

Cast of Characters –

in order of appearance, with Scenes in which each Character appears

CHARACTER

SCENES

(NOTE – ENTIRE CAST appears in Act III, Scene 4, the FINALE)

Martin Delaney (AA, Adult)	(Introduction)
David Hunter Strother (Adult)	(Introduction)
Railroad Porter (AA, Adult)	(I-1)
Granville Hall (Old Man)	(I-1, I-3, II-1, II-3, III-1, III-3)
Deborah Hall (Child)	(I-1, I-3, II-1, II-3, III-1, III-3)
J.R. Clifford (Old Man, AA)	(I-1, I-3, II-1, II-3, III-1, III-3)
Mary Clifford (AA, Adult)	(I-1, I-3, II-1, II-3, III-1, III-3)
Miss Paxton (Adult, Teacher)	(I-2)
Granville Hall (Child)	(I-2)
Madison (Child)	(I-2)
Elizabeth (Child)	(I-2)
Seth (Child)	(I-2)
Louisa Hall (Child)	(I-2)
Billy (Child)	(I-2)
Joseph (Child)	(I-2)
John Hall (Granville's Father, Adult)	(I-2)
Mary Hall (Granville's Mother, Adult)	(I-2)
J.R. Clifford (Boy, AA)	(I-4)
J.R.'s Cousins (young AA non-speaking roles)	(I-4)
Grandmother Clifford, AA	(I-4)
Satilpa Clifford (JR's Mother), AA	(I-4)
George (Escaped Slave, AA)	(I-4)
Martha (Escaped Slave, AA)	(I-4)
Church Congregation/Choir (10-20 AA, singing only)	(I-4)

Crowd/Observers (10-15 non-speaking mixed age, race)	(II-2)
Convention Delegates (5-10 non-speaking white males)	(II-2)
Julia Pierpont (Adult)	(II-2, III-2)
Granville Hall (Young Man)	(II-2, III-2)
Captain Gordon Battelle	(II-2, III-2)
Archibald Campbell	(II-2, III-2)
Convention Chair	(II-2)
Delegate Raymond	(II-2)
Delegate William Stevenson	(II-2)
J.R. Clifford (Young Man/Soldier)	(II-4)
Private Robinson AA	(II-4)
Private Jefferson AA	(II-4)
Mississippi John AA	(II-4)
Nurse Mays	(III-2)
Francis Pierpont	(III-4)
Abraham Lincoln	(III-4)

“A New Home for Liberty” Brief Character Descriptions

CHILDREN:

J.R. Clifford as a boy, AA, age about 13, precocious, energetic.

J.R.'s Cousins, 3-5, various ages, AA (non-speaking)

Granville Hall as a boy, age about 13; a little shy. Idolizes his parents.

Joshua Hall, younger boy; curious grandson of Grandville Hall

Deborah Hall, younger girl, granddaughter of Granville Hall

Louisa Hall, girl; feisty and outspoken (younger or older) sister of Granville Hall, might be tomboy type

Schoolchildren in Granville's school (I-2), various ages and sizes. **Madison, Seth, and Elizabeth** are speaking roles, the rest are non-speaking. The number of children we can use is flexible.

Children in Church Choir/Congregation, AA, flexible number.

Children in crowd at Wheeling Convention – flexible number, AA and white, with their families.

ADULTS:

J.R. Clifford as an old man, AA, fought in Civil War, started newspaper, WV's first African-American attorney, very determined.

J.R. Clifford as a soldier, AA, young adult; commanding, a leader.

Mary Clifford, young adult, AA; bright and kind daughter of J.R. Clifford, very interested in history, works as a school teacher.

Granville Hall, young adult; reporter at the Wheeling Convention, gifted and idealistic.

Miss Paxton, sympathetic teacher of Granville (as boy).

Soldiers -- AA and white, flexible number, some may be wounded in hospital beds in Gordon Battelle death scene (III-2). AA soldiers **Pvt. Jefferson, Pvt. Robinson, and Mississippi John** have speaking roles in Clifford Campsite Scene II-4, all other soldiers are non-speaking.

Nurses, AA and white, flexible number, (all but **Nurse Mays** non-speaking).

