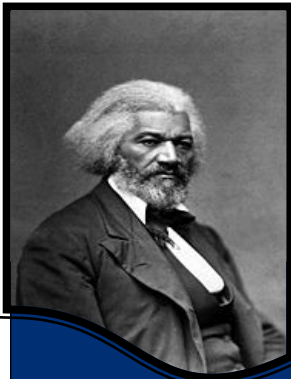




Life In Liberty: Rebuilding a Nation and Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom  
VFTE Chautauqua Companion Reader and Resource Guide

# VFTE Chautauqua Companion Reader



## Rebuilding a Nation Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom



**The Voices of  
Frederick Douglass  
Harriet Tubman  
Robert Smalls  
Frances Harper**



Essays by  
Dr. Connie Park Rice  
Ilene Evans  
Charles Pace  
Jamal Koram  
Arthurette Martin





## VFTE Chautauqua welcomes you to the Life in Liberty Tour 2015

Thank you for being a part of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War commemoration. Voices From the Earth has followed the sequence of the war by each year's in memorial theme. Each theme has been represented by a quilt made to help tell the story and bring the community together in a hand made project, which honors the sacrifices for freedom made by our forebears.



Puzzle at Port Royal



Nurses Quilt



Roll Call



Flying Free



Crossroads

VFTE Chautauqua is a "travelling" theater company under the direction of Ilene Evans, brings historical events directly to you. The historical portrayals create a framework for a dialogue. Chautauqua-style programs use historical portrayals, storytelling, and songs to recapture the chilling and inspiring exploits of some of the most famous men and women in America. Such unique presentations bring history to life by allowing the audience to step back in time and take part by interacting with the storytellers who are also renowned scholars on their character's life and times. Join us in an ongoing inquiry into historical issues that continue to shape our lives today.

The name of our 2015 Chautauqua program is ***Rebuilding a Nation: Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom***. The quilt is *Crossroads: Life in Liberty*. The portrayal of Robert Smalls, portrayed by Jamal Koram, will illustrate how African Americans entered the political realm just after the war and helped to shape law, land rights, education and welfare. Frances Harper, portrayed by Arthuretta Martin, will speak to the same issues for women and the success of the Port Royal Experiment. Frederick Douglass, portrayed by Charles Everett Pace, will reflect on the progress of his own children in the struggle for freedom. Harriet Tubman, portrayed by Ilene Evans, will speak to the importance of building communities, owning land, building schools and churches, and how to work in ways that sustain and support a life in freedom.

Ilene Evans  
Artistic Director



### Constitution Day

The purpose of Constitution Day is to ensure that students in our country are gaining an increased knowledge and appreciation for this valuable and important document of freedom. Colleges and universities across the county should ensure that programming is fun, yet has an impact on the greater understanding and content of the United States Constitution. Constitution Day was once celebrated as Citizenship Day. Constitution Day is an American federal observance that recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is normally observed on September 17, the day in 1787 that delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document in Philadelphia.

## *Who Shall Be Free in a “Free Society”*

by Ilene Evans

**“Ideas are contagious, particularly ideas that concern the rights of man.” *Ann Petry.*<sup>1</sup>**

**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”**

***The United States Declaration of Independence.***

If Thomas Jefferson had not written these words into the Declaration of Independence, Americans would have no recourse to appeal, to amend, adjust, and adapt the Constitution to suit the needs of the people for whom it was meant to govern and protect. That sentence in the Declaration reflected the highest moral standard the founding fathers knew to ensure equality and justice.

Harriet Tubman was no stranger to these words even though she could not read or write. People held in bondage understood the impact of the law on their lives in Maryland in 1840. No whip could be raised in a field without the consent of a law which enforced the cruelty of the lash. Who shall be free in a “Free Society”? Law and justice are not the same, and in fact, sometimes laws stand in the way of justice. Who do laws serve? Who do they leave out? When is law unjust? Harriet Tubman worked for justice in defiance of unjust law.

When the Marquis de Lafayette visited General Washington, the Frenchman proposed that Washington lead the way to end the slave labor system in the new country, claiming that slave labor should not be the basis of the wealth of a free society.<sup>2</sup> Washington was not ready for such a radical step. He could never fully support the abolitionists. Yet it was discussed at length in 1776 in the heat

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<sup>1</sup> Petry, Ann. *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1955), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Gaines, James R. *Liberty and Glory: Washington, Lafayette, and Their Revolutions*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 37.



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of the Revolutionary War, again in 1783, in 1789 before the signing of the U.S. Constitution, before Benjamin Banneker designed and built the nation's capital 1792, and the Missouri Compromise of 1820, before Denmark Vesey's strike for liberty in 1822, before David Walker's "Appeal" in 1829, before the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, before the Dred Scott Decision in 1857, before John Brown forced the hand of the planters at Harpers Ferry in 1859, before the Secession of South Carolina in 1861 and the beginning of the Civil War.

