

The end of slavery in the United States

After 1800, the campaign to end slavery started to grow slowly in the North. But the slave owners in the South believed this was an attack on their way of life.

The Underground Railroad

From around 1830, the campaign against slavery was helped by stories from the 'Underground Railroad'. This was the name given to the secret routes that slaves used to escape from the South to the North.

The slaves travelled at night, usually fifteen to thirty kilometres between each safe house. They had to hide during the day. They were helped by people who hated slavery. The journey was hard, especially for women and children. It was dangerous too. There were lots of slave catchers, often with dogs, who chased the slaves.



Uncle Tom's Cabin

In 1852, a white woman called Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe's book told the story of the terrible lives of slaves with cruel slave owners. Stowe lived at the time in Ohio, across the river from the slave state of Kentucky. She hated slavery and she often helped runaways.

Her book was very popular in America, selling 300,000 copies in its first year. It persuaded many Americans that slavery must end.



Harriet Beecher Stowe

Books changed people's opinions in the nineteenth century. What changes people's opinions today?

The Civil War

Abraham Lincoln wanted to end slavery. When he became the 16th President of the United States in 1860, the slave states of the South were very unhappy. They decided to leave the United States, and they formed the Confederate States of America. Lincoln refused to accept the break-up of the country.

In April 1861, the Confederate army attacked a U.S. army building and took down the American flag. The Civil War had started. It was a long and terrible war that lasted until 1865, and 625,000 men died. Many blacks fought for the Union Armies of the North. In April 1865, the North finally won the war.



Abraham Lincoln



Slavery ends

After the Union Army won the Civil War, Lincoln brought in a new law called the 13th Amendment. White people could no longer own black slaves. However, this did not make life much easier for black people. It was another hundred years until Martin Luther King helped to win equal rights for black people.

What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.

campaign route to persuade flag civil war equal rights