



# THE ANTI-SLAVERY ALPHABET

First published in Philadelphia and  
PRINTED FOR THE ANTI-SLAVERY FAIR.  
1846.

Merrihew & Thompson Printers,  
7 Carter's Alley, Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania

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Be The Present,  
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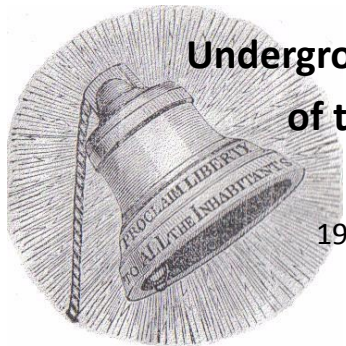
Revised and updated 2020  
by Mary Elizabeth Stewart of  
Underground Railroad History Project

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

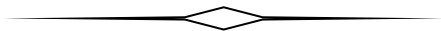
Prepared by:



**Underground Railroad History Project  
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194 Livingston Avenue Albany, NY 12210  
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TO OUR LITTLE READERS.

Listen, little children, all,  
Listen to our earnest call:  
You are very young, 'tis true,  
But there's much that you can do.  
Even you can plead with men  
That they buy not slaves again,  
And that those they have may be  
Quickly set at liberty.  
They may hearken what you say,  
Though from us they turn away.  
Sometimes, when from school you walk,  
You can with your playmates talk,  
Tell them of the slave child's fate,  
Motherless and desolate.  
And you can refuse to take  
Candy, sweetmeat, pie or cake,  
Saying "no"--unless 'tis free--  
"The slave shall not work for me."  
Thus, dear little children, each  
May some useful lesson teach;  
Thus each one may help to free  
This fair land from slavery.

*From the 1846 version*

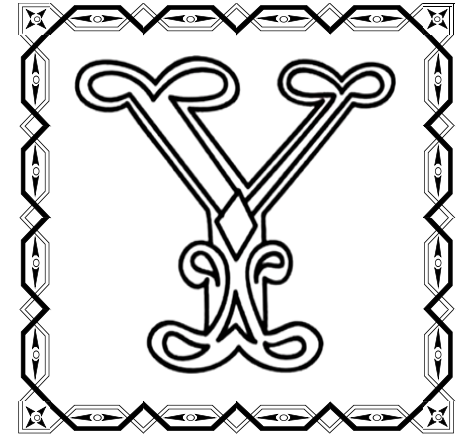
In 1846 a pair of Quaker sisters came up with an idea. They were abolitionists and actively campaigned against domestic slavery in the United States. However, Hannah and Mary Townsend came to realize that in order to ensure the end of the oppressive servitude of so many of their countrymen and women that educating the young was vital. A child, they decided, was not only able to fight against slavery in their adult years but as youngsters too. They produced a new way for the 26 letters to be taught by rote – the Anti-Slavery Alphabet.

*The version presented here has been updated and revised to better reflect contemporary thinking especially related to the power of language.*

Y

You – what stand will you  
take?

Are you for justice and  
equity for all,  
or for hate?



Z

Zealous a fighter  
you can be  
with others like you  
to insure that ALL ARE  
FREE!



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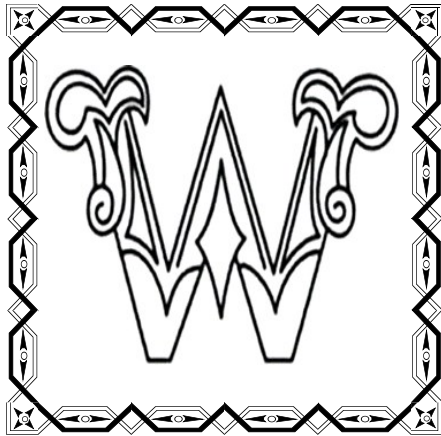
V

Committees of Vigilance  
A lookout they kept  
So help they could offer  
And Freedom Seekers  
intercept



W

Mr. Lewis Washington  
Escaped to his freedom  
And became a famous speaker  
around the Capital Region



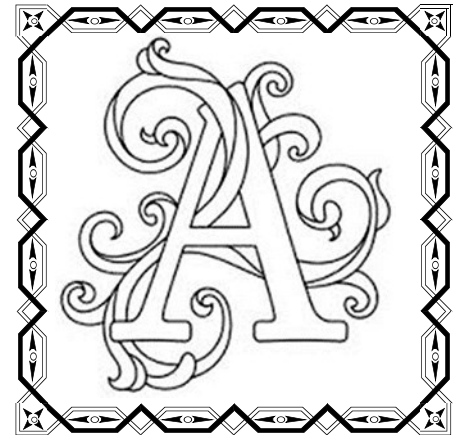
X

Xenophobia it was that kept  
slavery alive  
A terrible malady that stole  
many lives  
Of people who should have  
been free from the start  
And not kidnapped into  
bondage suffering broken  
hearts



A

is an Abolitionist--  
A person who wants to free  
Those who are enslaved--and  
insure for all  
An equal liberty.



