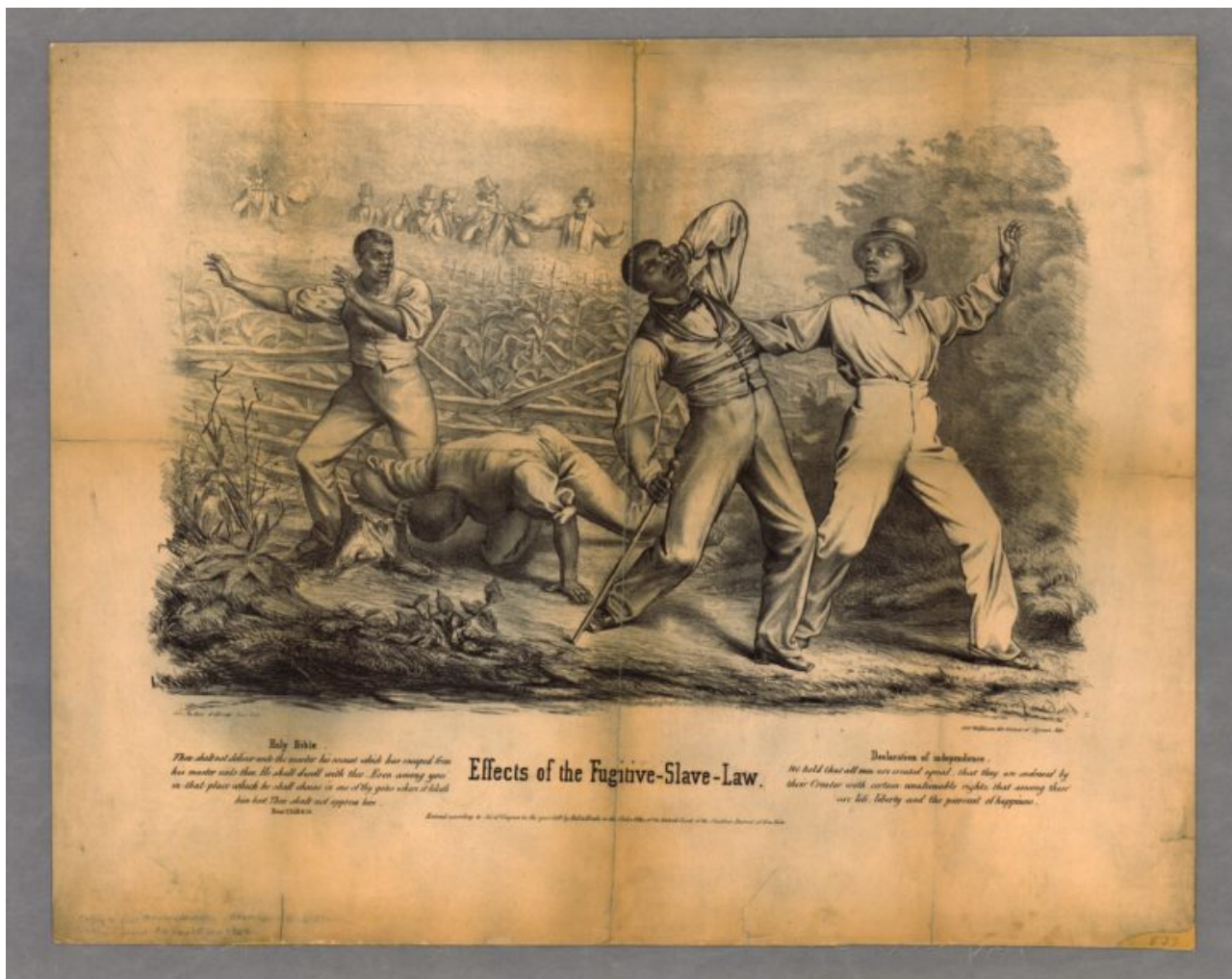


“A Genuine Article” Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Andrew Jackson



In late 1850, as a busy wife and mother in Brunswick, Maine, with a modest professional sideline writing essays and magazine fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe hid a fugitive slave in her house. He was not the first fugitive she had ever met, but he was the first that she harbored in her own home. She took this step despite the draconian penalties imposed for such behavior by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which had been passed only a few weeks earlier. This runaway made an impression upon Stowe and her family. “He was,” as she wrote in a letter to her sister, “a genuine article from the ‘Ole Carling State.’”

