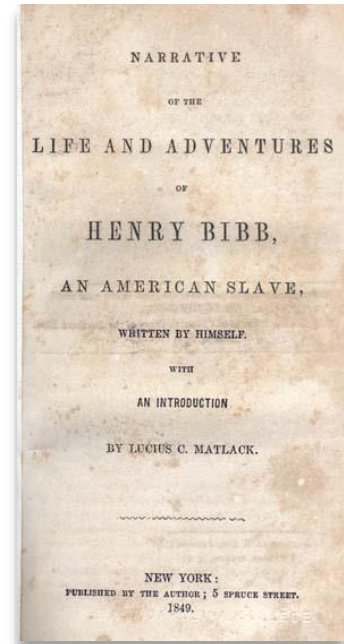


**BACKGROUND:** *Henry Bibb was born May 10, 1815, in Shelby County, Kentucky. His father was state senator James Bibb, and his mother was an enslaved woman named Mildred Jackson. When Bibb was a teenager, his enslaver, David White, sold him to a man from Newcastle, Kentucky. There he endured tremendous cruelties. Bibb repeatedly attempted to escape. Eventually, he was returned to David White. Over the next several years, Bibb met and fell in love with an enslaved woman named Malinda. They had a daughter. Bibb's love for his family stoked his desire for freedom. After several more attempts to escape, in 1840, Bibb was finally successful and escaped to Detroit, Michigan. While there Bibb became an active abolitionist and traveled throughout the north giving lectures on the evils of slavery.*

*The following is an excerpt from Henry Bibb's autobiography.*



---

Page 101

When we arrived at the city of Vicksburg [Mississippi], he intended to sell a portion of his slaves there and stopped for three weeks trying to sell. But he met with very poor success.

We had there to pass through an examination or inspection by a city officer, whose business it was to inspect slave property that was brought to that Market for sale. He examined our backs to see if we had been much scarred by the lash. He examined our limbs to see whether we were inferior.

As it is hard to tell the ages of slaves, they look in their mouths at their teeth and prick up the skin on the back of their hands, and if the person is very far advanced in life, when the skin is pricked up, the pucker will stand so many seconds on the back of the hand.

But the most rigorous examinations of slaves by those slave inspectors is on the mental capacity. If they are found to be very intelligent, this is pronounced the most objectionable of all other qualities connected with the life of a slave. In fact, it

---

Page 102

undermines the whole fabric of his chattelhood; it prepares for what slaveholders are pleased to pronounce the unpardonable sin when committed by a slave. It lays the foundation for running away and going to Canada. They also see in it a love for freedom, patriotism, insurrection, bloodshed, and exterminating war against American slavery.

Hence they are very careful to inquire whether a slave who is for sale can read or write. This question has been asked me often by slave traders and cotton planters, while I was there for market. After conversing with me, they have sworn by their Maker that they would not have me among their negroes and that they saw the devil in my eye; I would run away, &c [etc.].

I have frequently been asked also if I had ever run away, but Garrison would generally answer this question for me in the negative. He could have sold my little family without any trouble for the sum of one thousand dollars. But for fear he might not get me off at so great an advantage, as the people did not like

my appearance, he could do better by selling us all together. They all wanted my wife, while but very few wanted me. He asked twenty-five hundred dollars but was not able to get us off at that price.

Page 103

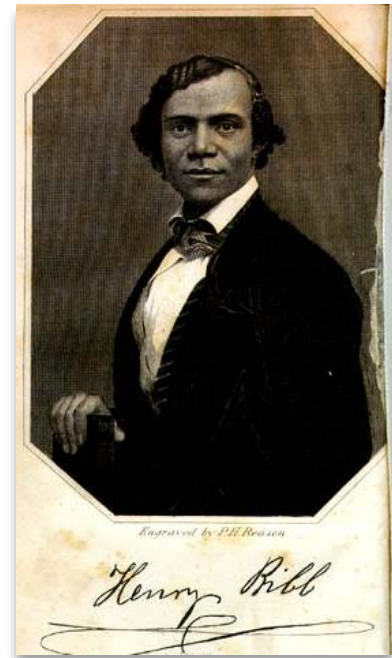
He tried to speculate on my Christian character. He tried to make it appear that I was so pious and honest that I would not run away for ill treatment, which was a gross mistake, for I never had religion enough to keep me from running away from slavery in my life.

But we were taken from Vicksburgh to the city of New Orleans where we were to be sold at any rate. We were taken to a trader's yard or a slave prison on the corner of St. Joseph street. This was a common resort for slave traders and planters who wanted to buy slaves; and all classes of slaves were kept there for sale, to be sold in private or public—young or old, males or females, children or parents, husbands or wives.

Everyday at 10 o'clock they were exposed for sale. They had to be in trim for showing themselves to the public for sale. Everyone's head had to be combed and their faces washed, and those who were inclined to look dark and rough were compelled to wash in greasy dish water, to look slick and lively.

When spectators would come in the yard, the slaves were ordered out to form a line. They were made to stand up straight and look as sprightly as they could; and when they were asked a question, they had to answer it as promptly as they could and try to induce the spectators to buy them. If they failed to do this, they were severely paddled after the spectators were gone. The object for using the paddle in the place of a lash was to conceal the marks which would be made by the flogging. And the object for flogging under such circumstances is to make the slaves anxious to be sold.