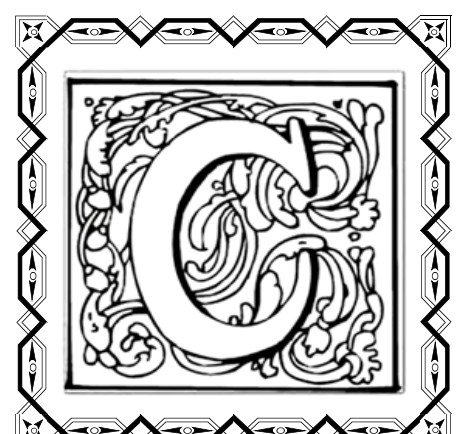
B

is for Henry 'Box' Brown  
Who stole his life away  
And found freedom in  
Philadelphia  
On one sunny day.



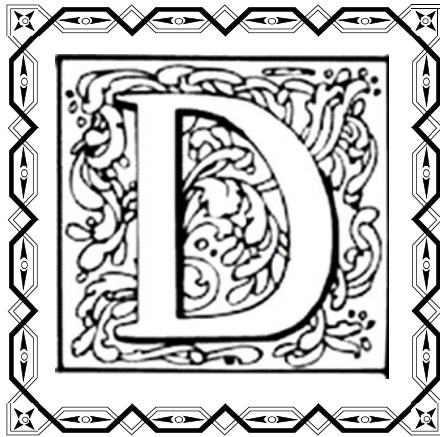
C

Mr. Marcellus Custerlow,  
A courageous man was he,  
Fled as a freedom seeker  
To Mr. Myers in Albany.



D

is for the Doctor,  
Elkins was his name,  
Who offered his medical services  
To those who to Albany came.



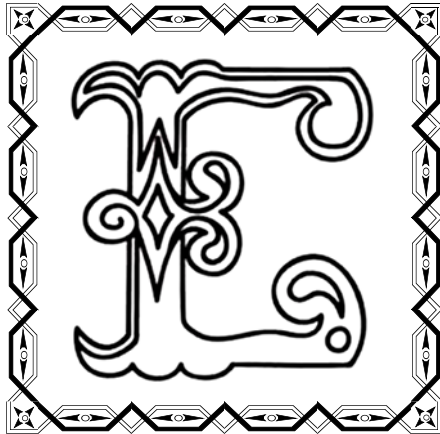
S

Sugar produced by the  
enslaved  
the abolitionists did not buy  
So through a sugar boycott  
they would reduce the supply



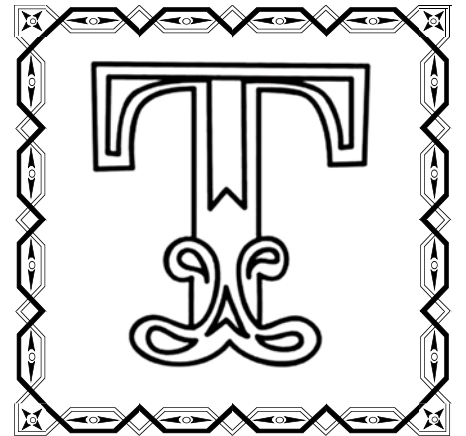
E

is the Eagle, soaring high;  
An emblem of the free;  
Reminding all that freedom  
Belongs to everyone, including  
you and me.



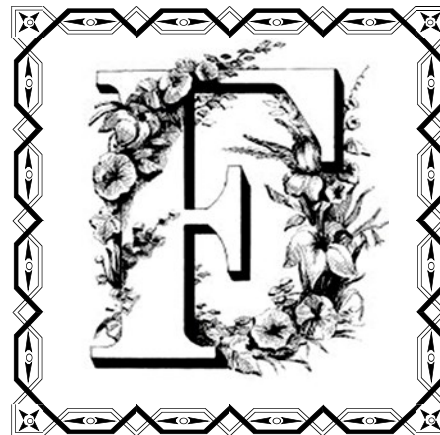
T

Sarah Taylor and her child  
Coming by horse to New York  
City  
From Maryland did escape  
And continued on to freedom  
by way of Albany