Stowe had met other men and women seeking freedom, when she lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, across the river from the slave state of Kentucky. And many of those individuals doubtless influenced her writing and inspired her concerns. Scholars have long speculated about the myriad influences that went into the imaginative construction of the iconic black characters in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* such as Uncle Tom, George Harris, Topsy, Eliza Harris, and others. There is little doubt that her creative impulses were fueled by a life of exposure to

pro-abolition arguments as voiced by white people. However, her creativity was also fueled by having witnessed both suffering and resistance on the part of black people in the decades before she wrote her monumental novel. Her early experiences with enslaved people and the effects of slavery on American society—particularly during her years in Ohio (1832-1850)—may have been limited, but they were substantial in their impact. In some ways, these interactions may have prepared her for an encounter with a runaway slave, in a situation when the stakes were significantly higher than they had been back in Ohio.

Stowe had read widely of the desperate circumstance enslaved people faced, studied how they sought their own freedom, and learned about the issues from her passionately abolitionist father and brothers (one of whom, Charles, lived for a time in Louisiana). We know that she witnessed a slave auction in Kentucky, and that she helped a servant of the Stowe family who they had mistakenly thought was free escape from her former master's pursuit. All these experiences may have seemed like a paltry source of knowledge to the Southern critics who railed against her ignorance of the South after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but they were sufficient for Stowe to create a literary work that would influence the course of American history. After all, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the best-selling American novel of the nineteenth century, a book that helped energize the most consequential social revolution in American history.

So why does Harriet Beecher Stowe's brief encounter with a fugitive slave in Maine in 1850 matter? How was her effort to help this man hide in the "waste room" of her house different from her earlier encounters with African Americans, whether free or enslaved? It was different for a number of reasons: the time and context in which it occurred, the manner in which it occurred, and the effect it had on her. Most of all, this encounter was different for a reason she herself could not have predicted: it was different because of the identity of this particular man and the future he went on to make for himself.

Stowe took a fugitive black man into her home and, under the threat of very real danger, waited upon him, hid him, and allowed her children to help care for him. This type of engagement, however brief, trumped some of her more circumstantial or distant encounters with African Americans, or even her realization in Cincinnati that the family's house servant needed to be spirited away to a station on the Underground Railroad. By Stowe's own admission, this man who spent one night hidden in her back room exerted a powerful influence on her feelings about slavery. As we shall see in her own version of this event, her interaction with this man helped give form to her belief that domestic sentiment could have a political and personal impact upon the actions of men—that it could help them "feel right."

The Fugitive

Harriet Beecher Stowe never named this fugitive who was fleeing to Canada. Yet he was, indeed, “a genuine article.” As this essay will argue, it appears almost certain that the man was John Andrew Jackson, whose encounter with Stowe was only one incident in his long and richly remarkable career.

Born enslaved on a Sumter County plantation in 1825, Jackson would declare in his 1862 memoir that “I belong to South Carolina.” Yet Jackson’s verbal dexterity layered that quote with meaning. He made the comment when confronted by Charleston dock workers who wondered if he was a fugitive slave and asked to whom he “belonged.” Since he couldn’t plausibly pass as a Charleston slave, and he couldn’t admit to being a fugitive, his shifty retort was a disarming gamble—one that, oddly enough, worked. Because he “belonged to South Carolina,” or perhaps simply because he perplexed his interrogators, they let him be. His memoir shows how his way with words saved him on more than one such occasion.