On a recent trip to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, I was reminded of just how close America's founding fathers lived with the people they held in bondage. According to the Mount Vernon records Washington owned 318 people. On his grand plantation there were heated debates about law and liberty which could and would be overheard by servants, women, children, immigrants, nationals, and foreign born. Talk of liberty, of overturning tyranny, of rebellion and freedom from overlords was ever present. Who could not overhear such passionate conversations, and not think they were included in that same aspiration? Ideas about liberty are contagious.

Among the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson believed slavery was legally incompatible with this country's experiment in freedom and representational governance. Yet, he not only used slave labor, he fathered children with mothers of African Descent whom he owned, some of whom could read and write. Did they overhear the drafting of the Declaration and the Constitution and not think it was meant for all people?

One hundred years before the Civil War, George Washington proposed the gradual emancipation of slaves through legislation.<sup>3</sup> By 1861, the wealth and influence of the Southern planters had grown and flourished on the backs of the slave labor system. The moral issue of slavery had taken a back seat to economic issues. Planters had no desire to follow a moral course to end slavery when the commercial value was so profitable in human trafficking. Had the founding fathers considered the tyranny of the market place? The debate about freedom and what it meant to live in a "free society" was folded into the very foundation of the new republic. Abolitionists believed that a free labor system was superior both morally and financially to the slave labor system.<sup>4</sup> Yet, America allowed slave labor to continue unhindered by law, left to be addressed at some other time.

The ambiguity of the Constitution allowed the practice of human servitude and domestic law to strip people of their human rights by giving priority to the "property rights" of the owners and planter classes. Further obstacles to citizenship for people of African descent came from laws prohibiting Black men to bear arms, fearing rebellion and insurrection. Such laws were dated back from 1640 in Virginia.

Slavery and servitude were considered domestic issues under law. Human traffickers, overseers and drivers had the full weight of the law behind them in how they saw fit to control their property. The law protected white male landowners' private property. At this time in history people were included in that property. People could be valued as assets, as part of one's wealth and holdings; as property

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<sup>3</sup> "George Washington to Robert Morris, 12 April 1786." From the "Letter Book" copy of The Papers of George Washington at the Library of Congress.p.424.

<sup>4</sup> McPherson, James M. *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. (Princeton, N.J :Princeton University Press, 1964), 249.





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that could be inherited, bought, sold traded and passed around. Women, children, servants, the lower classes, the uneducated, people of color, people of African, Asian, and European descent all suffered under such private property laws until the fourteenth amendment was passed on July 9, 1868. Until then there was no legal standard for determining citizenship and who the laws were meant to protect.

The Fourteenth Amendment, Section 1 reads: *All Persons born or naturalized in the United States...are citizens of the United States...No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens... nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

Could the laws of the land be used to bring justice to the enslaved? Was there a way to bring people of African descent into the American folds of freedom without insurrection and rebellion? African American leaders such as William Howard Day, Charles Langston, Martin Delaney, and later Frederick Douglass, believed that there was.<sup>5</sup> They were part of Lincoln's Loyal and Legal League.<sup>6</sup> They understood that the law needed to change to correct the status of Black men. Men of African descent wanted to be legal citizens and serve as part of the regular army with the sanction of law as equal men. The legal process was slow, but necessary for full enfranchisement. That chance came in the course of the Civil War.

With the Union capture and occupation of lands and plantations of Port Royal, South Carolina, November 7, 1861, The Port Royal Experiment of the Civil War began.<sup>7</sup> The Port Royal Experiment the name given to the unique effort to prepare newly freed people for full participation in post-Civil War society with educational and land ownership opportunities. Authored by the U. S. Treasury Department, the program was created to establish freedmen and women in a successful community to work the land abandoned by plantation owners. A second component of the experiment was to recruit and train men of African descent for soldiers in the military campaigns and have them fight next to white soldiers on equal footing of pay and promotions. Northern abolitionists and their Anti-slavery organizations supported the freedmen and women in becoming self-sufficient. It was their declaration of war against slavery; and a dream of an integrated social and political Union comprised of people from both races and cultures. Their intent was to prove the superiority of free labor and to transplant Northern values and remodel southern civil and social society.

Abolitionists, now, had the chance to challenge that Planter ideology after liberation of Port Royal. Free people, new to democracy, would be educated, given land, learn to work for themselves without overseers, tend their own affairs and be given the respect that came with land ownership, marriage, and civil liberty. That was the heart of the Port Royal Experiment.<sup>8</sup> How shall America conduct itself in a post-slavery economic environment? Harriet Tubman was a part of this experiment which addressed so many difficult questions.