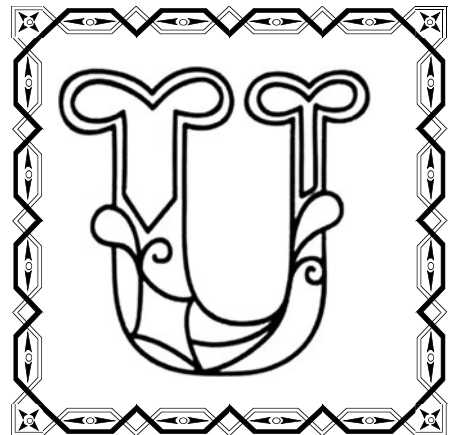
F

is for Walter Freeman,  
A courageous Freedom Seeker was  
he,  
Who sought his freedom in the  
1840's  
In the city of Albany.



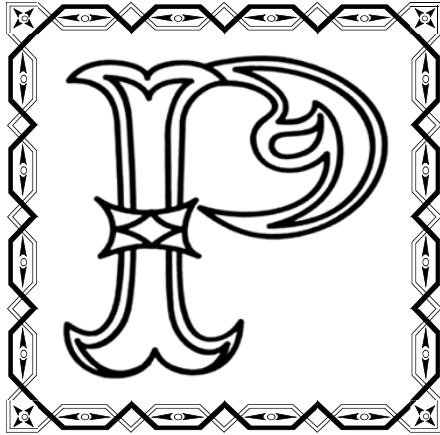
U

is for Upper Canada,  
Where some Freedom Seekers  
found  
Rest after all their  
hardship  
Safe on British ground!



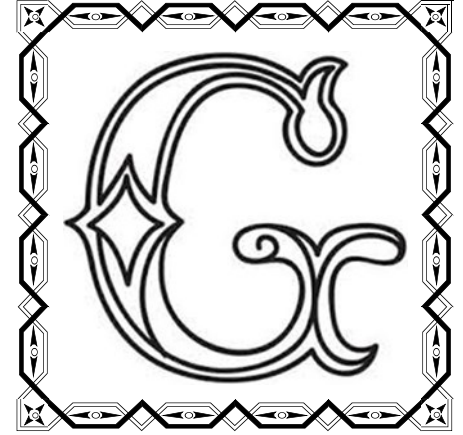
P

is for the abolitionist  
parents  
Who did their children raise  
To fight for justice for  
everyone  
Throughout their lifelong  
days



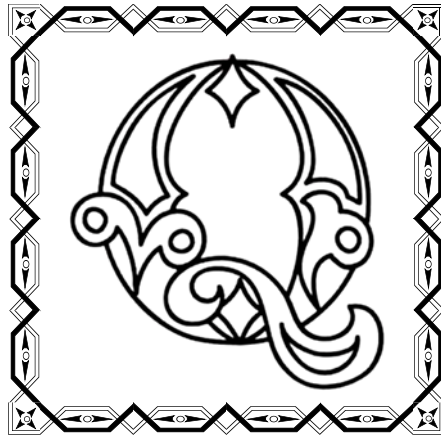
G

Henry Highland Garnet  
escaped enslavement with his  
family  
And became a minister, orator  
and president of a college  
called Avery.



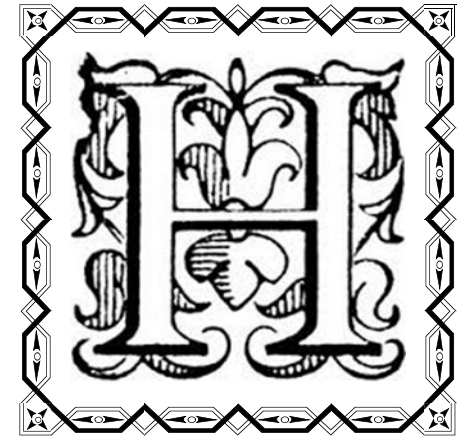
Q

A quandary did present  
itself  
To abolitionists all  
How to best free those  
enslaved  
And abolish slavery once and  
for all.



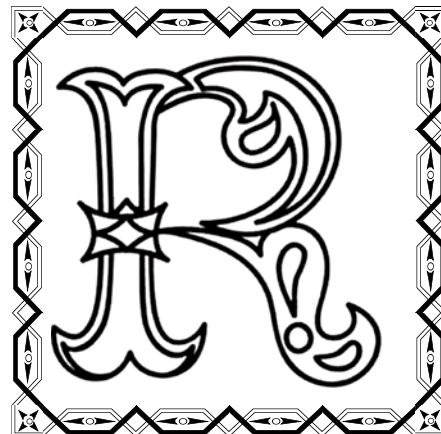
H

William and Catherine Harris  
Chose to escape their  
enslavement  
and courageously used the Erie  
Canal  
To find a safe place where  
their lives could be spent.



