



# **One Noble Journey**

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## **National Standards and Study Guide**

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Curriculum Standards

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Mike Wiley Productions is a theatrical company specializing in African American History Plays.



*One Noble Journey* is about the life of Henry “Box” Brown.

Brown was an African American who was born a slave in 1816 in Louisa County, Virginia. At the age of thirty-three he was bequeathed to his master's son, who sent him to work in his tobacco factory in Richmond, VA under the authority of a relentlessly evil overseer. Although his experiences in slavery were comparatively mild, and he was not subjected to physical violence, Brown was not content to be a slave. *One Noble Journey* demonstrates that slavery was still unbearable even under the best of conditions. Brown was able to experience the joys of marriage and even children under slavery's oppression but his wife and children were eventually taken from him and sold to North Carolina. That horrible incident was Brown's breaking point and he devised an escape plan. He had himself sealed in a small wooden box and shipped to friends and freedom in Philadelphia. He later settled in Massachusetts and traveled around the northern states speaking against slavery. *One Noble Journey* dramatizes Brown's life while demonstrating what an evening with “Brown: The Escaped Slave, Turned Abolitionist!” might be like.



ELLEN CRAFT.



WILLIAM CRAFT.

Within *One Noble Journey* is embedded the miraculous true account of *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* the narrative of William and Ellen Craft's escape from slavery. This pre-civil war “cloak and dagger” tale is told by Ellen Craft. Both were born and grew up in Georgia, where they lived in prior to their escape. In December 1848 they devised a plan in which Ellen Craft, who was literate and very light-skinned, would dress as a man and pretend to be sickly and seeking better treatment in Philadelphia. William was to accompany her and act as her slave.

Relying exclusively on means of public transportation, including trains and steamers, they made their way to Savannah, then to Charleston, Wilmington, North Carolina, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, and Philadelphia, where they arrived on Christmas Day. They then relocated to Boston and sailed for England after the Fugitive Slave Law enabled slave hunters to pursue them even in free states. *One Noble Journey* recounts the numerous times they escaped capture.



## **ONE NOBLE JOURNEY**

### **POST-PRODUCTION DISCUSSION GUIDE**

- 1) In the opening sequence of “One Noble Journey” an African slave speaks of lost freedom and gained hope. How does he describe freedom? What hope does he speak of?
- 2) Who spoke the words, “give me liberty or give me death,” and how is it relevant to this play? How is it relevant to slavery in America?
- 3) In the play Ellen Craft explains how some white children were sold as slaves. How was that possible?
- 4) Each of the main characters in the play found love and marriage. What major obstacles stood in their way?
- 5) What tragic incident led to Henry Brown’s decision to escape the bonds of slavery?
- 6) How do you envision Henry Brown’s new life as a free man?

### **Words & Phrases to Know:**

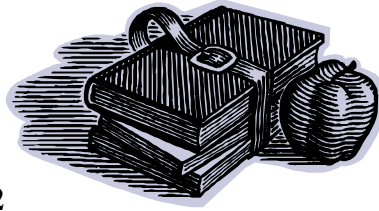
ABOLITIONIST EMANCIPATION

MULATTO OVERSEER MIDDLE PASSAGE

Books to Read:

Narrative of Henry Box Brown, by Henry Brown and Charles Stearns  
Great Slave Narratives, compiled by Arna Bontemps  
Born a Child of Freedom, Yet a Slave, by Norece Jones  
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Harriet Jacobs

# National Standards...



## **\*National Standards: Grades K-12**

### **Arts-**

**NA-T.5-8.1** SCRIPT WRITING BY PLANNING AND RECORDING IMPROVISATIONS BASED ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND HERITAGE, IMAGINATION, LITERATURE, AND HISTORY

**NA-T.5-8.2** ACTING BY ASSUMING ROLES AND INTERACTING IN IMPROVISATIONS

**NA-T.5-8.7** ANALYZING AND EXPLAINING PERSONAL PREFERENCES AND CONSTRUCTING MEANINGS FROM CLASSROOM DRAMATIZATIONS AND FROM THEATRE, FILM, TELEVISION, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

### **Language Arts-**

**NL-ENG.K-12.2** UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

**NL-ENG.K-12.3** EVALUATION STRATEGIES

**NL-ENG.K-12.4** COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**NL-ENG.K-12.9** MULTICULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

### **Social Studies-**

**NSS-USH.5-12.5** ERA 5: CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION (1850-1877)

**NSS-USH.5-12.6** ERA 6: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL UNITED STATES (1870-1900)

**NSS-USH.5-12.8** ERA 8: THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II (1929-1945)