

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Author
Harriet Beecher Stowe

Years Published
1851–52

Original Language
English

THEMES

We Must Stop Slavery!

Uncle Tom's Cabin is a forceful protest against slavery. The goal of producing outrage in readers against the institution is accomplished by telling the story of a noble enslaved man, Uncle Tom, who is wrenched from his family and ultimately killed by a cruel master. His story of faith and fortitude despite great suffering and anguish intertwines with those of other enslaved families who are equally sympathetic characters.

Christianity

In contrast to the immorality at the root of slavery, faith is the beacon of light and source of strength for enslaved people, especially Uncle Tom.

Evil of Slavery

The darkness of slavery is punctuated by the extreme physical and emotional scarring inflicted on enslaved people.

Power of Mothers

The strength of mothers and the moral power they yield to convince those around them of the evils of slavery is displayed repeatedly.

Main Characters

Slaveholder Friends

Family Married

Eliza
Courageous enslaved woman; escapes to keep her son

George
Intelligent, family-centered man; fights for freedom

Eva
Angelic, beautiful child; demonstrates Christian values

Uncle Tom
Enslaved man impassioned by Christianity; noble and bighearted

Simon Legree
Vicious, evil slaveholder; represents Satan

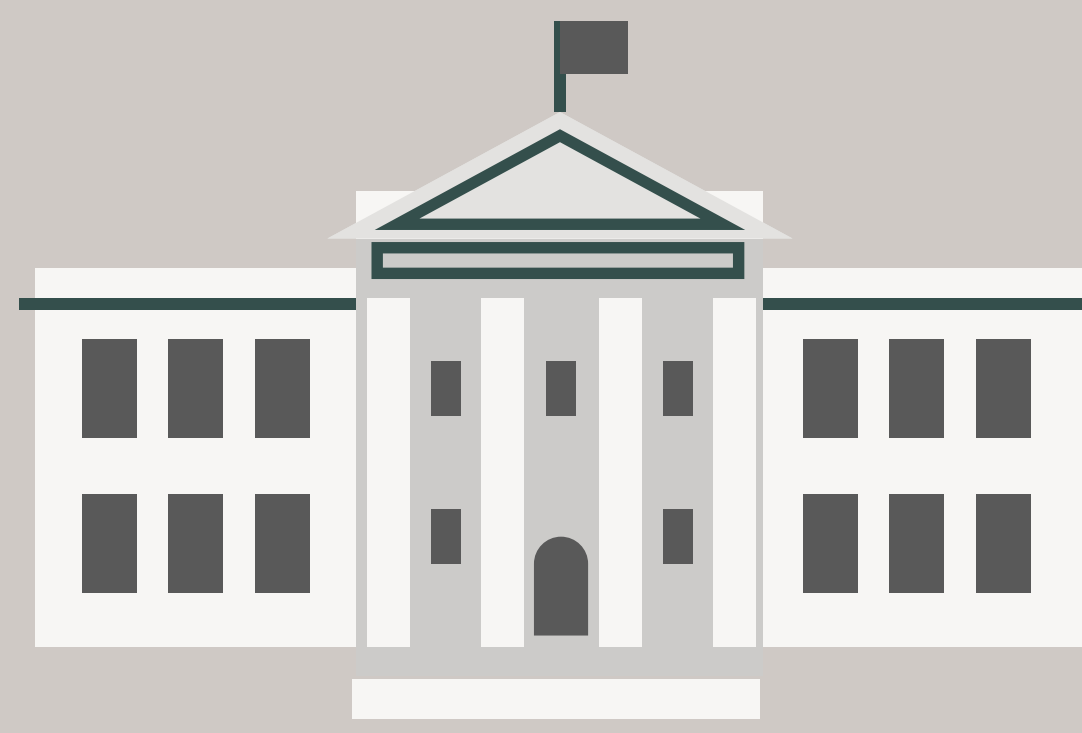
Augustine St. Clare
Pleasure-loving, hypocritical slaveholder

Uncle Tom's Cabin by the Numbers



\$300

Amount Stowe was paid for the serial version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*



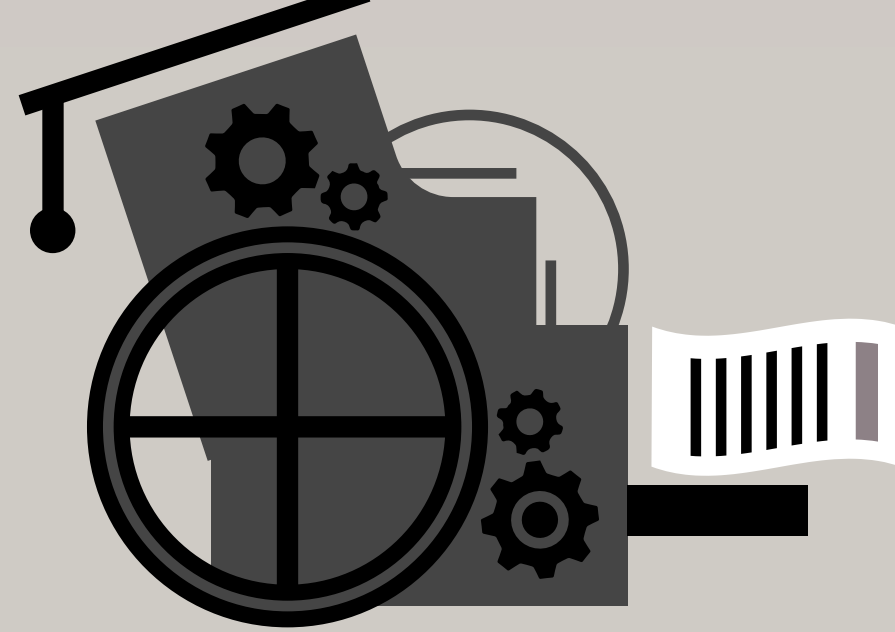
1862

Year Stowe met President Lincoln at the White House



5,000

Copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* originally printed, sold in just two days



>300,000

Copies of the book sold in the United States in the first year

Author



HARRIET BEECHER STOWE
1811–96

The daughter of a minister, Stowe had a sure moral compass and believed she could shape the world. Her talent as a writer and interest in the abolitionist movement combined to give her a strong voice in the antislavery movement through her most famous work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Symbols

Cabin

Symbolizes a place of love where people find rest, peace, and the stability of family

River

Symbolically divides the North—and freedom—from the South

The Bible

Represents hope, comfort, and Uncle Tom's unwavering faith; also used to justify slavery

"Witness, eternal God!" said George, kneeling on the grave of his poor friend; "oh, witness, that, from this hour, I will do what one man can to drive out this curse of slavery from my land!"

Narrator, Chapter 41