

Colored Conventions Project Teaching Guide for K-12

EXHIBIT:

Henry Highland Garnet's "Address to the Slaves" and its Colored Conventions Origins

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[*Henry Highland Garnet's "Address to the Slaves" and its Colored Conventions Origins*](#), curated by Harrison Graves and Jake Alspaugh, graduate students University of Delaware Department of English, and Derrick Spires, Cornell University

A. RESOURCES

Keyword Definitions (minimum 2 to 5)

1843 National Colored Convention---The 1843 National Colored Convention was held August 15-19 at the Park Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, New York. Similar to previous colored conventions, the convention of 1843 was an assembly for African American citizens to discuss the organized efforts of the anti-slavery movement. The convention included individuals and delegates from various states and cities. Henry Garnet and Samuel Davis delivered key speeches. Delegates deliberated courses of action and voted upon resolutions to further anti-slavery efforts and to help African Americans.

Black Print Culture---refers to the contributions of Blacks to printed texts (and their circulation) as authors, illustrators, publishers, editors, printers, typesetters, binders, distributors, and readers during various periods in history (i.e. antebellum period, civil war period etc..)

Collective Authorship---Speeches were often products of collective discussions among Black activists. In the case of Garnet's "Address," Julia Williams Garnet's hand in its writing and development was crucial.

David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*---an emotionally charged, powerful, and militant antislavery pamphlet published by Black Wilmington native David Walker in September 1829 and widely distributed across the South. It appeared in three editions, probably printed in Boston. Although Walker himself was born with a free status because of his mother, he was deeply troubled by the slave status of his father, who died before Walker was born. Garnet's address first appeared in print form as a preface to the second edition of *Walker's Appeal*.

Henry Highland Garnet's "Address to the Slaves"---In Buffalo, New York, Henry Highland Garnet gave his famous "An Address to the Slaves of the United States." He called for the enslaved persons of the South to refuse to work, to approach their masters and demand their freedom, and to resist their oppressors with force if necessary. Because it is such an influential "text," it is easy to forget that Garnet's 1843 address was spoken, not written, and rejected twice by the committee that heard it.

Oration---A formal speech delivered on a special occasion, like an anniversary, or ceremonial event. Usually given in public and characterized by the speakers elevated style, diction, or delivery.

People (minimum 2 to 5)

[Elijah P. Lovejoy](#)

[Francis McIntosh](#)

[Nat Turner](#)

[Denmark Vesey](#)

[David Walker](#)

[Madison Washington](#)

[Julia Williams Garnet](#)

Places (minimum 2 to 5)

African Free School---Located on Mott Street in New York City; the school where Henry Garnet attended upon arrival to New York.

Buffalo, New York---location of the 1843 Colored Convention

Liberia, Africa- Location of Henry Highland Garnet's death on February 13, 1882.

New Market, Maryland---Birthplace of Henry Highland Garnet.

Washington D.C.--- city where Henry Highland Garnet served as pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. On February 12, 1865, while in Washington, Garnet made history when he was chosen by President Abraham Lincoln to give a sermon before the House of Representatives—making him the first Black speaker to do so.

Key Texts (minimum 2 to 5)

David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*---David Walker's *Appeal*, arguably the most radical of all anti-slavery documents, caused a great stir when it was published in September of 1829 with its call for enslaved people to revolt against their enslavers. The goal of the *Appeal* was to instill pride and militancy in its black readers and give hope that change would someday come. It spoke out against colonization, a popular movement that sought to move free blacks to a colony in Africa. America, Walker believed, belonged to all who helped build it.

Ebony Magazine (1964 edition)---connected contemporary struggles for Black freedom and autonomy to Henry Highland Garnet's legacy.

Memorial Discourse---This was the address that Garnet gave in the Hall of House of Representatives in 1865.

News Coverage---Reactions were mixed with some applauding Garnet's speech while others denounced it. Garnet's 1843 address was published and advertised in *The North Star* multiple times, suggesting that there was renewed interest in more radical views. Garnet traveled all over the US and abroad to deliver addresses.

Predominant Themes (minimum 2 to 5)

Black Print, Collaboration, and Performance---The complexities of antebellum Black activism can be seen through the news coverage and matriculation of actual print coverage of Garnet’s “The Address to the Slaves”. The “Address’s” performance, reception, and print history suggest that analyzing it involves working on a constellation of at least three distinct yet mutually constituting print events: 1) the 1843 Convention’s minutes, 2) newspaper accounts describing Garnet’s performance and ensuing debate, and 3) divergent editions of the “Address.”