Escaped Slaves George and Martha; AA, Running from the slave catchers, determined to escape and help the Union.

Grandmother Clifford, older woman, A-A; J.R.'s grandmother, matriarch.

Satilpa Clifford, AA; J.R.'s mother, a brave woman who helps runaway slaves escape.

Granville Hall as an old man, has seen a lot but never gives up. Raised in an anti-slavery household, a peacemaker, reporter for the Wheeling Conventions, advocate for the formation of West Virginia and the end of slavery, WV Secretary of State.

John Hall, father of Granville, operates a tannery, flees arrest for having anti-slavery materials, intellectual as well as a small businessman.

Mary Hall, mother of Granville; religious, caring and concerned for her children, supportive of Father John Hall.

Gordon Battelle, delegate at the Wheeling Convention, Union officer, school principal and minister; eloquent and passionate about abolition, selfless and loyal to his troops, has death scene.

Archibald Campbell, Editor of *Wheeling Intelligencer*, against slavery for economic reasons, a businessman.

Convention Chair, impartial and organized.

Delegate Raymond, Delegate from Greenbrier County, considers slaves as property, doesn't want emancipation clause put in WV Constitution.

Delegate William Stevenson, Delegate from Wood County, against slavery.

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President.

Francis Pierpont, First Governor of Loyal Virginia.

Martin Delaney, A-A, Union Officer, cameo in Introduction.

David Hunter Strother – artist, Union Officer, cameo in Introduction.

Railroad Porter, A-A; Prompt and helpful, must sing .

Crowd and Delegates in Wheeling Convention Scene– Delegates are white males in non-speaking roles, Crowd are both white and AA, mixed men and women, all are non-speaking.

Church Choir/Congregation – 10-20, AA, singers.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(To be inserted)

CAMEO WELCOME BY MARTIN DELANEY

Good evening. I am Martin Delaney, and it is an honor to be here in Jefferson County, where I was born in ____, and to share this evening with you.

When I served as a Major in the Union Army in the Civil War, I saw thousands of ordinary people -- whites and blacks, men and women -- courageously risking their lives for liberty.

Many of those brave people paid the ultimate sacrifice -- in the cause of liberty and equality for all people.

Tonight, we honor their role in creating the State of West Virginia.

CAMEO WELCOME BY DAVID HUNTER STROTHER

Good evening. I am David Hunter Strother, also known as Porte Crayon. I was born in Berkeley County in _____, and my family had been in Northern Virginia for generations.

I was in the courtroom in Charles Town, when John Brown said that he had come to believe that blood must be spilled -- before slavery was ended in this Nation.

Two years later, Brown's prophecy proved to be correct. Secessionist mobs in Richmond ran the pro-Union Delegates from Western Virginia out of town -- because they wanted Virginia to stay in the Nation that my ancestors helped create.

I hated war, and I loved the land where I was born and raised. But I never regretted taking a stand, and risking my life for the Union -- and my new Home State of West Virginia -- a New Home for Liberty.

ACT 1 - SCENE 1

1913, at the B&O Railroad Station in Parkersburg, West Virginia

PORTER

[PORTER is at center stage with a push broom. As the CHOIR enters and sings, PORTER sweeps the platform.]

CHOIR

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the list’ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith
that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope
that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

[As the song ends, the CHOIR exits]

[PORTER goes down right to get a suitcase]

PORTER *[loudly]*

Paging Mr. Granville Hall! Paging Mr. Granville Hall!

GRANVILLE HALL

[GRANVILLE HALL enters with DEBORAH]

Here, porter! Here I am!

I’m Granville Hall!

PORTER

Mr. Hall, here is your suitcase. It was just delivered from the hotel.

GRANVILLE HALL

Thank you very much.

[GRANVILLE HALL takes suitcase, tips PORTER. PORTER exits.]

Deborah, our train to Clarksburg leaves in about a half an hour. I want you to stay close to me. This station can get pretty crowded.

DEBORAH HALL

Yes, Grandpa.

[J.R. CLIFFORD and MARY CLIFFORD enter, and approach GRANVILLE HALL.]