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<sup>5</sup> Jones, Hari. *For Light and Liberty: How the War to Preserve the Union Became the War to End Slavery. Vol.1.* (Washington D.C. : Harold Dean Jones, 2012), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Lawson, Elizabeth. The Daily Worker. June 18, 1937 Newspaper article in Interview with George Washington Albright by reprinted in the Daily World. July 11, 1975), 11-12

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. P. 159

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.160



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On June 19, 1865, Texas surrendered to Lincoln's Federal forces, returning the last state in rebellion to the Union. With the states reunited, the promise in the law of the Emancipation Proclamation could be fully enforced.<sup>9</sup> Then, Congress aligned itself with the noblest of intentions - to make a secure nation founded in freedom, justice and mercy. Congress continued its mission by passing the Thirteenth Amendment in December of 1865, prohibiting the practice of slavery in the United States. It was followed by the Fourteenth Amendment passed in 1868 and then the Fifteenth Amendment passed in 1870, which established individual representation in governance through the right to vote. The Fifteenth Amendment adjusted the balance of power that came with one person/one vote.

With the passing of these Amendments, America came closer to living up to the ideals found in the National Anthem, "...*The land of the free and the home of the brave...*" The Constitution proved to be a living document wielded on behalf of the people it was meant to protect, tool for justice. Congress continued to adjust the language to further the ends of justice by making laws to protect those rights of including the religious freedom and citizenship of Native Americans, of women, and most recently, people of various sexual orientations. America has the courage to consider all humans of equal value, an uncompromising stand for human rights and justice. May we live up to our ideals.



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<sup>9</sup> Lincoln, President Abraham. *The Emancipation Proclamation* .January 1, 1863.



## **The Port Royal Experiment In the American Civil War**

**by Ilene Evans and Connie Rice**

On November 7, 1861, Union forces consisting of approximately 60 ships and 20,000 men under the command of Union Navy Admiral Samuel F. DuPont and Army General Thomas W. Sherman attacked Confederate forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton (a local plantation owner) who was defending Hilton Head Island at Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard. By 3:00 p.m., the Confederate forces had retreated from the forts. When Union troops landed on Hilton Head Island, they encountered no resistance and discovered that the island's white inhabitants had already fled to the mainland, leaving behind the people who had been held in bondage for generations. Over 10,000 blacks remained, eager for the refuge and protection the Federal military flag offered. The Port Royal Experiment began in November 1862 on Saint Helena Island, South Carolina, in Beaufort County.

The Port Royal Experiment was an effort to prepare newly freed people for full participation in post-Civil War society with educational and land ownership opportunities. The program was created during the American Civil War to establish freedmen and women in a successful community to work the land abandoned by plantation owners. A second component of the experiment was to recruit and train men of African descent for soldiers in the military campaigns and have them fight next to white soldiers on equal footing of pay and promotions. Northern abolitionists and their Anti-slavery organizations supported the freedmen and women in becoming self-sufficient. It was their declaration of war against slavery; and a dream of an integrated social and political Union comprised of people from both races and cultures. Their intent was to prove the superiority of free labor and to transplant Northern values and remodel southern civil and social society.

At the same time, anti-Catholic bigotry inspired Republicans to promote public education throughout the South







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during the 1870s. As a result, Port Royal became a model of what Reconstruction could have been. African Americans quickly demonstrated their ability to work the land efficiently and live independent of white control. With assigned daily tasks for growing cotton, the residents of Port Royal had extra time to cultivate their own crops, fish, and hunt. The sale of surplus crops provided the funds to acquire small amounts of property. Schools were open to all ages for reading and writing lessons and provided residents with the education they needed to make their community successful. Their achievements made at Port Royal between 1861 and 1865 proved that social, economic, and political equality was possible.

In 1863, General Ormsby M. Mitchel permitted African Americans to establish the town of Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Built on the former Drayton Plantation, the town was close in proximity to the military camps. Mitchelville became the heart of a program known as **“The Port Royal Experiment.”** Mitchelville had neatly-arranged streets, one-quarter-acre lots, elected officials, a church, laws addressing such issues as community behavior and sanitation, taxes collections, and compulsory education law for children between the ages of six and fifteen, most likely the first such laws in the South.

This experiment was a major media event. Black family life and loyalty were on trial, as were Black soldiers and their manhood. There were two questions to be determined in the mind of the American Government: Will the people of African Descent work for a living? Will they fight for their freedom? The entire country continually scrutinized and assessed the “experiment.” Newspaper journalists embedded with the quartermasters in charge of daily life and with troops during military action published reports in the weekly papers that altered public opinion and political policy throughout the war. Those who doubted the military success of Black troops in the field fighting alongside White troops were both surprised and impressed at the valor of the sable warriors. United in a common cause bigotry began to ease between the races – at least on the battlefield.

When the war ended in 1865, President Andrew Johnson ended the experiment and returned the land to its previous white owners, thereby ending the dream of a unified and egalitarian society.