Jackson certainly didn’t belong to South Carolina for long under any terms, however artfully phrased. In 1847 he engineered a terrifying escape, stowing himself away between bales of cotton aboard a northbound ship, and settled in Salem, Massachusetts. Rather than live underground, Jackson chose to keep his name and live openly so as to fundraise with Northern abolitionists who were willing to help him negotiate freedom for the wife and baby daughter he had left behind. But this plan was doomed to failure. Before he was able to raise sufficient funds to purchase his family’s freedom, the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act effectively pushed him back into hiding, and eventually led him to flee again, this time north to Canada with the help of the increasingly organized Underground Railroad. After a few years in the city of Saint John, New Brunswick, he went overseas to England on the abolitionist lecture circuit (admiring testimonials included in his memoir indicate that he was lecturing in England by at least 1857 if not 1856). While there, he wrote a complex and powerful memoir of his time in bondage, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina* (1862). At the end of the Civil War, he returned almost immediately to the United States, whereupon he shaped a new career of teaching and activism. He would work for another 30 years to lecture and raise funds in support of the now free black communities in South Carolina. And thus, gratitude to mentors and patrons notwithstanding, Jackson would make his own decisions and fashion his own career through the remainder of the nineteenth century.

But what was the connection between Stowe and Jackson, and why might it have mattered to each of them? How do the events of real life come to influence literary work? Most of all, what was at stake for Stowe and Jackson in each of their later accounts of their meeting?

Jackson and Stowe

This question of the effects of this meeting is fundamentally one of timing: When did Jackson spend the night hiding in Harriet Beecher Stowe's house in Maine? First, let us contextualize Jackson's own references to Stowe. In his 1862 memoir, he wrote of the wake of his 1847 escape from South Carolina:

Just as I was beginning to be settled at Salem, that most atrocious of all laws, the "Fugitive Slave Law," was passed, and I was compelled to flee in disguise from a comfortable home, a comfortable situation, and good wages, to take refuge in Canada. I may mention, that during my flight from Salem to Canada, I met with a very sincere friend and helper, who gave me a refuge during the night, and set me on my way. Her name was Mrs. Beecher Stowe. She took me in and fed me, and gave me some clothes and five dollars. She also inspected my back, which is covered with scars which I shall carry with me to the grave. She listened with great interest to my story, and sympathized with me when I told her how long I had been parted from my wife Louisa and my daughter Jenny, and perhaps, for ever. I was obliged to proceed, however, and finally arrived in safety at St. John's, where I met my present wife, to whom I was married lawfully, and who was also an escaped slave from North Carolina.

Upon first reading this account, it doesn't seem that remarkable. After the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in March of 1852 (and even after the installments started appearing in *The National Era* in June of 1851), Stowe's celebrity spread so wide that many abolitionists, fugitives, and free people sought her endorsement. If Jackson fled New England *after* her installments had begun appearing and had sought her help on his way North, perhaps even asking for a letter of celebrity support, he could still have arrived in New Brunswick early enough to meet and marry his new wife (the marriage was announced in the *New Brunswick Courier* in November 1852). Moreover, Jackson's memoir was accompanied by reprinted remarks, dated 1857, authored by Scottish ministers noting that Jackson had presented them an especially persuasive and "strong" testimonial from "Mrs. Beecher Stowe." Hence we can see in 1857, at least, he was carrying around a valuable letter from Stowe while lecturing overseas, and that he had obtained that letter after her publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with an awareness of its potential value to him. A letter from her written before she had written *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would have been of little value, so clearly this letter was acquired after the publication of her work.

However, a careful examination of the likely dates and an analysis of the circumstances of events suggest a different—and more significant—historical encounter, one that occurred well *before* Stowe had begun publishing her momentous novel, and before he ever asked her for a letter of endorsement.

To recreate the events of 1850, we must examine the story from another perspective. In 1850, Harriet Beecher Stowe's husband, Calvin Stowe, had achieved prominence as a theologian and scholar at Lane Seminary in Ohio.

Calvin had been offered a named professorship at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. But he still had to finish out a term at Lane before taking up his position at Bowdoin, and had thus sent Harriet ahead from Cincinnati to Maine to organize their household before her seventh pregnancy made travel too difficult. With several stops to visit her relatives along the way, she set out for Maine in April of 1850 and was well settled into her Brunswick house by the beginning of July, when she gave birth to her son Charles Edward.