Rhetoric of Resistance---Although many speeches were both written and spoken by white abolitionists and free African Americans during the antebellum period, Garnet’s “Address to the Slaves” was only spoken during the Colored Convention of 1843. This influential oration was similar but different from Walker’s *Appeal*--though clearly meant to be in conversation with the famous document including its title, urging enslaved persons to approach their masters and demand their freedom is one of the many ways enslaved Black people resisted slavery.

Secular Rights versus Christian Duty---As discussed in other parts of this exhibit, Garnet’s address emerged in conversation with contentious precepts about the rights of African Americans being discussed at state level conventions. However, Garnet combined this discourse around secular rights with a narrative of Christian duty against oppression that comes straight from Walker’s *Appeal*.

Social Justice Activism---Garnet’s speech and life’s work as an abolitionist was rooted in social justice. Garnet’s tireless work to uplift enslaved persons and seek social justice is evident through speeches at the National Colored Convention, his sermon to the House of Representatives, and occupation as a minister.

Points of Interactivity

Exhibit Page Name + Link	Data Visualization Name	Visualization Type
Radical Typography	Frequency of Punctuation: Garnet VS Douglass	Interactive punctuation graph
News Coverage Of Garnet’s Address	The Addresses of Henry Highland Garnet	Interactive and annotated map
Other Addresses Given by Garnet	The Addresses of Henry Highland Garnet (Continued)	Interactive and annotated map
Garnet’s Orations	Garnet at the 1843 Convention: Snapshot of delegates for and	Interactive piktochart and annotated map

	against speech	
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Further Reading on Henry Highland Garnet

<https://www.biography.com/activist/henry-highland-garnet>

<https://www.nyhistory.org/web/africanfreeschool/bios/henry-highland-garnet.html>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1537.html>

B. METHODS

To successfully teach these exhibits we strongly encourage teachers to explicitly teach the following methods used to tell more complete stories of African American, African Diaspora, and American history:

Historiography

1. What is historiography?

Historiography can be understood as the history of history. A historiographical piece or essay discusses how history has been written over time and tracks the debates historians grappled with in a certain field. (Included is a link to video by Study.com; the first two [2] minutes of the video are free.)

2. How can students practice historiography as they study this exhibit?

3. How does historiography get written? Who gets to write history?

***Suggested Exercise:** Have students discuss the historiographical contributions of each section of the exhibit.*

Primary Documents

1. What are primary documents?

2. How do we research and analyze primary documents?

3. Is there a tool that we can use to help us think about primary documents?

4. What is the proper MLA citation practice for primary documents?

***Suggested Exercise:** Students must locate, review and use the following primary document(s):*

- [*An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America*](#) by Henry Highland Garnet
- [*Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829*](#) by David Walker

Data Visualization

1. What is data visualization?

*The act of showing data (information) using images such as pictures, maps, graphs, drawings. This [infographic](#) is a good example. (Source: Simon Rogers. **The Guardian** newspaper, International Edition. Friday, March 7th, 2014)*

2. What does digital data visualization allow you to see and analyze differently than data presented in textbooks?

Suggested Exercise: *Have students examine the data visualization from the delegates' votes, and ask students to analyze the available information to attempt to hypothesize why the votes changed from one day to the next.*

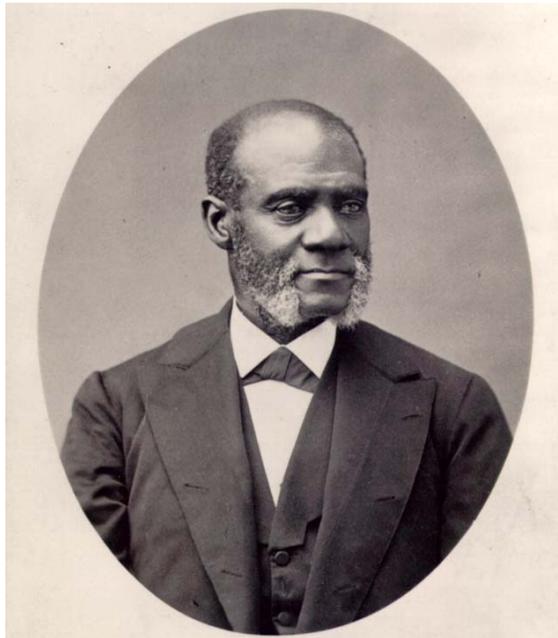
Attribution and Citation

1. Why is it important to cite sources?

2. What information does citation communicate?

Suggested Exercise: *Students will learn to accurately and appropriately cite this exhibit and the works referenced within, including:*