## The First and Last Paragraphs of Edward Pierce's Report on "The Freedmen at Port Royal"

JOHN ADAMS'S axiom, that civil society must be built up on the four corner-stones of the church, the school-house, the militia, and the town-meeting, receives new illustration, of the most distinct kind, as we work out the great problem of to-day. Whichever panacea is presented to us in the great work of the admission of the four million negroes into our civil society, and the establishment of their social rights, fails to pass test till we have so extended the proposed arrangements that, in its work of blessing, all four of the essential rights of religion, education, self-defence, and self-government are provided for. Thus, it is of little use to give the negro a vote, unless he can read it; nor, if he can read it, unless he can defend himself from being shot down like a dog as he offers it; while, again, voting and defence both suppose a conscience fitly trained for their right exercise.

The negroes will work for a living. They will fight for their freedom. They are adapted to civil society. . . . They have shown capacity for knowledge, for free industry, for subordination to law and discipline, for soldierly fortitude, for social and family relations, for religious culture and aspirations; and these qualities, when stirred and sustained by the incitements and rewards of a just society, and combining, with the currents of our continental civilization, will, under the guidance of a benevolent Providence which forgets neither them nor us, make them a constantly progressive race, and secure them ever after from the calamity of another enslavement, and ourselves from the worse calamity of being again their oppressors.

--[Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," \*The Atlantic Monthly\*, September, 1863, 291-315](#)







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Sea Island School No. 1, St. Helena Island, SC. Library of Congress.

## **A. F. Pillsbury to New England Freedmen's Aid Association Mitchelville September 24, 1864**

### **The Freedmen's Journal Vol 1, Issue 1**

Hilton Head, S.C., Sept. 24, 1864. It is a long time since I have written you. My excuse is the debilitating heat of this climate and the overtaking cares of my position. Neither hope nor courage is lessened; and, having resumed writing, it must be done in such a manner as shall most benefit this freed people. I must continue to appeal to the charities of enlightened and Christian New England.

This post is the great gateway of Freedom; and poor destitute fugitives from American oppression come in from every possible quarter. To furnish them shelter and safety, a "city of refuge" has been built (called Mitchell), over the marsh, about one mile distant from Hilton Head. Here is a population of from twelve to fifteen hundred, living in houses or "huts." Some are made of round poles chinked with oyster-shell lime; some of slats; and some of boards, picked up and bought, of every conceivable size, while others are "pieced out" with old canvas on the chimneys and roof.

All are striving to make a living. Many are profitably employed by the Government; many are soldiers' families struggling on alone. Some of them dress well, and some are very ragged. They are striving for churches and schools. It is a fine place for teaching and other missionary effort. A colored man named Lyman Anders has succeeded in raising a church and school-house in one. The building is about twenty



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feet by forty. At present there is no floor, but he is about putting down one, and will put in a few glass windows. If an addition of twenty feet square could be made at the end or side for the accommodation of teachers (to live in), it would be an excellent position for a school. Teachers cannot walk from the Head or the nearest plantation in the heat and rain.

Now, is there not some town which will take this matter in hand, build the addition, and send a teacher? The expense of a teachers' room has been computed at about \$250. With teachers residing in the building, a great opportunity for evening-schools would be afforded. It seems to me no greater gift could be conferred on this suffering village. I have read in the papers of the designed enlargement of colleges and other institutions in New England, and have noted the sums to be expended: having personally visited them and Mitchell, too, I could not but compare the necessities of the two, to wish that, for the present, till these crushed millions can stand alone, all surplus funds might find their proper channel. If this black race is really composed of men and women; if they are to live free under our government; if they are to be rescued from gross ignorance and consequent crime, — then the North must see to it that they are educated.

Perhaps I should say more of Mr. Anders, who erected the house as it stands. He reads and writes, has a library worth about \$100, and is very gentlemanly and unassuming. He came from Key West, was a slave, and has served as a soldier. He is truly worthy of encouragement. I write thus early because so much time is consumed on preliminaries, and the field is now white for the harvest. Very respectfully,

A. F. Pillsbury



The former Draper Plantation, Hilton Head, SC    Courtesy of the Library of Congress



## **Life In Liberty** by Dr. Connie Park Rice

In 1865, over four million African Americans, formerly held in bondage, were legally and physically set free. The reality was they were left without a plan to help secure homes or property, no money, no jobs, no education, no personal goods but the clothing on their backs. The majority of those newly freed men and women had nothing but their freedom. The exception was in Beaufort County, SC. Those who participated in the successful experiment at Port Royal had a clear path to start their life in freedom. In the Port Royal region, the new freedmen and women struggled to establish their new lives in freedom. For many others their journey often began with years of searching for family members separated from them during slavery. The situation was very different in West Virginia.

When the state of Virginia succeeded from the Union in 1861, the northwest counties of the state broke away from Virginia, declared its loyalty to the union, and established the new state of West Virginia in 1863. As a result, when Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, granting freedom to those held in bondage in states of rebellion, blacks held in bondage in the new state were not given their freedom. During and immediately following the Civil War, West Virginians faced the challenge of building a new state amid political, economic, and social turmoil. On February 3, 1865, Gov. Arthur I Boreman signed an act providing for the immediate abolition of slavery in West Virginia. On the same day, the state of West Virginia also ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, outlawing slavery.