While Stowe was organizing her household and nurturing her newborn son, she followed with horror the debates over the evolving Compromise of 1850 and the consequent passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. In agonized anticipation of its passage, she published in the August 1850 issue of *The National Era* a dark sketch titled "The Freeman's Dream." In this tale she imagined a farmer who refused to help a desperate family of fugitives, in fear of violating the new law. He was to face, however, a more horrific justice, for his confrontation in the afterlife made it clear that God's judgment of his sins was more consequential than any legal punishment could have been. But no short story written by a minister's wife in Maine could stop the course of events. The Fugitive Slave Law passed as predicted, and went into effect on September 18, 1850. Thus we know that Stowe was very much concerned with not only the effects of the law, but also with issues of how to represent, imagine, and enact defiance of it at the very moment of its inception. She didn't know it at the time, but she was primed for both craft and action.

We know from his memoir that Jackson's flight from Salem occurred at some point after September 18, 1850, when the Fugitive Slave Act passed, and thus it is during the tumultuous months immediately following this legislation that we must attempt to pin down the point where their lives intersected. Aside from Jackson's memoir, the key documented account of their meeting is an undated letter Stowe wrote to her older sister, Catherine. In this letter—which Stowe's biographer Joan Hedrick identifies as having certainly been composed in either late 1850 or early 1851—Stowe first decries the scourge of the newly passed Fugitive Slave Law, and then shares an account of how she and her close friends and neighbors, the Uphams, had discussed the actual consequences and impact of the law, followed by a description of the events immediately after their discussion.

The Upham family had swiftly become the Stowes' closest friends in Brunswick, and it is easy to see why, as the families had much in common. Thomas C. Upham was a professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Bowdoin College. He and his wife, the brainy and bustling Phebe Upham, welcomed the Stowes as kindred spirits to their intellectual and activist New England circles. The Stowe family had six children at that time and the Uphams had themselves adopted six orphans, and easily understood the challenges of managing such a busy household.

While Thomas Upham was a passionate supporter of abolition, he was also a cautious man who served as the vice-president of the American Colonization

Society and had affirmed that his distaste for the Fugitive Slave Law would nonetheless not allow him to advocate violating it. Phebe Upham, who was known for regularly arguing with her pastor at the First Parish Church (Congregational) about the suitability of women speaking in church meetings, had also (sometime earlier in 1850) authored a religious tract that told of the inspiring life of Phebe Ann Jacobs, a freed slave. (Various scholars have pointed to this tract as possibly influencing Stowe's later portrayal of pious Uncle Tom.)

The dinner with the Uphams that Harriet recounted in the letter to her sister demonstrates that the Stowe house was ever one for lively debate among its adult members. And while the domestic sphere might not be the place where decisions were made, it could be where they were shaped. It is unclear from Harriet's letter whether Calvin Stowe was present at this dinner, although it seems unlikely as she doesn't mention him, and when present he frequently played a role in her lively letters. If Calvin was away (and her letters indicate he was certainly away for Christmas and much of December), it was because he was fulfilling a brief (and somewhat fraught) temporary teaching obligation at Andover Theological Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts. Much to the frustrations of the Bowdoin faculty who had granted him a professorship, he had nonetheless agreed to teach from November 1850 through March 1851.

As she described it in her letter to Catherine Beecher, Harriet held her own in an impassioned dispute with Thomas Upham over the Fugitive Slave Law:

He & I had over the tea table the other night that sort of argument which consists in both sides saying over & over just what they said before, for any length of time—but when I asked him flatly if he would obey the law supposing a fugitive came to him Mrs. Upham laughed & he hemmed & hawed & little Mary Upham broke out "I wouldn't I know."

And yet, in an incident which scholars have noted clearly inspired the "In Which it Appears that a Senator is but a Man" chapter in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe gleefully told her sister that the very next day, a runaway slave was directed by another Bowdoin faculty neighbor, William Smyth, to the Upham house. And like the fictional Senator Byrd that Stowe was to sketch out a few months later in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, when Thomas Upham was faced with an actual fugitive at his door, he overcame his civic scruples:

... the next day there come along a fugitive bound for Canada and Smyth sends him right up to Proff Upham who takes him into his study & hears his story, gives him a dollar & Mrs. Upham puts in bountifully in the provision line.

