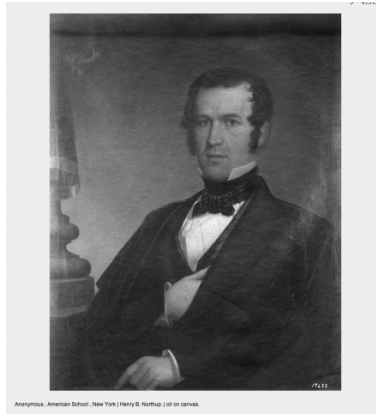




This is the story of how one man's loss (of political office) likely became the conduit for another man's gain (of personal freedom).

The man who rescued Solomon Northup ("Platt Hamilton") was a New York attorney named Henry Bliss Northup.

This image is a black-and-white copy of an [original colored portrait of Henry Northup](#), now owned by Middlebury College (in Vermont). Henry Northup graduated from [Middlebury College](#) in 1829.

Why does Solomon have the same last name as his rescuer, Henry B. Northup? We can't be certain about the actual reason, but it was common for slave families to take on the names of their "masters." History tells us that Henry B. Northup was a relative of the man who was once the "master" of Solomon's father (whose name was Mintus).

After Minus was freed, the Northup family took him in. When Solomon was born, he was given "Northup" as his surname. We don't know why this happened, we just know—for sure—that it did.

At least one of the letters which Samuel Bass wrote on behalf of Solomon Northup, during August of 1852, eventually made its way to Henry B. Northup. It was that letter which caused Henry to take decisive action. His decisive action, however, was delayed for several months.

William Hart, a Professor of History, has researched Henry's story. Excerpts of his work—which shed light on Henry Northup's actions on behalf of Solomon ("Platt")—are [featured at the Middlebury College website](#):

Henry Bliss Northup sought a life in politics and it was those aspirations, Hart theorized, that delayed his journey to Louisiana in 1852 (with legal documents in hand) to free the man who had been kidnapped and sold into slavery.

In August 1852 Solomon Northup [with the indispensable help of Samuel Bass] managed to send letters to friends in the Saratoga Springs area beseeching them for help. We know the letters came to Henry Northup's attention in September, Hart said, but the Middlebury graduate [Henry] was busy running for the U.S. Senate that autumn. He eventually lost the race and set off for Louisiana in December 1852 to prove that Solomon Northup was a free man.

After Henry freed Solomon, he returned to his life in New York. He lived until November of 1877.

Although he accomplished other things in his life, today Henry B. Northup is best-known as the man who saved Platt Hamilton, thereby restoring the forced-slave to a life of freedom which he lived under his own given name—Solomon Northup.

How good was it, for Solomon, that Henry lost the election of 1852?

Credits:

Portrait image of Henry Bliss Northup is a black-and-white version of an original portrait now owned by Middlebury College in Vermont. Historians believe that the original portrait may have been painted by Ezra Ames. He was a well-known creator of portraits in the Albany area (of New York) during the early-19th century. Public Domain.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Henry-B.-Northup-Rescues-Platt-from-Slavery>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Henry-B.-Northup-Rescues-Platt-from-Slavery>