The paddle is made of a piece of hickory timber, about one inch thick, three inches in width, and about eighteen inches in length. The part is applied to the flesh is bored full of quarter-inch



Page 104

auger holes, and every time this is applied to the flesh of the victim, the blood gushes through the holes of the paddle or a blister makes its appearance. The persons who are thus flogged are always stripped naked and their hands tied together. They are then bent over double, their knees are forced between their elbows, and a stick is put through between the elbows and the bend of the legs in order to hold the victim in that position, while the paddle is applied to those parts of the body which would not be so likely to be seen by those who wanted to buy slaves.

**DEATH OF HENRY BIBB.**

We are pained to learn of the death of HENRY BIBB, Editor of the, Voice of the Fugitive. He died at Windsor, Canada West, on the first inst., aged 39 years. His life was an eventful one. Born a slave in Kentucky, he toiled in Servitude for 25 years when he effected his own emancipation.— And for ten years past, has labored diligently and faithfully as an anti-slavery editor and lecturer. Especially was Mr. Bibb a fast and well tried friend of his brother refugees. Located as he was at their most important point of entrance to their land of promise he was able and always ready to render them most valuable service. And that too, at a pecuniary expense to himself and his excellent and accomplished wife, which they were often poorly able to sustain. Nevertheless this service seems always to have been done heartily; for the iron had entered his own soul, and he knew how to sympathise with his fugitive bretheren and sisters. Mr. Bibb's devotion to the cause of freedom, had secured for him the esteem and respect of his proscribed bretheren, as well as that of the citizens of Detroit, generally. His death is therefore a real and great loss to the cause of the successful fugitive and of the still bound slave.

We have received for publication the annexed, proceedings of the colored people of Detroit, friends and neighbors of Mr. Bibb. They will speak for themselves :

*On board Steamer Ruby, between Amherstburg, C. W., and Detroit, Michigan, August 1st, 1854.*

The colored citizens of Detroit being on a pleasure excursion in commemoration of the anniversary of the emancipation of 800,000 human beings from chattel slavery in the British West India Islands. George de Baptist, Esq., announced to the assembled company the decease of Henry Bibb, Esq., which took place at Windsor, C. W., at 3 o'clock this morning, (August 1st,) and suggested that the excursion party organize themselves into a meeting to express their sentiments in relation this melancholy event. Whereupon, Rev. William C. Munroe was called to the Chair, and J. Theodore Holly was appointed Secretary. The Chairman made a few remarks on the solemnity of the occasion, and the tremendous loss we all had experienced in having the manly voice of so noble a champion as H. Bibb closed in death, and suggested the appointment of a committee to draft suitable resolutions expressive of the feelings of this meeting in relation to this bereavement. Whereupon, Messrs. William Lambert, Geo. de Baptist and Peter Thomas were appointed said committee.

The committee retired, and after a short absence returned and presented the following preamble and resolutions :

WHEREAS, We have heard the melancholy decease of Henry Bibb, which occurred at 3 o'clock this (Tuesday) morning, at his late residence in Windsor, C. W., therefore,

Resolved, That in his death freedom has lost one of its noblest champions, and humanity one of its brightest ornaments.

Resolved, That we recognize in our deceased companion a true friend and brother, and one who stands among the first on the page of history as the elevator of his race.

Resolved, That the emancipated bondman from American slavery, and the free colored emigrants now in Canada, have lost their chief pillar, and one of their most brilliant advocates.

Resolved, That to his indefatigable labors is to be chiefly attributed the good repute that Canada and her colored inhabitants are fast gaining all over the world.

Resolved, That whilst the pleasures of this festive occasion is marred by this melancholy bereavement, yet it was appropriate that such a grand and sublime life, should come to a close on such an eventful day.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with the bereaved widow, disconsolate mother and grief-stricken brothers who mourn his loss; but we would comfort them with the recollection of the imperishable legacy that his enduring fame bequeaths to them forever.

Resolved, That this meeting requests J.T. Holly, (who was lately associated with the deceased in editing and publishing the Voice of the Fugitive) to deliver an eulogium on the life and character of the deceased, at his earliest convenience.

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be presented to the widow and relatives of the deceased in behalf of this meeting, and published in the Detroit city papers, and the anti-slavery press throughout the United States and Canada.

On motion, the above preamble and resolutions were received by the meeting and adopted unanimously.

After these proceedings, Geo. DeBaptist, Esq., suggested that before the meeting disband, we express our sentiments in relation to our good treatment whilst on this pleasure excursion, and accordingly offered and moved the adoption of the following preamble and resolutions :

WHEREAS, we often experience great disadvantages on Steamboats in consequence of the hateful prejudice against color, and whereas we have on this occasion been treated with the greatest deference and kindest considerations by Capt. Ward, officers and crew of the steamboat *Ruby*, therefore,

Resolved, That we return our hearty and most sincere thanks to Capt. Ward, officers and crew of the steamboat *Ruby* for their gentlemanly conduct in extending to us every hospitality during our excursion to-day, without any indication of this hateful prejudice.

Resolved, That we commend the *Ruby* to the patronage of our philanthropic friends and brethren who may have occasion to travel on her route, or to hire a boat for an excursion.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published with the previous proceedings of this meeting.

These resolutions were supported by Wm. Lambert, put to vote, and adopted unanimously.— (Signed.)

WILLIAM C. MUNROE, Chairman,  
J. THEODORE HOLLY, Sec'y.

Source: *Anti-Slavery Bugle* (Lisbon, Ohio), August 12, 1854.