It is at this point that the story of Jackson and Stowe truly unfolds, for the Uphams directed the runaway to the Stowe house for a night's lodging. Even with her husband almost certainly away (as well as her teenage twin girls, who were then visiting with relatives), Stowe took the unnamed fugitive in and marveled at how well her three young children (Henry, age 12, Frederick, 10, and

Georgiana, 7) interacted with the charismatic man.

Now our beds were all full & before this law passed I might have tried to send him somewhere else As it was all hands in the house united in making him up a bed in our waste room & Henry & Freddy & Georgy seemed to think they could not do too much for him—There hasn't any body in our house got waited on so abundantly & willingly for ever so long— these negroes posses some mysterious power of pleasing children for they hung around him & seemed never tired of hearing him talk & sing.

In bemused assessment, Stowe declared, "He was a genuine article from the 'Ole Carling State.'"

While Stowe seems to be quoting a well-known minstrel tune that was in circulation in the late 1840s and through the 1850s known as "Old Carolina State" or occasionally as "Dearest Mae," she was also, quite possibly, quoting John Andrew Jackson. This seems all the more plausible since, in his own memoir published some twelve years after the fact, Jackson included lyrics to a small handful of anti-slavery songs, including "The Slaves Song" that opens with the lines:

Now, freemen, listen to my song, a story I'll relate,
It happened in the valley of the old Carolina State:
They marched me to the cotton field, at early break of day,
And worked me there till late sunset, without a cent of pay.

If he knew the lyrics well enough in 1862 while in England to be able to recite them to his friends there, it seems believable he knew them well enough in 1850 to sing them for Stowe.

Despite the songs and happy times, the visit was to be a brief one. Spending more than a short time in a household full of chatty children might well have seemed unwise, and the runaway was directed elsewhere the next day. While there are clues for where this fugitive may have stayed after his one night at the Stowe house, Harriet doesn't refer to him again.

So, what do we know of Jackson's life at this point? Aside from Jackson's own claims in his memoir, the next firmly documented reference to Jackson places him a year later in the free city of St. John, New Brunswick. Starting his free life anew, Jackson evidently settled fairly rapidly into St. John's community of free blacks and fugitive slaves. On November 20, 1852, his second marriage was announced in the *New Brunswick Courier*: "m. By Same, same day, at his residence, John A. Jackson / Miss Julia A. Watson both of Saint John." Within a few years he and his wife turned up in England, and his international career as abolitionist lecturer began.

That Jackson was familiar to Stowe by the late 1850s is fairly clear. Not only does his memoir assert it, but two clerical testimonials that were printed as part of his 1862 memoir in England refer to him carrying a reference from

Stowe:

18, Coates Crescent, Edinburgh, 7th May, 1857. Mr. Jackson, on producing what seemed to me sufficient testimonials, and particularly a strong one from Mrs. Beecher Stowe, was allowed to deliver two lectures in my Church. These lectures were, I have reason to know, very creditable to him. I have no doubt of his being entitled to countenance and support in his laudable undertaking.
THOS. CANDLISH, D.D., Minister of Free St. George's.
JAMES GRANT, 7, Gilmore Place.

Resermere Presbyterian Manor, Loanhouse, Edinburgh, 18th May, 1857. From testimonials produced by Mr. Jackson, given by Mrs. Beecher Stowe and others, I was convinced of the truth of his case, gave him the use of my Church for public lectures on two occasions, and felt happy in affording him hospitality for two nights. From all I have seen and heard, it gives me pleasure to testify my conviction that he is entitled to cordial sympathy and encouragement in the laudable object he has in view—the deliverance of some relations from that estate of bondage from which he himself has in the good providence of God escaped.

I can cordially unite with the above, from
WM. ANDERSON, Minister of the gospel.
DAVID GUTHRIE, Minister of the Free Church, Tibetson.

If Jackson were not the slave who first encountered Stowe in 1850 as a fugitive, then he had certainly either met her or corresponded with her before those testimonials were written. But that notion, if they had met in person, seems unlikely, for it is difficult to imagine that Jackson would have returned to the United States (where such a meeting would have taken place) after he had just gone to such perilous lengths to leave it. And, while it is conceivable that Jackson might have met Stowe during one of her trips to England during 1853 or 1856 (which might more sensibly account for the testimonials he obtained), this does not explain why he would later claim to have met her in 1850, when he was en route to Canada. For the purposes of this essay, I will assume that his account of taking refuge with Stowe in Maine in 1850 is true, and that he later—perhaps before leaving Canada, perhaps while in England, but certainly after her novel had made her famous—wrote her asking for a letter of introduction, knowing that it would be of great value.