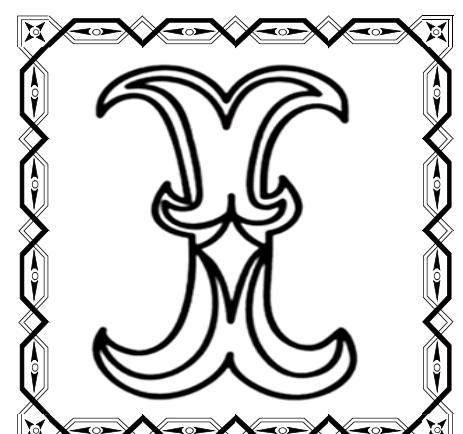
R

is for Benjamin and Harriet  
Ross  
Who, guided by Harriet  
Tubman,  
Made their way to freedom  
In the promised Canadian  
land of St. Catharine's.



I

Insuring freedom for everyone  
Was the Abolitionist cause,  
One way to do this  
Was to change the country's  
laws.





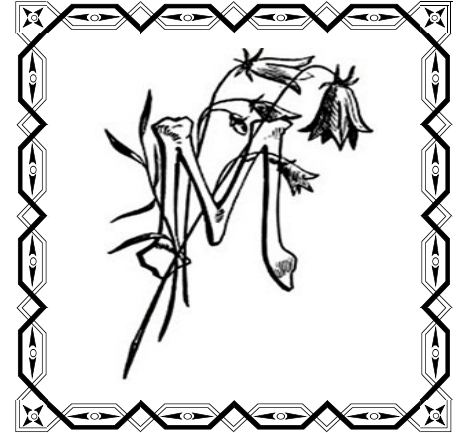
J

is for the joy felt  
by Ellen and William Craft  
When they arrived in Boston  
And were free at last.



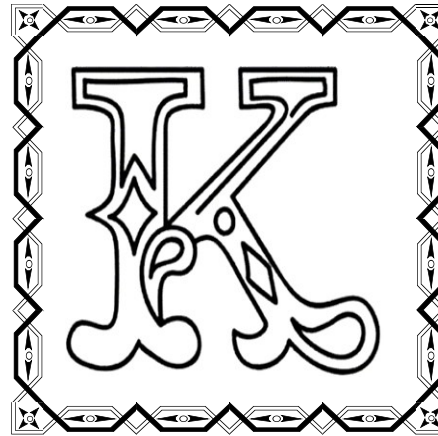
M

Harriet and Stephen Myers  
leading activists in Albany  
assisted hundreds of Freedom  
Seekers  
Wanting freedom lawfully.



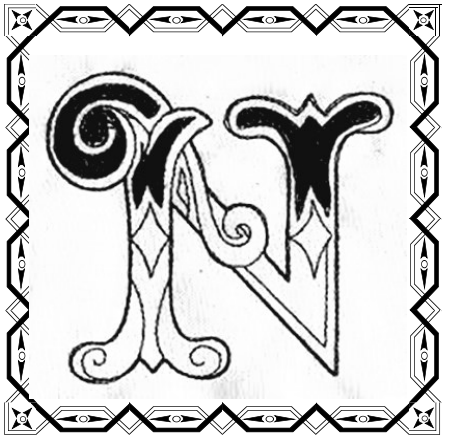
K

is for the kettle  
Kept warm on the hearth  
For those seeking sanctuary  
On their dangerous journey  
north.



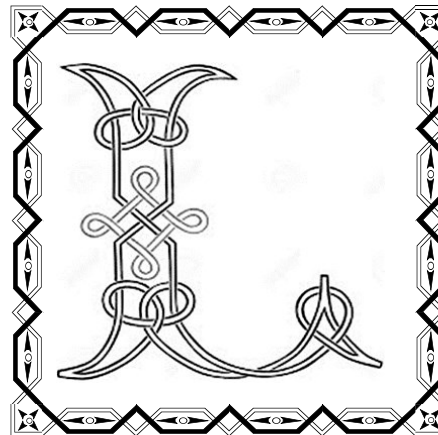
N

Escaping from Maryland, Mr.  
Charles Nalle  
Worked every day  
In the lovely city of Troy,  
New York  
Where he could receive his  
own pay.



L

is for Mr. William Locks  
Who came to Albany  
To make a new life for himself  
where he could be free.



O

Mr. Frederick Douglass,  
a famous orator was he,  
Spoke at many anti-slavery  
events  
in the city of Albany.