Although African Americans achieved the right to testify in court against blacks or whites, blacks still could not legally serve on juries. The most controversial issue in West Virginia following the Civil War was black suffrage. Immediately after the war, state officials were troubled by the deep divisions within the new state and fearful of granting political power to citizens who aided the South. The State enacted a voter's test oath in 1866 which stated that no person who gave voluntary aid or assistance to the rebellion against the United States could be a citizen of West Virginia or vote in elections. As a result, the question of granting suffrage to African Americans was not whether or not blacks should be allowed to vote, but why blacks should be allowed to vote when thousands of ex-Confederates and southern sympathizers in the state could not.

While the debate over black suffrage continued, the West Virginia legislature ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution on January 16, 1867, to provide African Americans equal protection of their civil rights under the law. Still, blacks did not receive all the rights due them as free citizens. In 1868, blacks could not vote, hold office, serve on juries, intermarry with whites, or attend the same schools as whites. Legal and social discrimination continued although they achieved a few gains. Blacks now had the right to leave the state and return, be tried and punished in the same manner as whites, give testimony against whites in court, have marital rights recognized, sue for the support of a child if unmarried, and to serve in separate companies of the militia, with active duty only in emergencies.

In 1868, the United States Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment to the constitution. On March 3, 1869, West Virginia became the second state to ratify the amendment, thereby granting

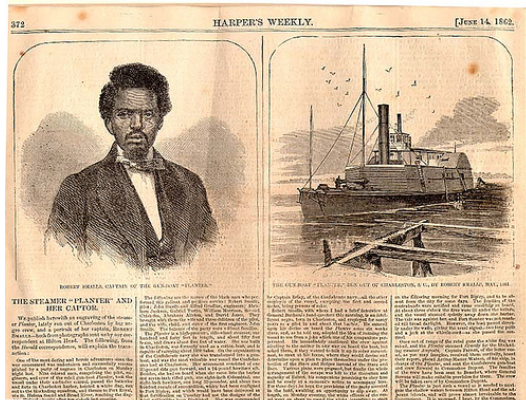




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suffrage regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Yet many West Virginians remained reluctant to support the Fifteenth Amendment when Confederates in the state could not vote. As a result W. H. H. Flick proposed an amendment to the state constitution giving all male citizens in the state of West Virginia the right to vote. In May of 1870, 2,705 Africa American men participated in their first election. That same spring, the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision in the case of *Strauder v. West Virginia* stating the West Virginia’s exclusion of African Americans from jury service violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. However, Black West Virginian’s received the legal right to serve on juries on February 3, 1881, but even then, most counties in the state refused to allow blacks to serve on juries.

Despite constant challenges to their freedom, their labor, their property, and their right to vote, newly freed men and women had great hopes for the future. They built churches, schools, communities; acquired jobs, educations, and property; and became good, productive citizens. However, the more they achieved economically and politically, the more attempted to control them legally and illegally. One by one, southern states began passing discrimination or “Jim Crow” laws to separate whites from blacks; one by one, southern states began passing disfranchisement laws to keep blacks from voting. All the hope and promise borne out of the success of the Port Royal Experiment eventually disappeared with the enactment of “Jim Crow” laws across the south.



*LIVING here in Boston where the black man is given equal justice, I must say a word on the general treatment of my race, both in the North and South, in this twentieth century. I wonder if our white fellow men realize the true sense or meaning of brotherhood? For two hundred years we had toiled for them; the war of 1861 came and was ended, and we thought our race was forever freed from bondage, and that the two races could live in unity with each other, but when we read almost every day of what is being done to my race by some whites in the South, I sometimes ask, "Was the war in vain? Has it brought freedom, in the full sense of the word, or has it not made our condition more hopeless?"*

*In this "land of the free" we are burned, tortured, and denied a fair trial, murdered for any imaginary wrong conceived in the brain of the negro-hating white man. There is no redress for us from a government which promised to protect all under its flag. It seems a mystery to me. They say, "One flag, one nation, one country indivisible." Is this true? Can we say this truthfully, when one race is allowed to burn, hang, and inflict the most horrible torture weekly, monthly, on another? No, we cannot sing "My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of Liberty"! It is hollow mockery. The Southland laws are all on the side of the white, and they do just as they like to the Negro, whether in the right or not.*

Suzie King Taylor 1908



## Harriet Tubman: Sustaining a Life in Freedom

By Ilene Evans



Harriet Tubman shared the experiences of many Black women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Through the lens of her life we can see issues all African American Women faced and the complex pressures that made them the center of their families and the core of the values that helped African Americans survive to struggle for freedom and equality. Tubman understood the need to financial independence for women especially as they stepped into a free community that was secure. Tubman organized

wash houses, cook houses, schools, and envisioned the whole community and responded to its interconnected needs.

