



**JAMES VARICK** was the founder and first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Varick was born to a slave mother near Newburgh, New York. His father was Richard Varick, a free black man who was originally from Hackensack, New Jersey. Varick grew up with his parents in New York City, where it is thought that he may have attended the Free School for Negroes. After this schooling, Varick was trained in the trade of shoemaking. In 1766, Varick, now free, joined the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church, which had a predominately white congregation. Eventually Varick became a minister and was licensed to preach at John Street Church. Although he

was not the main minister, his appointment to the pulpit as the Church's first black preacher caused considerable racial tension and calls for racial segregation of the congregation. Eventually black parishioners were forced to sit in the galleries or the backrow seating. Incensed at this change in church policy Varick and thirty other black members withdrew from the church in 1796. In 1790, Varick married Aurelia Jones. The couple had seven children, four of whom survived into adulthood. During this time Varick worked as a shoemaker and a tobacco cutter in order to support his family. In 1800, Varick and those who had seceded from the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church started their own place of worship, which they dubbed the "Zion" church which was located a few blocks from Wall Street. In 1806, Varick and three other men became the first three ordained black deacons in New York. In 1818 Varick helped found the African Methodist Episcopal Church in New Haven, Connecticut. He was also one of the vice-presidents of the New York African Bible Society. Varick was a strong opponent of slavery and openly supported its abolition. He often preached sermons on this subject and fought for equal rights for African Americans, the most notable being the "Sermon of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade," on January 1, 1808. In 1821, Varick and other black New York City leaders petitioned the New York State Constitutional Convention to grant blacks the right to vote. Six years later Varick helped establish Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper in the United States. As other independent black Methodist churches

emerged in the Northeast, Varick in 1821 led the movement to establish a new denomination which would be known as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (as opposed to the African Methodist Episcopal or AME Church founded in the same period by Rev. Richard Allen). The next year Varick was elected the first bishop of the AME Zion Church and was re-elected for a second term at the second annual conference in 1824. On July 4, 1827, Varick and his congregation celebrated victory when New York finally enacted the final emancipation of Negro slaves. Two weeks after the celebration Varick passed away in his New York City home. **Source: BlackPast.org**



**SOJOURNER TRUTH** A former slave, Sojourner Truth became an outspoken advocate for **abolition**, temperance, and civil and women’s rights in the nineteenth century. Her **Civil War** work earned her an invitation to meet President Abraham Lincoln in 1864.

One of 13 children, Truth was born Isabella Baumfree, a slave in Dutch-speaking Ulster County, New York in 1797. She was bought and sold four times and subjected to harsh physical labor and violent punishments. In her teens, she was united with another slave with whom she had five children, beginning in 1815. In 1827—a year before New York’s law freeing slaves was to take effect—Truth ran away with her infant Sophia to a nearby abolitionist family, the Van Wageners. The family bought her freedom for twenty dollars and helped Truth successfully sue for the return of her five-year-old-son Peter, who was illegally sold into slavery in Alabama.

Truth moved to New York City in 1828, where she worked for a local minister. By the early 1830s, she participated in the religious revivals that were sweeping the state and became a charismatic speaker. In 1843, she declared that the Spirit called on her to preach the truth, renaming herself Sojourner Truth.

As an itinerant preacher, Truth met abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass. Garrison’s anti-slavery organization encouraged Truth to give speeches about the evils of slavery. She never learned to read or write. In 1850, she dictated what would become her autobiography—*The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*—to Olive Gilbert, who assisted in its publication. Truth survived on sales of the book, which also brought her national recognition. She met women’s rights activists, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, as well as temperance advocates—both causes she quickly championed.

In 1851, Truth began a lecture tour that included a women’s rights conference in Akron, Ohio, where she delivered her famous “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech. In it, she challenged prevailing notions of racial and gender inferiority and inequality by reminding listeners of her combined strength (Truth was nearly six feet tall) and female status. Truth

ultimately split with Douglass, who believed suffrage for formerly enslaved men should come before women's suffrage; she thought both should occur simultaneously.