So, if Jackson had taught Stowe anything about slavery, why wasn't he mentioned in her exposition of facts about the "Institution" published as *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1853? After all, other specific individuals were cited as having shaped her literary creations. And, furiously defending herself against charges of exaggeration and unreliability, surely Stowe would have added as many real-life accounts of slavery as she could.

Of course, there are several ways to account for this omission; the point of *The Key* was to document what would otherwise be "hearsay" inspirations, and the Key is therefore almost totally reliant upon published (often to the point of

being inaccurately retroactive) sources. Her illegal harboring of Jackson not only couldn't have been publicly mentioned in 1853 under penalty of prosecution. But it also would have been, almost by definition, undocumentable, and wouldn't in any substantive way have helped her establish her public "authority" in constructing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It might even have served to reveal crucial details of the Underground Railroad network in Maine, something she would have scrupulously avoided. She cites the lives of people such as Josiah Henson and Lewis Clarke inasmuch as they produced published narratives. In *The Key* she does not discuss her personal interviews or encounters with slaves or fugitives she had met in Ohio and Kentucky, regardless of the influence those events had upon her.

One of the stronger challenges to Jackson's claim might be to question why Jackson did not foreground his Stowe connections even more. After all, Josiah Henson and others made careers for themselves as professional muses to Stowe, claiming that they had been the "real" or at least the models for various iconic characters from the Stowe oeuvre. Indeed, Josiah Henson republished his original 1849 memoir *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada. Narrated by Himself* in 1876 in London under the title *Uncle Tom's Story of His Life*.

While Stowe did complain to the *Evening Bulletin* of Maysville, Kentucky, in a letter dated December 9, 1895, about upstarts "going about the country representing themselves to be the originals of Uncle Tom, or George Harris, as the case might be," both Henson's and Clarke's lives are explicitly cited by Stowe as real-life parallels and inspirations, if not models, for her fiction. So it seems that if Jackson had had a direct influence upon her, she would have mentioned it at some point.

Moreover, surely Jackson, a savvy opportunist, would have been justified in milking his early connection with Stowe in his personal fundraising efforts, perhaps with the argument that he had been an original of Uncle Tom—or, in a more fitting parallel, an original of Eliza Harris, who like Jackson had appeared at the doorstep of someone who had just stated his intention to never violate the Fugitive Slave Law. Or perhaps we can see a parallel in Jackson's life to the defiant George Harris, for Jackson too had singlehandedly escaped and was determined to somehow rescue his young wife and daughter from bondage. Alas, unlike the fictional Harris, who was reunited with his family, Jackson's happy ending wasn't so pat. Jackson was never able to secure the freedom of his first wife and their child. While he remarried twice, there is some possibility his first wife, Louisa, survived the war, and that they saw one another in South Carolina. However, the records are unclear on that point. Stowe's contrived endings were just that, and real lives like Jackson's could never unfold so tidily. Census records from 1870 and 1880 indicate a Louisa Law living in Lynchburg, South Carolina, who might be Jackson's first wife, presumably having moved back from Georgia.

While it is tempting to speculate about what Jackson might have told Stowe on

the one night that he spent under her roof, we can never ultimately know. But perhaps the pivotal nature of the incident lies in its *domestic* presence. A man fleeing for his life was not an abstraction or an inspiration. He was someone who brought the effects of the Fugitive Slave Act into her very house in Maine. She very likely would have seen the hand of divine providence at work. In early March 1851, Harriet was sitting in the Upham family's church pew in the First Parish Church in Brunswick, and she had a vision of a man being whipped to death, a vision that compelled her to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—a vision that drew upon a lifetime of impressions, research, knowledge, and experiences. Adding Jackson to that assortment of influences is important, because the fact that he was “the genuine article,” and the fact that he was sent to her for protection in a strange town, may have been part of the final push toward the writing of her great novel.