J.R. CLIFFORD

Excuse me, sir. I overheard that porter call your name.

Are you the same Granville Hall who served as West Virginia Secretary of State, fifty years ago?

GRANVILLE HALL

Yes, I am that Granville Hall. And who are you, sir?

J.R. CLIFFORD

My name is John Robert Clifford. I am an attorney and publisher in Martinsburg.

GRANVILLE HALL

You have me at a disadvantage, Mr. Clifford. Have we met before?

J.R. CLIFFORD

No, sir, we have not, but I know my West Virginia history. I believe I read that that as a young man, you took down the records of the Wheeling Statehood Conventions. If that correct?

GRANVILLE HALL

You are correct, Mr. Clifford. For a young man it was a great honor and opportunity to be a small part of creating our new State of West Virginia, just fifty years ago.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Do you live here in Parkersburg, Mr. Hall?

GRANVILLE HALL

No, Mr. Clifford, I live in Chicago now. But many of my family still live here.

This is my granddaughter Deborah, and we are on our way to meet her cousins in Clarksburg at the West Virginia Day Celebration.

Say "Hello" to Mr. Clifford, Deborah.

DEBORAH

Hello, Mr. Clifford.

We're going to a Fiftieth Birthday Party for West Virginia!

J.R. CLIFFORD

Well, Happy Birthday! I'm pleased to meet you.

Mr. Hall, Deborah, let me introduce my daughter, Mary Clifford. Mary is a history teacher in Martinsburg, which is our home. We have come to Parkersburg for a political meeting.

GRANVILLE HALL, DEBORAH HALL

Hello, Miss Clifford.

MARY CLIFFORD

It's a pleasure to meet you.

If you don't mind my asking, Mr. Hall, how old were you when West Virginia was created?

GRANVILLE HALL

Miss Clifford, I was born in 1837, and that means I was just 24 years old in 1861, when the Wheeling Statehood Convention began.

MARY CLIFFORD

How about you, Dad? How old were you when West Virginia was created?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Let's see, Mary, I was born in 1848. So in 1861 I was 13 years old, and living with my family on our farm near Moorefield. That was shortly before they sent me to Chicago.

GRANVILLE HALL

So you lived in Chicago, Mr. Clifford? That is where I live now.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Please, Mr. Hall, call me "J.R." -- everyone else does.

Yes, I lived in Chicago. My parents sent me to stay with friends after the Civil War started. Chicago is where I first went to school, and learned to read and write.

MARY CLIFFORD

Is that where you enlisted in the Army, Dad -- in Chicago?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Yes, I put aside my schoolbooks, and I joined the United States Colored Troops.

GRANVILLE HALL

That was very brave of you, J.R..

And please, call me "Granville." We are both too old to stand on ceremony.

MARY CLIFFORD

When Father talks about those times and our family, when he was a boy and there was slavery all around them, it sounds dreadful.

Mr. Hall, if you don't mind my asking -- how was it with you, back then? How did your family feel about slavery, when you were a boy?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Mary Clifford, that is a very personal question!

GRANVILLE HALL

J.R., I don't mind that question at all. It's important for all these young people to know about our history; and I admire your daughter's curiosity.

Miss Clifford, J.R. -- if you have a moment, please take a seat, and I will answer that question with a story from my childhood.

J.R. CLIFFORD

It would be an honor, Granville.

GRANVILLE HALL

Deborah, you listen, too. This story is about your great-grandparents -- my mother, Mary Hall, and my father, John Hall. They were very brave people.

It was in about 1850, when I was 13 years old. My sister Louisa and I were in our little one-room school in Shinnston.

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 1 - SCENE 2

[Inside a one-room schoolhouse]

MISS PAXTON

Children, please pay attention!

Granville Hall, come up here and show the class where we live.

GRANVILLE HALL

We're right here, Miss Paxton, in Shinnston, right next to Clarksburg.

MISS PAXTON

And who knows where the capitol of Virginia is?

SEVERAL SCHOOLCHILDREN

[unison]

I know, I know!

MISS PAXTON

[selects MADISON]

Come up and show the class, Madison.

MADISON

The capitol of Virginia is waayyy over here -- in Richmond.