The power of the promise of freedom mobilized men and women like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, who longed to own the work of their own hands, to determine their own way of life, their marital partners and to follow their dreams. Harriet Tubman took it upon herself to take what was denied her by law, the ownership of herself and land. She understood that only owning land would give people stability and a means of supporting themselves in a new life in freedom. If she did not fight for it, justice would remain a distant dream; justice in terms the “Golden Rule”: that one should do for another one would have others do for them, regardless of race, class, creed or gender.

Tubman knew the value of owning land. In 1857, U.S. Senator William Seward made a mortgage available to her. This allowed Tubman to a secure home for her aging parents and siblings. The house was in Auburn, NY. The laws of New York did not allow free Blacks to own land, much less runaways with now manumission papers, but Seward did what he thought was right. And this human liberator found a friend in a powerful influential politician. Not many people had such friends in high places.

They understood the need for education to protect them from legal actions that could be taken against them. Had Harriet Tubman’s mother been able to read and write she would have known that the will of her former mistress freed her upon her mistress’s death. Tubman and her siblings should have been born in freedom, but without the ability to read documents for themselves they could not be protected from the auction block.

Harriet Tubman was a woman of her time. She participated in the discourse of the day, using her own stories to illuminate principles and problems regarding the cost and the importance of freedom for African Americans specifically and women in general. Women like Harriet Tubman always believed the cause of the Civil War was economic because they knew that African Americans were at the heart of the American economy in every conceivable way, free or slave male and female. Black women viewed the southern society’s call for “States Rights” as a veil to continue the tyranny of a chattel system based on human bondage for profit: a slavocracy. They saw cause of the war as the greed that kept the people in power rich. The wealth of a few was the result of the labor of many; the privileged few had no moral compunction to share that wealth with those who labored to earn it. Slavery was one way to keep that wealth in place.





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The life of African American women at the time of the Civil War was always precarious. Harriet Tubman was subjected to the same political, racial and social threats as any other Woman of African Descent at the time. Whether in the Deep South or in New England, African American women shared the burden of the drudgery and labor, they bore the children, raised the crops, sewed and cooked and cleaned and managed large complicated systems of yearly agricultural cycles. This they did with humor, tolerance, hope and a belief that their condition was not their conclusion.

Women lived with the uncertainty of constant change in all the areas of their lives in part because there were no laws to protect them and no recognition or legal status for them to claim. The Dred Scott Decision of 1857 brought the voice of the U.S. Supreme Court right into the hearth of their homes. It said, very clearly, that there were no rights that a Black person had that a White person needed to respect. It did not protect women as an exception. At any time, black women could be kidnapped, they could be bought, sold, forced to comply with the wishes of those in power, humiliated and terrorized without impunity. The work of their hands belonged to their owners and if they were free, it belonged to their husbands or fathers. They were considered part of the household goods. That was true whether they were bound or free, educated or illiterate, common or elite, in the North or in the South. The defining factor for freedom of movement and access to resources was race and color. There was no legal appeal for Black women in cases of abuse or violence. They often were blamed for any misfortunes that were visited upon them. They were however, not passive in their condition and struggled to change it.



Emancipation Harpers Weekly



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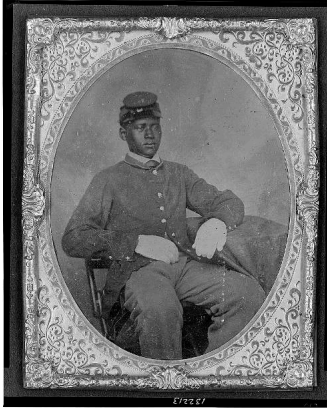
## Life In Liberty: Rebuilding a Nation and Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom VFTE Chautauqua Companion Reader and Resource Guide



““Emancipation Day in South Carolina” - the Color-Sergeant of the 1st South Carolina (Colored) addressing the regiment, after having been presented with the Stars and Stripes, at Smith's plantation, Port Royal, January 1”. From Leslie's Illustrated. LCUSZ62-88808



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Many African American men, such as this unidentified soldier, enlisted to defend their nation and win their freedom – yet were treated with extreme inhumanity after the war. Library of Congress.





## Life In Liberty: Rebuilding a Nation and Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom

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#### Harriet Tubman (1820-1913)

Harriet Tubman was part of the Anti-slavery resistance network known as the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland but escaped through the Underground Railroad to Pennsylvania in 1849. She then became the most famous leader of that network, aiding slaves in their escape to Free states and Canada. She was known as "Moses" to the hundreds of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Tubman helped to free hundreds of people held in bondage and inspired thousands of others. She was never caught and never lost anyone on the route to freedom. She served as a spy, nurse, scout, and guide for Union troops and was present at the ill-fated assault of Fort Wagner by the 54th Massachusetts in South Carolina.

