

## **Educator's Guide**

### **Folktale Productions**

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## **Bobby Norfolk**

### **Henry "Box" Brown and Other Stories of the Underground Railroad**

#### **Henry "Box" Brown and Other Stories of the Underground Railroad (performance with classroom workshops conducted by Sherry Norfolk)**

#### **Performance:**

In this theatrical reenactment, Bobby breathes life into this amazing story of a slave turned hero, along with other tales of ordinary people taking extraordinary risks in the name of freedom.

Henry "Box" Brown was born a slave in Virginia in 1816. After his wife and children were sold to a plantation in South Carolina, he had himself sealed in a small wooden box and shipped to friends and freedom. His narrative was published in 1849 to raise funds so that Brown could purchase freedom for his wife and children. He later traveled the northern states speaking against slavery, but eventually was forced to flee to Great Britain because of the Fugitive Slave Law.

Each 45-minute performance is followed by a 15-minute Question-and-Answer session.

#### **Tennessee Standards Addressed:**

##### **Social Studies**

5.5.01 Understand the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War.

##### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy**

RI.5.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

#### **Classroom Workshops:**

Following the performance, Sherry Norfolk conducts a three-part series of one-hour workshops during which three-person teams research, write and perform historical fiction short stories about freedom-seekers on the Underground Railroad.

Sherry begins with a discussion about Henry "Box" Brown's experience, as well as that of other freedom-seekers, then tells a sample historical fiction story which accurately reflects the experiences of escaping slaves. She'll then discuss the framework of the story, which students will use to create their own historical fiction tales of the Underground Railroad in action, which they will dramatize for the class. Grade-level appropriate research materials are provided.

## **Tennessee Standards Addressed**

### **Social Studies**

5.3.01 Understand how to use maps, globes, and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective.

5.5.01 Understand the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War.

- a. Identify the locations of the southern and northern states

### **CCSS-ELA**

W.5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W.5.3a Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

W.5.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

W.5.3c Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

W.5.3d Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

W.5.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

RI.5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

### **Post-Program Activities**

- **Present the historical fiction skits to other classes, and be prepared to answer follow-up questions during a Q&A session.**
- **Ask students to translate their told stories into written ones. Collect the resulting historical-fiction stories into a book and publish.**
  
- **Discuss how state and national governments and laws affected the lives of African people held as slaves, and how they impacted economic development in the north and south.**
- **Explore the impact of the Abolitionist Movement on state and local governments and laws.**

### **Resources**

#### **Books**

- Hamilton, Virginia. *Many Thousand Gone*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
- Harley, Sharon et al. *The African American Experience*. Globe Book Company, 1992.

#### **Websites**

- [www.historychannel.com](http://www.historychannel.com) <<http://www.historychannel.com>>
- [www.ugrr.org](http://www.ugrr.org) <http://www.ugrr.org>
- <http://www.freedomcenter.org/>
- <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/tl.html>

### **Vocabulary**

Fugitive - Runaway.

Slave- A human being owned by or subject to another as a result of capture, purchase or birth.

Fugitive Slave Law-An 1850 law that required runaway slaves to be returned to their owners.

Abolitionist- A person who worked for an end to slavery in the United States in the 1800's.

Underground Railroad-A system set up by opponents of slavery to help African American slaves escape to the free states of the North and to Canada.

## **Teacher Expectations**

PERFORMANCE: Teachers are the role models for student behavior, so listen actively! Set aside papers and pay attention, just as you expect the children to do! Students should come to the assembly empty-handed and have comfortable seating on the floor or in chairs where everyone can see and hear.

WORKSHOPS: Arts-based residencies offer teachers opportunities new insights into their students' learning styles and innovative approaches to content. Participate with your students in the residency activities, participate with the artist in developing the lesson, participate in the ongoing embedded assessments – you'll be amazed at what you see, hear and learn!

It is recommended that the first session of this workshop be held in the Media Center, with student access to books and internet, and space for students to work in groups of three. Artist will require access to a whiteboard or chalkboard. Students will need writing paper and pencils. Second and third sessions can take place in the classroom.

