



Slaves Who Dared: The Stories of Ten African-American Heroes

Mary Garrison

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They were slaves, but they refused to accept the rules. They used their courage and determination to break their chains and gain their freedom.

It is difficult to imagine a time in our country's history when people owned people. Yet, nearly four million enslaved people lived in the United States at the end of the Civil War. By law, they were forbidden to read and write. Because they had no rights, they could be punished or sold at any time. These African Americans overcame enormous obstacles to make significant contributions to our country. Fortunately, many escaped slaves recorded their life experiences in books known as slave narratives. Their words are over one hundred years old, but they still speak to us today. Among these courageous people are:

Josiah Henson, who at age four, saw his father collapse after receiving one hundred lashes with a whip.

Harriet Jacobs, who lived in an attic loft for seven years to escape the harassment of her owner.

Henry Bibb, who was owned by seven men but risked his life escaping from each one.

Sojourner Truth, who was brutally beaten and scarred at age nine but became a traveling preacher later in her life.

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