#### Frances Harper (1825-1911)

A poet and essayist, Frances Ellen Watkins was born in Baltimore in 1825. Orphaned at the age of three, Watkins went to live with her aunt and uncle, Harriet and William Watkins. She compiled her first collection of poems, *Forest Leaves*, in 1845. In 1860, Watkins married Fenton Harper and settled on a farm in Ohio. During her four-year marriage, she gave up lecturing in order to raise their daughter, Mary, and Fenton's three children from an earlier marriage. She watched the progress of the Port Royal experiment from her home and wrote extensively. After her husband's death saddled her with a large debt, Harper resumed lecturing for the antislavery cause, teaching, and writing poetry and novels in order to support herself and her family.



#### Robert Smalls (1839-1916)

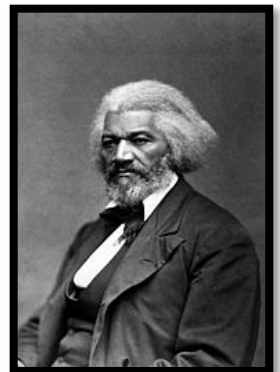
Robert Smalls was a self-liberated man who planned, and succeeded, in spirited away his family on a Confederate Steam ship which was being operated as an armed transport and dispatch vessel. In April of 1862, he impersonated a captain and stole a Confederate ship, sent a rowboat to pick up waiting family members, sailed past five Confederate forts, and eventually turned the ship over to Union troops blockading the area. Smalls stood proudly at the Planter's wheel. Only seven miles of water lay between the ship and the chance of freedom. With precision and amazing courage, he navigated past the Confederate forts in the harbor and steered the ship toward the safety of the Union fleet. Smalls continued to stay active in the U.S. Navy and later engaged in politics to protect the gains made by the war. He became the first African-American captain of a United States vessel and later served in both the South Carolina legislature and the United States Congress.



#### Frederick Douglass (1818- 1895)

Frederick Douglass was an American social reformer, orator, writer and statesman. After escaping from slavery, he became a leader of the abolitionist movement, gaining note for his dazzling oratory and incisive antislavery writing. Douglass wrote several autobiographies, eloquently describing his experiences in slavery in his 1845 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, which became influential in its support for abolition.

He wrote two more autobiographies, with his last, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, published in 1881 and covering events through and after the Civil War. After the Civil War, Douglass remained active in the United States' struggle to reach its potential as a "land of the free". Douglass actively supported women's suffrage. Douglass was a firm believer in the equality of all people, whether black, female, Native American, or recent immigrant, famously quoted as saying, "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong."







## **Meet the VFTE Chautauqua Scholars**

### **Charles Everett Pace Portraying Frederick Douglass–**



Charles Everett Pace has undergraduate and graduate degrees from The University of Texas at Austin (B.A., biology) and Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana (M.A., American studies: history and anthropology). As well as being a Program Advisor at the Texas Union, University of Texas at Austin, Charles has taught at The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Purdue University, and most recently at Centre College in Kentucky. His research area is the anthropology of performance, experience and visual communications. He has performed and conducted workshops in hundreds of cities across the United States, as well as, in London, England. Pace has also conducted performance-based public diplomacy work for the United States Information Agency (USIA) in dozens of cities in nine countries across east, west and southern Africa.

### **Arthuretta Martin Portraying Frances Harper**



Ms. Martin holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from James Madison University, a master's degree in management from Florida Institute of Technology. She continued post graduate work in public policy and communication at George Mason University. She is a Certified Federal Contracts Manager through the National Contract Management Association, Distinguished Toastmaster through Toastmaster's International and a member of the National Speaker's Association. She is currently conducting research on the framers of civil rights era legislation. Ms. Martin is the Youth Leadership Coordinator for District 29, Toastmaster's International.

### **Jamal Koram Portraying Robert Smalls**



Jamal Koram, B.A., M.S., and Ed.S. is a veteran teacher, historian and scholar. He is the recipient of several storytelling and academic awards. Baba Jamal has received a Charles Stewart Mott Fellowship, The Zora Neal Hurston Award, and Phi Delta Kappa recognition. He has served as the president of the National Association of Black Storytellers for several different terms. Each spring, he leads a cultural workshop at Franklinton Center at Bricks for storytellers of African descent to continue timeless oral tradition and African American Heritage. Publications include an original version of Aesop's Fables.

### **Ilene Evans Portraying Harriet Tubman**



Ilene Evans has a B.A. from Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois and a Master's Degree from East Tennessee State University in the department of Education with an emphasis in Storytelling. She has spent the last 20 years as the artistic director of Voices From the Earth, an educational touring theatre company that uses storytelling and theatre to promote social justice. In 2009, Ilene was selected by the United States Embassy to tour Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Columbia to share her work in the history and culture of African Americans through arts education, literature, and music.



## **Civil Discourse Guidelines**

Civil Discourse is purposeful conversation to add to the commonwealth of knowledge and understanding. Conversation requires trust and a willingness to listen with the intent to gain knowledge. These guidelines help participants to ensure a safe space for that kind of exchange.