So, if Jackson was the slave who spent one night under the roof of Calvin and Harriet Stowe in Brunswick, Maine, in late 1850, how might we apprehend its influence on another important nineteenth-century writer, namely John Andrew Jackson? How was his life story crafted in response to the expectations that abolitionists such as Stowe had created in the public mind about the experience of slavery? How might his encounter with such an author have influenced his own decisions to pursue a career in letters and social change?

Like Stowe, Jackson was a writer who drew upon a variety of sources and inspirations. And yet, leaving aside the anxious question of influence, we can still see that, just as Stowe doubtless used Jackson in some small way as the emotional impetus for launching *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, so too did Jackson likely use Stowe as part of consolidating the emotional and intellectual confidence necessary to put his own life story down in words. After all, while it is true that many slave narratives had been published throughout the previous decades, the audacious self-possession it takes to write a memoir should not be underestimated. While Jackson does not tell his readers how he learned to read and write, it was most likely as a free adult, and it almost certainly took a series of experiences with men and women of letters—people who put their activism into permanent textual form—that undergirded his belief that he could and should write his own story. It is notable that he confidently and almost casually signed his book “By John Andrew Jackson,” eschewing the by then rote “written by himself” that was often appended to most American slave narratives.

And yet, while Jackson accumulated a number of literary, clerical, and intellectual friends who assisted him in the production of his 1861 memoir, Stowe remained more than just a figure who could vouch for him. She clearly provided a frame in which he could move between fiction and non-fiction in the project of his own self-fashioning. An account of one of the lectures Jackson delivered in Scotland in 1857 provides an overview of the life story he was soon to sketch out in his memoir. The newspaper report of the talk, however, shifts into a discussion, perhaps inadvertently, of Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1856 novel, *Dred*. Jackson evidently told his audience of his determination to free his father and his sister's children from bondage, but he included other

figures in his lecture as well. As the observer in *The Christian News* of June 6, 1857, put it: "In the course of his lecture he told a thrilling tale of a slave named Dred." The reporter then went on for a paragraph to summarize Jackson's version of Dred's tale, never hinting that it might be fiction, stating only that "This story was told with great effect." Since Stowe's novel had been in circulation in Britain for at least a year before Jackson's lecture, it seems unfathomable that Jackson would have tried to pass off Dred's story as non-fiction, even though Stowe had presented the novel *Dred* as intricately inspired by the testimony of the very real revolutionary leader Nat Turner.

Nonetheless, as the reporter saw it, Jackson then segued smoothly into an account of how a black driver on the plantation where Jackson had once lived had been similarly threatened and, in this instance, eventually murdered by a white owner. Jackson's own brave escape by pony to Charleston and then by ship to Boston were thus aligned with the actions of Stowe's revolutionary character Dred.

Finally, Jackson's own 1862 memoir, *The Experience of a Slave in South Carolina*, was explicitly introduced as a supplement of sorts to Stowe's legacy. As the preface to his memoir stated, Jackson's mission was to discuss the evils that even Stowe had been unable to reveal:

In aiming to arrest the attention of the reader, ere he proceeds to the unvarnished, but over true tale of John Andrew Jackson, the escaped Carolinian slave, it might be fairly said that "truth was stranger than fiction," and that the experience of slavery produces a full exhibition of all that is vile and devilish in human nature.

Mrs. Stowe, as a virtuous woman, dared only allude to some of the hellish works of slavery—it was too foul to sully her pen; but the time is come when iniquity should no longer be hid..

From his own account, we can see that while Jackson never excessively capitalized upon the fateful past he and Stowe shared, he did move ahead with his life fully cognizant of the impact of stories, the courage of kindness, and the power of the pen to help him fashion his own fate.

Further Reading

For a fuller story of how Jackson tried unsuccessfully to free Louisa and his young daughter Jinny, see this [thoughtfully curated exhibit](#) of letters and documents organized and edited by Lucia Z. Knoles.

This article originally appeared in issue 13.4 (Summer, 2013).

Susanna Ashton is Professor of English at Clemson University and is currently working on a literary biography of John Andrew Jackson.