During the 1850's, Truth settled in Battle Creek, Michigan, where three of her daughters lived. She continued speaking nationally and helped slaves escape to freedom. When the Civil War started, Truth urged young men to join the Union cause and organized supplies for black troops. After the war, she was honored with an invitation to the White House and became involved with the Freedmen's Bureau, helping freed slaves find jobs and build new lives. While in Washington, DC, she lobbied against segregation, and in the mid-1860s, when a streetcar conductor tried to violently block her from riding, she ensured his arrest and won her subsequent case. In the late 1860s, she collected thousands of signatures on a petition to provide former slaves with land, though Congress never took action. Nearly blind and deaf towards the end of her life, Truth spent her final years in Michigan. **Source: WomensHistory.org**



**HARRIET TUBMAN-** During the Civil War, Harriet Tubman worked for the Union Army as a cook, nurse, and a spy. She would dress in men's clothes when spying within the ranks of the Confederate Army.

When the Civil War ended, Harriet Tubman returned home to Auburn, New York. Her parents were old and had a good support system during her absence but they still needed her daughter's financial support. Her brothers and their families eventually moved from St. Catharine's to Auburn. Her parents passed away of old age. Her father died in 1871 and her mother in 1880.

Tubman was a philanthropist who provided to those who sought her help. She left the door of her residence at South Street open for those who needed shelter and food. For years freed slaves came and left when they were ready to move on. She took care of all their needs even though she was penniless. She supported herself and those she sheltered by selling produce from her garden, taking in donations of food and asking friends for loans. She also raised pigs in her backyard.

In 1867 Tubman received the news of the death of her former husband, John Tubman. (Harriet was never formally married to John; theirs was an informal marriage just like all others who lived in slavery.) He had been killed in an altercation with a white man named Robert Vincent, but the man was never convicted. In 1869 Tubman met Nelson Davis, a man who had looked for shelter in her home. He had been a slave in North Carolina and served as a soldier in the Civil War. Davis was a brick maker. Tubman and Davis married on March 18, 1869 at the Presbyterian Church in Auburn. In 1874 they adopted a girl who they named Gertie. Davis suffered from tuberculosis and could not hold a steady job, leaving Harriet responsible for the household. Their marriage lasted 20 years until his death in 1888 from tuberculosis.

When Harriet Tubman returned to Auburn, she applied for governmental compensation for her services during the Civil War but her application lacked the official documents. With the help of some friends she was able to appeal but it took more than 30 years for her to succeed. Her friends found out about her financial needs and community leaders wrote letters to newspapers advocating for her case.

When her husband, Nelson Davis died in 1888, Tubman was able to collect a veteran's widow pension of \$8 a month. It was the first time she enjoyed a reliable and steady income.

Tubman supported the Women's Rights Movement by attending meetings and giving speeches. Friends who had supported her during her Underground Railroad years were leaders of the movement. She toured New York, Boston and Philadelphia speaking in favor of women's suffrage rights. She was especially interested in African American women's rights. In 1896 she was invited as a speaker at the first meeting of the National Association of Colored Women.

Tubman showed special concern for the old. Few social services were available to them and many freed slaves were too old to make a living. In 1896 Tubman acquired in auction 25 acres of land adjacent to her property, located at 130 South Street. With money raised by the AME Zion Church and with the support of a local bank, Harriett Tubman was able to afford this acquisition. Her winning bid to purchase the property was \$1450. Her dream was to build a house for the aged colored people.

In 1903, donated the property to the AME Zion Church with the condition that it would be maintained as a home for the elderly. The Board of the Lady Managers helped raise funds to equip and staff the home. It took five years for Tubman's dream to realize. On June 23, 1908, Harriet Tubman Home was inaugurated with Tubman as the guest of honor in the opening celebration.

Following her hospitalization in 1911, she moved out of her house and into the care of the facility she had built, which was next door where she was to spend the rest of her life. Harriet Tubman died on March 10, 1913, and was buried in Auburn, New York.  
**SOURCE: CLC FACILITATOR'S GUIDE**



