

[Bibb](#), Henry (1815–1854): fugitive slave narrator and journalist. Henry Bibb is best known through his *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave*, which was first published by Bibb himself in 1849. His *Narrative* provides a superb picture of life on the plantation even as it condemns slavery as inhuman oppression.

Bibb was born on 10 May 1815, one of seven children. His mother was named Mildred Jackson, and his father was Kentucky state senator James Bibb. He was owned by Willard Gatewood on whose plantation he served an early life of misery. His siblings were sold away to other plantations, and in his frustration and anger he attempted escape and suffered horrible punishments.

Bibb was sold to six different owners, ultimately escaping to Detroit, Michigan where he became active in the antislavery movement and abolitionist lecture circuit. Outraged by the passage of the Compromise of 1850 and its Fugitive Slave Act, Bibb is said to have remarked, "If there is no alternative but to go back to slavery, or to die contending for liberty, then death is far preferable," a clear echo of Patrick Henry. As he was an escaped slave, he emigrated to Canada. George Harris, in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, also leaves America for Canada.

In Canada Bibb became a journalist and founded Canada's first Black abolitionist newspaper, *The Voice of the Fugitive*. Bibb devoted much of the decade preceding the Civil War to activities supporting the removal of American slaves to Canada, collaborating with the Underground Railroad. He viewed Canada as a safety zone for escaped Negroes and purchased a two thousand-acre tract of land near [Windsor](#), Ontario, to become a center for [Negro](#) culture. He organized the North American Convention of Colored People, a group that opposed the colonization of African Americans back to [Africa](#). He died young, at age [thirty-nine](#), in 1854.

Adapted from: <http://www.answers.com/topic/henry-bibb>