- [Primary documents](#) within the exhibit (eg. [Newspaper articles](#) that demonstrate the positive and negative reactions to Garnet's speech.)
- Secondary documents within the exhibit (eg. "[The Address in Context](#)")



Henry Highland Garnet 1815-1882

C. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the argument or main idea of the exhibit?

The main idea of [Henry Highland Garnet's "Address to the Slaves" and its Colored Conventions Origins](#) is to trace Garnet's "Address" through its inception at the 1843 Convention to its subsequent publication journey. In doing so, we extend our attention beyond the minutes of the forums and include information from newspapers and other textual sources to color in the gaps that surround the 1843 oration of Garnet's "*An Address to the Slaves of the United States.*" The life of Garnet's *Address* demonstrates the enduring legacy of Black radical and/or militant ideology across generations.

2. Who are the subjects of the exhibit?

[Henry Highland Garnet](#), primarily, "[The Address to the Slaves](#)"; David Walker, [Walker's Appeal](#), [Julia Williams Garnet](#).

3. What are the topics of the exhibit?

The exhibit explores the [Colored Conventions Movement](#), Black Politics and Print Culture, [Oracle Performances](#), [Racial Policing](#), Antebellum Black activism, [19th century Black Print](#), Racial Policing, and the Black Press.

4. What is the timeline of the exhibit?

The exhibit captures events from 1843-1964. The earliest convention mentioned is the New York 1843 Convention, and the exhibit extends to 19th century print coverage of Garnet's life in a [1964 magazine](#) article.

5. What are the major events of the exhibit?

[1843 Colored Convention](#), Reconstruction, [advancements in Black print culture](#)

6. Where do these major events take place?

The events take place across the United States, Africa, and Jamaica.

7. What are other places/things of significance discussed in this exhibit?

The Black Press, [Racial Policing](#), [Analysis of language and rhetoric in Black speeches](#), 20th Century Interpretations of Black Press.

D. QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

8. Now that you have learned more about these events, why does this exhibit matter?

This exhibit addresses an issue with the modern-day memory of Henry Highland Garnet's "*An Address to the Slaves of the United States.*" It reminds readers not only that Garnet's original address was an oration—and originally voted down—but that there are several subsequent editions of the printed

text—each of which can be examined for its individual qualities. Garnet’s “*Address*” appears static, but it was a living document in many ways. By refocusing attention on the “*Address*” to more broadly recognize its history, we are able to show how it reflects issues connected to Black print culture in the antebellum period, as well as, tensions that exist between print and oral performance.

9. Why do these events matter?

These events matter because it is important to understand how external factors, like political and religious affiliations can oftentimes impact what gets reported and how it is disseminated through various types of print media. These events offer a lens to examine the Colored Conventions as choreographed public performance of collective Black politics, for examining Colored Conventions' dynamism as a collaborative enterprise that included women's labor, and for thinking about the importance black activists placed on making collective authorship and print practices visible.

E. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The prompts below in purple are from the Exhibit, [*Henry Highland Garnet’s “Address to the Slaves” and its Colored Conventions Origins*](#).

1. How does this exhibit help fill gaps in the following?

- Black women’s contributions and political engagement
- Documentation of Black history
- The Colored Conventions movement

2. How does this exhibit create a richer context for the following?

- Black print culture
- The Black Press
- Black intra-community dynamics

3. How does this exhibit address or intervene in the historiography of the following themes?

- Women’s participation in the CC movement
- Black Political Activism
- Black Press
- Black leadership
- The role of the Black Church in CC movement

F. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. What stood out for you the most in reviewing and studying this exhibit?**
- 2. What did you find most exciting about what you learned from this exhibit?**

3. Why does this exhibit matter?
4. Consider the radical ideas set forth by Garnet and Walker? Can you draw any modern parallels to their ideas for Black liberation?

G. STANDARDS

Standards are taken from the [Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies and Writing](#) in grades 11 and 12. Note: *Teachers should use these standards as a guide and align their lessons with the specific standards for their individual state.*

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.