Hard" news story** — An article about a current event that is focused primarily on timeliness and is generally written in summary form.

**Labor** — The condition of physical or mental exertion, especially when difficult or exhausting; work.

**Legacy** — Something that is transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.

**Liberator** — One who frees another from domination.

**Manumission** — A written legal document that freed an individual from slavery.

**Master** — A man in a position of authority, control or ownership, as the head of a household or a plantation; a man who owns a slave or many slaves.

**Memoirs** — A narrative of experiences that the writer has lived through; an autobiography.

**Mistress** — A woman in a position of authority, control or ownership as the head of a household or a plantation; a woman who owns a slave or many slaves, typically the wife of the master.

**Mulatto** — The child of a black person and a white person; a term used during slavery and early 20th century.

**Myth** — A legendary narrative that presents part of the beliefs of a people or explains a practice; an imaginary or unverifiable person or thing.

**Narrative** — A story, usually from a first person perspective.

**Negro** — A term used to describe a black person or a person of African descent. Often offensive.

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**North Star** — 1. A star pointed to by the two stars at the end of the bowl of the Big Dipper, it may have been used by those using the Underground Railroad for navigation to the North. 2. Periodical founded before the Civil War in Rochester, New York, in 1847 by Frederick Douglass. The paper focused on a variety of issues including emancipation, women's suffrage and education.

**Oppress** — To keep a person down by the severe and unjust use of force or authority; to overwhelm or crush an object, people or group.

**Overseer** — One who keeps watch over and directs the work of others, especially laborers; a supervisor or superintendent.

**Perpetrator** — One who is guilty of a crime or mistreatment.

**Perseverance** — Steady determination to a course of action, a belief or a purpose; steadfastness.

**Plantation** — A large estate or farm on which crops are raised, worked by slaves during the antebellum period.

**Primary source** — Firsthand evidence or account of something that happened.

**Proclamation** — An official or general notice in which the word "proclamation" is used in the heading; an official public announcement.

**Quadroon** — A person having one-quarter black ancestry, a classification used under slavery.

**Quaker** — A member of the Society of Friends religious denomination; they were known to oppose slavery and often helped slaves on their escape.

**Realistic** — Works of art, including monuments and sculptures, that show the subject accurately and true to life. You can tell who or what the subject is when you look at it.

**Reminiscences** — A narration of past experiences; memories.

**Resister** — One who resists; one who actively opposes the policies of a government.

**Revolt** — To try to overthrow an authority figure or system; to oppose or refuse to accept something.

**Safe house** — A house where escaped slaves could receive help such as food, shelter, rest and, in some cases, new clothes.

**Slave** — A person who is by law deprived of his or her liberty for life and becomes the property of another. The children of female slaves follow the condition of their mothers and are themselves slaves.

**Slave catchers** — People who made their living catching runaway slaves for the reward money, usually thought to be drifters or mercenaries.

**Slave states** — States that allowed slavery, often referred to as the South.

**Slavery** — The state or condition of a slave; an institution or system that perpetuates human bondage.

**“Soft” news story** — See Feature story.

**Station** — A safe place that held slaves for one day or longer until it was safe to move again.

**Stereotype** — The notion that many people have about a thing or a group that may often be untrue or only partly true.

**Storyboard** — A panel or series of panels of rough sketches outlining the scene sequence and major changes of action or plot.

**Tobacco** — The leaves of these plants are dried and processed for use in cigarettes, cigars and snuff or for smoking in pipes. This crop was once heavily cultivated with slave labor.

**Underground Railroad** — A loose, secret network of people working from their homes, churches and businesses who helped runaway slaves reach freedom in the free states of the United States or Canada. The network included sympathetic whites and free blacks in the North and the South; in some cases it included other slaves who may have helped in some aspect.

**Victim** — One who is subjected to oppression, hardship or mistreatment; one who is harmed or killed by another; one harmed by or made to suffer from an act, circumstance, agency or condition; a person who is tricked or taken advantage of.

**Whip** — **v.** To strike with repeated strokes, as with a strap or rod; lash. **n.** A piece of leather that is braided together so as not to unravel, commonly used to punish slaves who disobeyed.