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS** Born a slave in Maryland, he was named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey after his mother Harriett Bailey. Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became a prominent activist, author and public speaker. He became a leader in the abolitionist movement, which sought to end the practice of slavery, before and during the Civil War. After that conflict and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, he continued to push for equality and human rights until his death in 1895. Douglass' 1845 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, described his time as a slave in Maryland. It was one of five autobiographies he penned, along with dozens of noteworthy speeches, despite receiving minimal formal education. An advocate for women's rights, and specifically the right of women to vote, Douglass' legacy as an author and leader lives on. His work served as an inspiration to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in or around 1818 in Talbot County, Maryland. Douglass himself was never sure of his exact birth date. His mother was of Native American ancestry and his father was of African and European descent. He was actually born Frederick Bailey (his mother's name) and took the name Douglass only after he escaped. After, he was separated from his mother as an infant, Douglass lived for a time with his maternal grandmother. However, at the age of six, he was moved away from her to live and work on the Wye House plantation in Maryland. From there, Douglass was "given" to Lucretia Auld, whose husband, Thomas, sent him to work with his brother Hugh in Baltimore. Douglass credits Hugh's wife Sophia with first teaching him the alphabet. From there, he taught himself to read and write. By the time he was hired out to work under William Freeland, he was teaching other slaves to read, using the Bible. As word spread of his efforts to educate fellow slaves, Thomas Auld took him back and transferred him to Edward Covey, a farmer who was known for his brutal treatment of the slaves in his charge. Roughly 16 at this time, Douglass was regularly whipped by Covey. After several failed attempts at escape, Douglass finally left Covey's farm in 1838, first boarding a train to Havre de Grace, Maryland. From there he traveled through Delaware, another slave state, before arriving in New York and the safe house of abolitionist David Ruggles. Once settled in New York, he sent for Anna Murray, a free black woman from Baltimore he met while in captivity with the Aulds. She joined him, and the two were married in September 1838. They would have five children together. After their marriage, the young couple moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where they met Nathan and Mary Johnson, a married couple who were born "free persons of color." It was the

Johnsons who inspired the couple to take the surname Douglass, after the character in the Sir Walter Scott poem, “The Lady of the Lake.”

In New Bedford, Douglass began attending meetings of the abolitionist movement. During these meetings, he was exposed to the writings of abolitionist and journalist William Lloyd Garrison. The two men eventually met when both were asked to speak at an abolitionist meeting, during which Douglass shared his story of slavery and escape. It was Garrison who encouraged Douglass to become a speaker and leader in the abolitionist movement. By 1843, Douglass had become part of the American Anti-Slavery Society’s “Hundred Conventions” project, a six-month tour through the United States. Douglass was physically assaulted several times during the tour by those opposed to the abolitionist movement. In one particularly brutal attack, in Pendleton, Indiana, Douglass’ hand was broken.

The injuries never fully healed, and he never regained full use of his hand. Two years later, Douglass published the first and most famous of his five autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.

Later that same year, Douglass would travel to Ireland and Great Britain. At the time, the former country was just entering the early stages of the Irish Potato Famine, or the Great Hunger. While overseas, he was impressed by the relative freedom he had as a man of color, compared to what he had experienced in the United States. During his time in Ireland, he would meet the Irish nationalist Daniel O’Connell, who would become an inspiration for his later work. When he returned to the United States in 1847, Douglass began publishing his own abolitionist newsletter, the *North Star*. He also became involved in the movement for women’s rights. He was the only African American to attend the Seneca Falls Convention, a gathering of women’s rights activists in New York, in 1848.

He would later include coverage of women’s rights issues in the pages of the *North Star*. The newsletter’s name was changed to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* in 1851, and was published until 1860, just before the start of the Civil War. For the 24th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, in 1886, Douglass delivered a rousing address in Washington, D.C., during which he said, “... where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.” During the brutal conflict that divided the still-young United States, Douglass continued to speak and worked tirelessly for the end of slavery and the right of newly freed black Americans to vote. Although he supported President Abraham Lincoln in the early years of the Civil War, Douglass would fall into disagreement with the politician after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which effectively ended the practice of slavery. Douglass was disappointed that Lincoln didn’t use the proclamation to grant ex-slaves the right to vote,

particularly after they had fought bravely alongside soldiers for the Union army. Thus, in the 1864 presidential election, Douglass supported abolitionist Radical Democracy Party candidate John C. Frémont. It is said, though, that Douglass and Lincoln later reconciled and, following the latter's assassination in 1865, and the passage of the [13th amendment](#), [14th amendment](#), and [15th amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution (which, respectively, outlawed slavery, granted free slaves citizenship and equal protection under the law, and protected all citizens from racial discrimination in voting), Douglass was asked to speak at the dedication of the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, D.C.'s Lincoln Park in 1876. Historians, in fact, suggest that Lincoln's widow, Mary Todd Lincoln, bequeathed the late-president's favorite walking stick to Douglass after that speech. In the post-war Reconstruction era, Douglass served in many official positions in government, including as an ambassador to the Dominican Republic, thereby becoming the first black man to hold high office. He also continued speaking and advocating for African-American and women's rights. In the 1868 presidential election, he supported the candidacy of former Union general [Ulysses S. Grant](#), who promised to take a hard line against white supremacist-led insurgencies in the post-war South. Grant notably also oversaw passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1871, which was designed to suppress the growing Ku Klux Klan movement.

