

# Freedom Rising

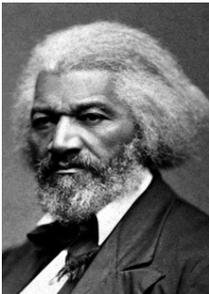
## A NEW YEAR'S STORY

By Beverly Morgan Welch



It is December 1862 and Boston is alive with plans to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln's signature being penned upon the **Emancipation Proclamation**. On January 1, 1863, the Presidential Order to liberate men, women and children enslaved in those states in rebellion during the Civil War is going to be signed. Boston is leading the fight to end slavery; the revelry is expected to be considerable and anticipation is mounting. The momentous occasion is to be called Jubilee Day.

The black community, through the Union Progressive Association appoints William Nell (left), a leader in the Abolitionist and Equal School Rights Movements to head the committee for the festivities. This is to be the largest public celebration, if not the only one, in the Northeast where the giants of the antislavery forces are to be in attendance. Nell's first order of business is to raise the necessary funds for the program of music, speeches, and refreshments to sustain the audience while awaiting word that the proclamation is finally signed.



On January 1, 1863, six thousand gather in Boston and while they are mostly black citizens, their white abolitionist colleagues turn out in numbers too. Apostles of abolition and oratory, Anna Dickinson, Frederick Douglass (left), and William Lloyd Garrison (below) are at Tremont Temple, while literary giants Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Harriet Beecher Stowe hold forth at the Music Hall for the historic event.

When the President signs the Emancipation Proclamation in the afternoon, word does not reach those watching and waiting in Boston until almost midnight. The announcement is read and the crowds throw their hats into the air, shout with joy and sing with gleeful jubilation.



Two days later, President Lincoln issues yet another historic order. He countermands General Ulysses Grant's order to remove all Jewish people from the areas under his command. Grant regrets his stand and, as President, becomes an international ally to Jews.

The Museum of African American History and the Handel and Haydn Society Chorus will commemorate *Emancipation* with a **First Night 150th Anniversary Jubilee Concert at the African Meeting House on Monday, December 31, 2012**. The Meeting House, the nexus of the anti-slavery movement, first serves as a church and then as a synagogue; it is only fitting to celebrate these historic events in this hallowed space.

The First Night event marks the beginning of the Museums presentation of Freedom Rising, the yearlong commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and

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## FREEDOM IS RISING IN 2013!

The Museum of African American History commemorates the Sesquicentennial of the *Emancipation Proclamation* and of the Massachusetts 54<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the first black soldiers from the north to serve in the American Civil War, through *FREEDOM RISING 2013*. A new exhibition and yearlong programming are among the major components, which also include lectures, concerts, Teacher Summer Institutes and children's events in celebration of Boston's black and white abolitionists' roles in these monumental historic events.