ELIZABETH

Miss Paxton, why is the state capitol so far away from us? My mother says the people over there in Richmond don't even know we exist!

MISS PAXTON

Madison, when they made Richmond the capitol of Virginia, there were hardly any people living here in the western part of the state. Today it is different.

GRANVILLE HALL

My father says we need a new state, so we can run our own affairs. He says the slave-owners are running the state for themselves.

MISS PAXTON

Louisa, your father has a right to his opinion. But the law is the law, and right now the laws are made in Richmond, and we must obey them.

It's time for recess, children. Don't be late coming back to class!

[SCHOOLCHILDREN line up and exit schoolhouse to exterior. Seth is last and pushes through the others to get to Granville. Miss Paxton remains at her desk inside.]

SETH

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

SCHOOLCHILDREN

[Unison chant]

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

LOUISA HALL (to Seth)

You can't call my brother names! You take that back, or I'll beat you up!

SETH

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

SCHOOLCHILDREN

[taunting]

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

[MISS PAXTON hears the commotion and goes outside to recess area]

MISS PAXTON

Children, children, what are you yelling about?

SETH

Miss Paxton, Granville Hall is a 'blishonist, and he's going to jail!

MISS PAXTON

Stop this foolishness. No one is going to jail.

Granville and Louisa Hall, your mother and father are coming for you. You wait here for them. The rest of you children, play nicely.

[MISS PAXTON goes back inside. SETH teases GRANVILLE HALL.]

SETH

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville's going to jail!

[JOHN HALL and MARY HALL come on stage. Seth sees them and runs back to other children stage right.]

LOUISA HALL

What's wrong, Mother?

JOHN HALL

Children, we have something very serious to discuss with you.

GRANVILLE HALL

Dad, those kids called me a "blishonist". What's a "blishonist"?

MARY HALL

Granville, the word is "abolitionist." It means a person who is against slavery. You know that your father and I believe that slavery is against God's will.

LOUISA HALL

I saw some colored children in Clarksburg last month, all chained together. Father, those children were just my age, and they were sold to the cotton plantations down south.

MARY HALL

Louisa, those slaves do not have rights like we do. If they run away from their master, they can be put in jail, or whipped, or worse.

GRANVILLE HALL

What about us, Father? Why did Seth say I was going to jail? I'm not a slave!

JOHN HALL

Granville, those children misunderstood something they heard. No one is going to put you in jail.

But the Sheriff is looking for me. The Grand Jury wants to arrest me and our neighbor Mr. Hart, because we have been getting anti-slavery newspapers.

LOUISA HALL

Are you going to jail? What about us and mother?

GRANVILLE HALL

Father, I am frightened.

JOHN HALL

I'm not frightened, I'm mad! This is the United States of America. And we can read whatever newspapers we want!

GRANVILLE HALL

Father, what can we do, when we know slavery is wrong?

JOHN HALL

Children, please don't worry. I believe change is coming. We must be firm in what we believe. God will protect us.

MARY HALL

You both have to be brave. If we can get the charges dismissed, your father can return home.

[BILLY sees the Sheriff off left and runs across the stage towards the Halls.]

BILLY

The Sheriff is on his way !!

MARY HALL

Children, your father has to go now. Say "Goodbye."

JOHN HALL

[JOHN HALL hugs LOUISA, then GRANVILLE, and then puts his hands on their shoulders].

Granville and Louisa, while I am gone, you must not let what some people may say hurt you, or make you angry. Remember, they called our Lord bad names, too. You can handle some bad names.

GRANVILLE and LOUISA HALL

We will, Father. Good-bye.

JOHN HALL

[Takes MARY HALL'S hand]

Good-bye, children.

MARY HALL

Stay here children. I'll be back shortly.

[JOHN HALL and MARY HALL leave stage. GRANVILLE HALL and LOUISA HALL remain on stage. SCHOOLCHILDREN come back on stage and approach GRANVILLE HALL and LOUISA HALL]

ELIZABETH

Granville and Louisa, what's going on?

GRANVILLE HALL

The Sheriff wants to put my father in jail – because he's against slavery.

SETH

I heard your Dad was a "*blishonist*," too.