## **Background Information on Bobby Norfolk**

An internationally known story performer and teaching artist, this three-time Emmy Award winner for the Channel 4 series "Gator Tales," and six-time Parent's Choice honoree is one of the most popular and dynamic story educators in the country today!

St. Louis native Bobby Norfolk began his career as a stand up comedian in area comedy clubs. From there, he worked for 10 years as a National Park Service Ranger presenting historical interpretive programs for school groups and community at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (The Arch and The Old Courthouse). In the evenings, he worked as an actor and director in local community theatres. With a background in comedy and theatre, he naturally turned to storytelling and became a full-time teller in 1987. He is well known for his high-energy performances and lively animation. His stories promote character education, cultural diversity and self-esteem, and are geared for audiences of all ages. Bobby has also served as a board member for the following: St. Louis Storytelling Festival, Missouri Storytelling, and the National Storytelling Network. From park ranger to TV host, recording artist to author, Bobby has traveled an interesting life path that is revealed by his creative stories and crowd-pleasing concerts, enriched with language, movement and clever sound effects. Bobby is truly a gift for the imagination!

Bobby is a graduate of The University of Missouri-St. Louis, and won a Danforth Fellowship in the Metropolitan Leadership Program, 1973/74.

## **Background Information on Sherry Norfolk**

Sherry Norfolk is an exceptionally engaging, dynamic performer, appearing at festivals, schools, museums and libraries nationwide and abroad. Her inviting style draws listeners of all ages into the world of the imagination, offering them a peek through the kaleidoscope of story. Sherry has been applauded at the International Storytelling Center, St. Louis Storytelling Festival, Corn Island Storytelling Festival, Hong Kong International School, Children's Museum of Atlanta, Hawaii State Libraries, and Anchorage Municipal Libraries, just to name a few.

As a teaching artist, she embodies the meaning of the phrase - that is, she is an artist who can not only talk the talk but walk the walk. As a teacher, she leads

residencies and workshops internationally, introducing children and adults to story making and storytelling. She is on the roster of 7 state arts councils, a testimony to her value in the classroom and as a workshop leader. Sherry is co-author with her husband Bobby of *The Moral of the Story: Folktales for Character Development, 2nd Ed.* (August House, 2006), and co-author of *The Storytelling Classroom: Applications Across the Curriculum* (Libraries Unlimited, 2006).

Sherry's dedication to and deep interest in children and literacy have been recognized with national awards from the American Library Association, the Association for Library Service for Children, the National Association of Counties, and the Florida Library Association.

Sherry has a B.S. in Elementary Education and a Masters in Library Science, and has been a professional storyteller since 1981. She tells folktales from around the world, using storytelling as a non-didactic way to teach universal values, elevate understanding and acceptance of other cultures, and enhance literacy skills. Sherry served as a consultant on Turner South's "Stories to Learn By" initiative. Her skills as a performer, teacher, and workshop leader are in demand all over the country.

### **Contact information for Folktale Productions**

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**www.bobbynorfolk.com**

### **Underground Railroad TIMELINE** (from National Geographic.com)

#### **1501—African Slaves in the New World**

Spanish settlers bring slaves from Africa to Santo Domingo (now the capital of the Dominican Republic).

#### **1522—Slave Revolt: the Caribbean**

Slaves rebel on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which now comprises Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

#### **1562—Britain Joins Slave Trade**

John Hawkins, the first Briton to take part in the slave trade, makes a huge profit hauling human cargo from Africa to Hispaniola.

#### **1581—Slaves in Florida**

Spanish residents in St. Augustine, the first permanent settlement in Florida, import African slaves.

#### **1619—Slaves in Virginia**

Africans brought to Jamestown are the first slaves imported into Britain's North American colonies. Like indentured servants, they were probably freed after a fixed period of service.