Definition:

Conversation –To turn; exchange of thoughts, ideas, and feelings; the free turning of dialogue this way and that to strive to understand complex realities;

- Conversation must carry the actuality or potential of growth;
- Conversation increases personal and organizational intelligence;
- Conversation builds awareness, comprehension, understanding, and capability;
- Conversation is characterized by mutual trust, lack of fear, desire for contribution;
- Conversation is used to excite and inform;
- Conversation has the intention to generate reflection and inspiration;
- Conversation interweaves logic and intuition; where facts and imagination dance.

What rules should protect conversations in civil discourse?

### **Guardians of Civil Discourse**

Participants must agree to:

- Not to use words as weapons – no violence in word or deed
- Engage in Affirmations –appreciations the contributions of participants
- Insist on a tone of that expresses respect and tolerance

Each small group shall determine 5 guardians

1. To ensure that each person in the group has an opportunity to speak
2. To ensure the question is the center of the conversation
3. To record the thoughtful ideas of the group
4. To bring those thoughts back to the large group
5. To ensure that the tone remains one of respect and tolerance



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## **VFTE Chautauqua Symposium**

Symposium questions in the context of the Port Royal Experiment:

- What is Freedom?
- What is Equality?
- What is Fairness?
- What is Justice?

Symposium Questions in the context of current events:

- Is the definition of freedom the same today as it was during the Civil War?
- Who or what defines your freedom today?
- What is the cost of Freedom?
- Can there be freedom without a sense of justice?



# Life In Liberty: Rebuilding a Nation and Fulfilling the Promise of Freedom

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VFTE presents stories from diaries and memories about the Port Royal Experiment told in Chautauqua style by storytellers who have become scholars in the research of the life and times of some of the people who were a part of shaping America's conscience.



2013

Luis Emilio	Louis Henry Douglass	Charles Douglass	Robert Smalls
Frederick Douglass	Prince Rivers	Robert Sutton	Martin Delany



2012

Harriet Tubman	Charlotte Forten	Esther Hill Hawks	Clara Barton	Susie Baker King Taylor
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Harriet Tubman	Frances Harper	Robert Smalls	Seth Rogers	Luis Emilio
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2011





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**VOICES FROM THE EARTH VOICES OF FREEDOM SERIES**  
**THE PORT ROYAL PROJECT—**  
**AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CIVIL WAR**  
**150 YEARS OF STRUGGLE—THE STORY IN THE QUILTS**



***Roll Call USCT - Men of Color to Arms!***

2013 (1863)

The *Roll Call USCT* quilt was designed in memory of the United States Colored Troops.—200,000 strong—1/10th of the United States Federal Army during the American Civil War 1861—1865. The ranks were filled with volunteers, businessmen, newly freedmen, fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. They were actively recruited in 1863 with the promise that if they would help reunite the Union they would win their freedom and the freedom of all people held in bondage hence forth and forever more. VFTE tells the stories of these men—their valor, courage and honor. They turned the tables of the war and proved their worth as productive citizens. The rigid quilt block pattern represents the formation of 160 regiments of Black men: 140 Infantry, 13 Artillery and 7 Cavalry. The colors reflect the mixing of races and blood of the men on the field of battle and in life.



***“The Long Watch Night: Women of Port Royal”***

2012 (1862)

This was considered a “Nurses Quilt.” Ours is a replica of the 1879 quilt by Betty West, currently held in the Smithsonian collection, donated by the children for whom Ms. West made the quilt. For Ida Murphy, it honors the thousands of African American and their struggle for freedom. Ms. Ida named her reproduction “Women of Port Royal” as it represents their struggle to establish a new kind of American society based on racial equality and social justice in Port Royal, South Carolina from 1861-1865. The themes of flying geese and the Ohio star to symbolize the many different people who supported a radical reconstruction of the Southern aristocracy no longer based on privilege and race. The triangles represent the flying geese, people flying to freedom any way they could. The stars represent the leaders who brought them together and coordinated their efforts.



***“Puzzle at Port Royal”***

2011 (1861)

This quilt represents the struggle to establish a new kind of American society based on racial equality and social justice in Port Royal South Carolina from 1861—1865. West Virginia artist, Ida Murphy, uses the charm pattern to symbolize the conflicting interests journey for liberation of the Freedmen and women, the United States Colored Troops, and those who supported a radical reconstruction of the Southern aristocracy no longer based on privilege and race. The abstract impression of motion in the puzzle pieces represent the constant movement of military and civilian support. The thrust of the blades interlock in an optical playing field. The foreground shifts to the background. The battle front also had a back commemorated on the reverse side of the quilt.

**VFTE Programs Available**

VFTE Chautauqua presentations in first Person and symposiums about African Americans in the Civil War - VFTE Ensemble  
PowerPoint Presentation on the Port Royal Experiment in the Department of the South, Port Royal South Carolina—Ilene Evans  
West Virginia in the Civil War - Dr. Connie Rice  
Readers Theater Monologues: Voices from the Port Royal Experiment 1861-1866- -for all ages