ELIZABETH

Seth Goodheart, you are dumb as a post.

An abolitionist *is* a person who's against slavery. It's the same thing!

MARGARET

Well, lots of people in our church are against slavery, and anyhow we don't have any slaves here in Shinnston.

SETH

But the rich people over in Clarksburg have slaves. And I'm going to be rich, too, and I'm going to have slaves.

ELIZABETH

That's because you don't like to work, Seth.

LOUISA

I've seen slave children, and they are people just like you and me.

Except they were chained up to be sold, and that's not right!

I'm against slavery and I don't care who knows it, in Virginia or anywhere else.
And I can whip anyone who doesn't like it!

JOSEPH

My father says that the problem is the government in Richmond.

GRANVILLE HALL

I don't know much about government. But I do know my folks are good Christian folks, and I want to be just like them when I grow up.

SETH

But isn't your father running away, Granville? He's running scared, just like the slaves who take off for Ohio!

[LOUISA HALL assumes a fighting stance]

GRANVILLE HALL *[to SETH]*

If I were you, I'd be running, too – because my sister is gonna whip you!

LOUISA HALL *[As she chases SETH]*

You take that back. My daddy is the bravest man around!

[SETH runs off the stage, chased by LOUISA HALL. As SETH leaves, he hollers back]

SETH

Granville is a 'blishonist, Granville is a 'blishonist!

[The other SCHOOLCHILDREN follow them. GRANVILLE HALL remains onstage, turns and looks to spot where parents exited.]

GRANVILLE HALL

Oh, Father, be safe!

[LOUISA HALL comes back onstage, and takes GRANVILLE HALL's hand, and tugs at him]

LOUISA HALL

Come on, Gran, it's going to be OK, like Mom said.

GRANVILLE HALL

I'm coming, but I'm worried, Sis.

[GRANVILLE and LOUISA are center stage as lights fade out]

END SCENE

ACT 1 – SCENE 3

[Train Station]

MARY CLIFFORD

Wow, that's quite a story! What happened to your Father, Mr. Hall?

GRANVILLE HALL

Dad came back from Ohio after a couple of months, when they dropped the charges. It was just political – the courthouse crowd was trying to please some of the wealthy slave owners in our county, who were afraid of losing their property.

MARY CLIFFORD

I never thought about white people getting into trouble for being against slavery. I guess "abolitionist" was a dirty word when you were a boy.

GRANVILLE HALL

Being an abolitionist was a crime when I was a boy. Miss Clifford, there were many whites, like my parents, who hated slavery. Most of them were afraid to speak their true feelings -- and I can understand why.

J.R. CLIFFORD

I think you are right, Granville. When I was a boy growing up near Moorefield, I played with white children who lived nearby. Their parents were small farmers who did not have slaves.

DEBORAH

Were you a slave, Mr. Clifford?

GRANVILLE HALL

Deborah, now that *is* a personal question!

J.R., please forgive my granddaughter.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Not at all – Deborah is like my daughter Mary – curious and not afraid of the truth! Good for her!

No, young lady, I was never a slave, but my ancestors were. My great-grandfather was freed by his master; and my parents were free. My father, Isaac, owned a small farm. We were not slaves, but because of our ancestry we had no rights. We paid taxes but could not vote or travel without a pass. And we had no schools or teachers.

When I was a boy, I used to haul corn to town in a wagon with my father. We passed the big farms and sawmills where there were many slaves. When the masters needed money, they would sell the slave children, like animals, to the cotton plantations down South.

DEBORAH

Did the slaves ever escape? Where could they go?

If I was a slave, I would do anything to get free!

J. R. CLIFFORD

Young lady, let me answer your question -- if you will -- with a story from *my* childhood.

GRANVILLE HALL

Please do, J.R. One old story deserves another!

MARY CLIFFORD

Yes, Dad – we want to hear.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Very well. It was in the early summer of 1861, and I was living with at home on the farm with my family, and the Civil War had just begun. It was around supper time, and my cousins and I had just come in from working in the cornfield.

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 1 – SCENE 4

[JR & COUSINS come in from off stage, playing]

J.R. CLIFFORD

Grandmother, where are you? We're done hoeing corn and we're hungry!