#### **1662—Hereditary Slavery**

Virginia law decrees that children of black mothers "shall be bond or free according to the condition of the mother."

#### **1705—Slaves as Property**

Describing slaves as real estate, Virginia lawmakers allow owners to bequeath their slaves. The same law allowed masters to "kill and destroy" runaways.

#### **1712—Slave Revolt: New York**

Slaves in New York City kill whites during an uprising, later squelched by the militia. Nineteen rebels are executed.

#### **1739—Slave Revolt: South Carolina**

Crying "Liberty!" some 75 slaves in South Carolina steal weapons and flee toward freedom in Florida (then under Spanish rule). Crushed by the South Carolina militia, the revolt results in the deaths of 40 blacks and 20 whites.

**1775—American Revolution Begins**

Battles at the Massachusetts towns of Lexington and Concord on April 19 spark the war for American independence from Britain.

**1775—Abolitionist Society**

Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia founds the world's first abolitionist society. Benjamin Franklin becomes its president in 1787.

**1776—Declaration of Independence**

The Continental Congress asserts "that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States".

**1783—American Revolution Ends**

Britain and the infant United States sign the Peace of Paris treaty.

**1784—Abolition Effort**

Congress narrowly defeats Thomas Jefferson's proposal to ban slavery in new territories after 1800.

**1790—First United States Census**

Nearly 700,000 slaves live and toil in a nation of 3.9 million people.

**1793—Fugitive Slave Act**

The United States outlaws any efforts to impede the capture of runaway slaves.

**1794—Cotton Gin**

Eli Whitney patents his device for pulling seeds from cotton. The invention turns cotton into the cash crop of the American South—and creates a huge demand for slave labor.

**1808—United States Bans Slave Trade**

Importing African slaves is outlawed, but smuggling continues.

**1820—Missouri Compromise**

Missouri is admitted to the Union as a slave state, Maine as a free state. Slavery is forbidden in any subsequent territories north of latitude 36°30'.

**1822—Slave Revolt: South Carolina**

Freed slave Denmark Vesey attempts a rebellion in Charleston. Thirty-five participants in the ill-fated uprising are hanged.

**1831—Slave Revolt: Virginia**

Slave preacher Nat Turner leads a two-day uprising against whites, killing about 60. Militiamen crush the revolt then spend two months searching for Turner, who is eventually caught and hanged. Enraged Southerners impose harsher restrictions on their slaves.

**1835—Censorship**

Southern states expel abolitionists and forbid the mailing of antislavery propaganda.

**1846-48—Mexican-American War**

Defeated, Mexico yields an enormous amount of territory to the United States. Americans then wrestle with a controversial topic: Is slavery permitted in the new lands?

**1847—Frederick Douglass's Newspaper**

Escaped slave Frederick Douglass begins publishing the *North Star* in Rochester, New York.

**1849—Harriet Tubman Escapes**

After fleeing slavery, Tubman returns south at least 15 times to help rescue several hundred others.

**1850—Compromise of 1850**

In exchange for California's entering the Union as a free state, northern congressmen accept a harsher Fugitive Slave Act.

**1852—*Uncle Tom's Cabin* Published**

Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel about the horrors of slavery sells 300,000 copies within a year of publication.

**1854—Kansas-Nebraska Act**

Setting aside the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Congress allows these two new territories to choose whether to allow slavery. Violent clashes erupt.

**1857—Dred Scott Decision**

The United States Supreme Court decides, seven to two, that blacks can never be citizens and that Congress has no authority to outlaw slavery in any territory.

**1860—Abraham Lincoln Elected**

Abraham Lincoln of Illinois becomes the first Republican to win the United States Presidency.

**1860—Southern Secession**

South Carolina secedes in December. More states follow the next year.

**1861-65—United States Civil War**

Four years of brutal conflict claim 623,000 lives.

**1863—Emancipation Proclamation**

President Abraham Lincoln decrees that all slaves in Rebel territory are free on January 1, 1863.

**1865—Slavery Abolished**

The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution outlaws slavery.