In 1877, Douglass met with Thomas Auld, the man who once "owned" him, and the two reportedly reconciled. Douglass' wife Anna died in 1882, and he remarried in 1884, to white activist Helen Pitts. In 1888, he became the first African-American to receive a vote for President of the United States, during the Republican National Convention. Ultimately, though, Benjamin Harrison received the party nomination. Douglass remained an active speaker, writer, and activist until his death in 1895. He died after suffering a heart attack on his way home from a meeting of the National Council of Women, a women's rights group still in its infancy at the time, in Washington, D.C. His life's work still serves as an inspiration to those who seek equality and a more just society. Frederick Douglass died February 20, 1895 in Washington, DC. The national historic site is named Cedar Hill and is in Washington, DC. **Source: History.com**



## **BISHOP JERMAIN WESLEY LOGUEN**

Rev. Jermain Wesley Loguen (February 5, 1813 – September 30, 1872), born Jarm Logue, in slavery was an African-American abolitionist and bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and an author of a slave narrative.

Originally named Jarm Logue, he later added the "n" to his last name to differentiate himself from his slave-master father and adopted the middle name "Wesley" to reflect his Wesleyan Methodist sympathies. When he was in his early twenties, Loguen escaped from slavery and fled to Canada. He eventually settled in New York state, enrolled in the abolitionist Oneida School in 1839, and later established a school in Utica, New York, for

African American children. He moved to Syracuse, New York, in 1841, founded another school, and married Caroline Storum, with whom he had five children. Loguen was ordained by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1842 and became increasingly involved with the anti-slavery movement, working with other abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, on the lecture circuit. Loguen publicly denounced the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and swore to defy it. He even advertised himself as a prominent Underground Railroad conductor in an April 1855 issue of Frederick Douglass' Paper, writing "that the Underground Railroad was never doing a better business than at present. . . . I speak officially, as the agent and keeper of an Underground Railroad Depot." Loguen served as pastor of Zion Church in Binghamton, New York, in the early 1860s, and after the Civil War became active in establishing AME Zionist congregations for southern freedmen. Loguen was named a bishop in the AME Zion Church in 1868. He died in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1872. **SOURCE: Revolvy.com**



**ELIZA ANN GARDNER** Gardner was born May 28, 1831, in New York City. Her parents, James and Eliza Gardner, moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where the father worked as a ship building contractor. The family was related to W.E.B. DuBois which may have influenced their involvement with social reform in their community. The Gardner home was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Certainly, the young Eliza was inspired by the attention her parents gave to the freedom of blacks and to the oppressed in general. Gardner's parents were very active members of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Freedom Church at the Boston Church, now known as Columbus Avenue A.M.E. Zion Church.

Gardner was a staunch abolitionist, who was closely associated with other abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, editor of *The Liberator* and founder of the New England Anti-slavery Society. A fearless, outspoken woman, she has been described as one of the most effective “conductors” on the Underground Railroad. Gardner also was an advocate for women’s rights and organized women’s organizations for more effective advocacy. She was the founder of the Women’s Era Club of Boston, the city’s first black women’s club. She also helped to lay the groundwork for formation of the National Association of Colored Women. To help young Black women support themselves, she often helped them to find employment.<sup>1</sup> in 1922, and is interred at Woodlawn Cemetery in Everett, MA.

Gardner was an influential woman in her local church and the city of Boston. A conscientious Sunday School teacher, who in 1883 became the Sunday School Superintendent of the city of Boston, the first woman to hold his position. In 1876, she founded the Zion Missionary Society in her church, and later the first Zion Missionary Society in New England, which financially supported missionaries to Africa. Thus, she provided the foundation for our connectional level Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society. Because she began the first missionary society in the New England Conference that was the first in the Zion Church, she is regarded as the “mother” of the Women’s Home & Overseas Missionary Society in The A.M.E. Zion Church. Her activism for women’s rights extended very much into the church. Making a powerful speech at the General Conference of 1884, she was instrumental in urging the Zion Church to allow women to raise funds for missions and to be ordained clergy. She told the General Conference to “strengthen women’s efforts and make us a power!” This was a moving and influential speech for many who had doubts about woman’s role in the church and for others who were skeptical about overseas missions. **Source: CLC FACILITATOR’S GUIDE**