GRANDMOTHER

[From offstage]

Did you all scrape off your shoes before you came on the porch?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Yes, Grandma.

GRANDMOTHER [enters]

Wash your hands, and you can serve yourselves.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Grandma, what's going on? We heard horses tearing down the main road!

GRANDMOTHER

Here comes your mother, J.R. She can tell you about those riders.

[SATILPA CLIFFORD enters and comes toward the porch.]

SATILPA CLIFFORD

[addressing COUSINS and J.R. CLIFFORD]

I want all of you children to sit here and listen; you must be quiet. There is a posse around here, looking for two escaped slaves from Moorefield.

[GRANDMOTHER and the two escaped slaves, GEORGE and MARTHA (his wife) come from behind house.]

GRANDMOTHER

These people cannot stay here. That posse will find them for sure. And I have to take these children to church in just a few minutes.

You have to get them on the road North, quickly!

SATILPA CLIFFORD

I know, Mother.

J.R. CLIFFORD [to *GEORGE* and *MARTHA*]

Are you going to Pennsylvania? Father says now that the war has begun, lots of slaves are running away.

GRANDMOTHER

Hush, J.R. Don't bother these people. They have no time for your questions.

MARTHA

There's no problem, sister. Our children need to know. Yes, young brother, we are going North. If we can reach the Union lines, we'll be safe.

GEORGE

Yes, and I can join the Union Army, and fight for freedom.

Last year my master sold our son to a cotton plantation down South -- and if I have to fight my way to Mississippi to bring him back, I will. And I swear on my life, that no child of ours will ever be born a slave.

GRANDMOTHER

But if that posse catches you, you will hang! You must flee, now!

SATILPA CLIFFORD

We'll try to keep you from the gallows, but we must hurry.

J.R., I'm going to get these folks on their way to Cumberland. You children stay close to the farmhouse.

J.R. CLIFFORD & COUSINS

Yes, mother. Yes, ma'am.

[SATILPA CLIFFORD and the two ESCAPED SLAVES move down left. J.R. CLIFFORD speaks to GRANDMOTHER.]

J.R. CLIFFORD

Grandmother, what will happen to the people who are slaves, now that there is a War?

GRANDMOTHER

J.R., they are talking in Wheeling about breaking off from Virginia, and starting a new State of West Virginia. Maybe that will bring an end to slavery. But with a war, who can say?

J.R. CLIFFORD

I know what I'm going to do! I'm going to fight for freedom!

COUSINS

[all, loudly, breaking into play battles]

I'm going to fight for freedom, too! Me too! Take that, Johnny Reb!

GRANDMOTHER

Hush, children. You heard what your mother said - be quiet!

Now get your things, we will be late for church services.

SATILPA CLIFFORD begins singing to GEORGE and MARTHA, instructing them. J.R. CLIFFORD, COUSINS, and GRANDMOTHER prepare for church.

*Wade in the water
Wade in the water, children,
Wade in the water
God's a-going to trouble the water*

Lights go down on farmhouse scene, and come up on CHOIR, in robes. J.R. CLIFFORD, COUSINS, and GRANDMOTHER join CHOIR in singing "Wade in the Water."

*See that host all dressed in white
God's a-going to trouble the water
The leader looks like the Israelite
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*See that band all dressed in red
God's a-going to trouble the water
Looks like the band that Moses led
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*Look over yonder, what do you see?
God's a-going to trouble the water
The Holy Ghost a-coming on me
God's a-going to trouble the water*

*If you don't believe I've been redeemed
God's a-going to trouble the water
Just follow me down to the Jordan's stream
God's a-going to trouble the water*

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 2 – SCENE 1

[Train Station]

GRANVILLE HALL

J.R., your family were brave people.

DEBORAH

Mr. Clifford, did your mother get those slaves to safety?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Yes, my mother knew all the tricks for escaping the slave-catchers.

DEBORAH

I like that song, “Wade in the Water.” What does it mean?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Deborah, they say that Harriet Tubman sang that song to tell the escaping slaves to stay in the streams, so the dogs would not catch their scent.

DEBORAH

Grandfather, what were you doing when the Civil War started?

