



## Biography

### Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth (c.1797-1883) was born into slavery in a Dutch-speaking community in New York State. Her terrible experiences as a slave informed her later denunciations of slavery and racism.

Although she officially secured her freedom in 1826, defiantly escaping bondage, definitive emancipation would only come with her spiritual conversion in 1843. She spent the years prior to the civil war 'sojourning' throughout north-eastern and mid-western states, preaching and teaching on issues such as women's experiences in slavery, religious freedom, and abolition. Her reputation as an orator and teacher quickly grew, a fact made all the more remarkable as English was not her first language.



Sojourner Truth, three-quarter length portrait, standing, wearing spectacles, shawl, and peaked cap, right hand resting on cane, Detroit, 1864.



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During the civil war, she redirected her energies to providing assistance to the Union army, fund-raising, and using her wit and reputation to offer solace and encouragement to African-American soldiers.

After the war, she turned her attentions to combating new problems, such as racial segregation on public transport, the impoverishment of (largely) southern African-American refugees, and unemployment and land shortages among African-Americans. She was also a vocal supporter of universal suffrage. Her astute exploitation of her reputation, through photography and print, helped her to become one of the most well-known orators of the century, and beyond.



Sojourner Truth. Other title: I sell the shadow to support the substance. 1864.