GRANVILLE HALL

Deborah, when the War started I was working for a newspaper called the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, run by Archibald Campbell.

Because I was good at shorthand, the leaders of the New State movement hired me to take down the speeches at the Statehood Convention in Wheeling.

MARY CLIFFORD

What was it like in Wheeling in those days, Mr. Hall?

GRANVILLE HALL

Wheeling was a bustling city. There were factories and railroads, warehouses and riverboats. The streets were crowded with wagons, full of war supplies. The sidewalks were packed with people.

When the Convention was in session, everyone came to the Customs House. People crowded inside and outside -- to listen to the Delegates debate about the new State.

DEBORAH

What did they say about slavery, Grandpa?

GRANVILLE HALL

Some of the Delegates owned slaves, and they wanted to avoid the subject of slavery entirely. Other thought that if we did not agree to end slavery, we could never get a new state admitted into the Union.

I remember the day when a great man, Captain Gordon Battelle, spoke against slavery. Before he spoke, there was a big rally outside the Customs House. The Hutchinson Family sang. The Hutchinson Family was one of the most popular singing groups of the day, and they were strongly against slavery. They even sang for President Lincoln!

SCENE ENDS

ACT 2 – SCENE 2

[As the CROWD and DELEGATES enter (possibly from the audience), we hear the HUTCHINSON FAMILY singing “GET OFF THE TRACK.”]

[Then the action shifts to the Convention Hall. Stage Right, just outside of the Convention Hall, JULIA PIERPONT is with ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL. They meet GORDON BATTELLE.]

JULIA PIERPONT

Good morning, Captain Battelle.

GORDON BATTELLE

Good Morning, Mrs. Pierpont. I trust that Governor Pierpont is well.

JULIA PIERPONT

He is well, thank you. He is in Alexandria, reviewing our loyal Virginia troops.

Captain, you know the editor, Archibald Campbell? And Mr. Campbell, of course you know Captain Gordon Battelle, one of our leading Delegates.

GORDON BATTELLE

Good morning, Mr. Campbell. Tell me, Mr. Campbell, what does your newspaper hear from the front?

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

Captain, thanks to General McClellan, the railroad is in our hands all the way to Baltimore.

Now is the time to get our new State of West Virginia into the Union -- while we have the upper hand!

Will you excuse me for a moment, please? I want to say hello to young Granville Hall before the Session starts.

[ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL leaves group and enters the Hall, moving over to GRANVILLE HALL, who is standing at a desk].

Good morning, young Granville. How is your arm holding up with all this note-taking?

GRANVILLE HALL

I am doing well, Mr. Campbell.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

When are you coming back to work, Granville? The war news is overwhelming. I need your help!

GRANVILLE HALL

Mr. Campbell, I will be back with you as soon as this session of the Convention is over.

[GORDON BATTELLE joins them].

Good morning Captain Battelle. I am looking forward to hearing you speak about the slavery issue today.

GORDON BATTELLE

Some Delegates would like to avoid the slavery issue, but I know we cannot. Congress will never approve our new state if we do not address slavery in our new Constitution.

Wouldn't you agree, Mr. Campbell?

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

Of course I agree! Our factories don't need illiterate slaves; we need educated workers. Our businesses in Western Virginia rely on wages -- not the whip!

[CROWD and DELEGATES have been finding seats and moving around]

GRANVILLE HALL

Excuse me, I think the Chair is about to call the Convention to order. I must begin my reporting duties.

CONVENTION CHAIR [raps gavel]

The Chair holds that a quorum is present, and calls this meeting to order.

[People take their seats, including some of the CROWD, and DELEGATES. BATTELLE stands.]

The Chair recognizes the Delegate from Ohio County, Gordon Battelle.

GORDON BATTELLE

Mr. Chairman, I offer the following resolution: “Resolved: on and after the 4th day of July, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall cease within the limits of the new State of West Virginia.”

DELEGATES [some]

Hear, hear!

CONVENTION CHAIR [raps gavel]

Order, order! A Resolution has been proposed. Is there discussion?

The Chair recognizes Delegate Raymond from Greenbrier County.

DELEGATE RAYMOND

Mr. Chairman, the issue of slavery will divide this body. There are more than ten thousand Negro slaves in Western Virginia, and they represent great wealth to some of our leading citizens.

How can we ask these men to support a new State, if it means they will lose their property?

If nothing more is said about slavery here, I think all opposition to our new state will cease. I move to table Mr. Battelle's resolution, and I ask Mr. Battelle never to mention slavery here again.

DELEGATES *[some]*

Hear, Hear! Hear, hear!

CONVENTION CHAIR

Order, I said! The Chair recognizes Delegate William Stevenson from Wood County.

DELEGATE WILLIAM STEVENSON

Mr. Chairman, we have come here because we do not want to be a part of the Confederacy, which was formed to protect and perpetuate slavery.

If we wish to have a new State that is part of the United States, we must renounce slavery, even if some people must give up their slaves.

DELEGATES *[some]*

Bravo! Well said! Hear, Hear! Hear, hear!

CONVENTION CHAIR

The Chair recognizes Delegate Battelle to close the debate.

[During the following, ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL exits the Hall and returns to JULIA PIERPONT]

GORDON BATTELLE

Mr. Chairman, the injuries which slavery inflicts upon our own people are manifold and obvious. It practically aims to enslave not merely another race, but *our own race*.

It inserts in its bill of rights some very high sounding phrases securing the freedom of speech; and then puts *a lock on every man's mouth and a seal on every man's lips* who will not shout for and swear by the divinity of the slavery system.

CROWD/DELEGATES *[some]*

A new home for liberty! A new home for liberty!

CONVENTION CHAIR

Order, order!

[Lights down on Convention, up on crowd outside]

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

What do you think, Mrs. Pierpont -- will the Convention accept Captain Battelle's resolution? If it passes, some of our Statehood Delegates would lose their "valuable property."

JULIA PIERPONT

Slavery is growing weaker every day. I believe that the day of reckoning is here, and Justice is wielding her terrible swift sword.

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 2 – SCENE 3

[Train Station]

J.R. CLIFFORD

Captain Battelle was a wonderful speaker, Granville.

But his eloquent words did not carry the day, did they?

GRANVILLE HALL

J.R., you *do* know your West Virginia history.

Captain Battelle's resolution was tabled, on a very close vote. 23 Delegates voted with Captain Battelle, but 24 voted to cut off any further discussion of slavery.

MARY CLIFFORD

What happened, Mr. Hall?

GRANVILLE HALL

The Wheeling Convention sent Congress a West Virginia Constitution that did not say anything about slavery.

We didn't know how Congress would react. Would all our work be for nothing?

J.R. CLIFFORD

I remember that time, too, Granville.

I was in a Union Army camp by then, and all of the soldiers were wondering what we would face after the war was over.

MARY CLIFFORD

Tell us more about when you were in the Army, Dad.

DEBORAH

Yes, Mr. Clifford, we want to hear about when you were in the Army.

GRANVILLE HALL

Yes, please do, J.R.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Very well. As I told you, after the War started, my parents sent me to Chicago. After I could read, I read the newspaper every day.

One day I read a speech by Frederick Douglas. He said that colored men who wanted freedom must fight for it. The next day I went down to the recruiting office, and enlisted in the United States Colored Troops,

After our training in Kentucky, they made me the corporal in charge of our artillery unit. We were in several battles, and many of our troops were killed.

One night, one of my men from Mississippi was badly wounded. In the morning, when the fighting was over, we made our way back to camp.

SCENE ENDS

ACT 2 – SCENE 4

[Scene is a military camp. MISSISSIPPI JOHN, who has a bloody dressing on his head is found lying on a cot. J.R. CLIFFORD and the other COLORED SOLDIERS enter.]

J.R. CLIFFORD

Private Robinson, did you send for a medic for Mississippi John?

PRIVATE ROBINSON

Yes, Corporal Clifford.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Private Jefferson, you check that dressing on John's wound.

PRIVATE JEFFERSON

Yes, Corporal Clifford!

J.R. CLIFFORD

We fought bravely yesterday. With that kind of spirit, we can win this war.

PRIVATE ROBINSON

Corporal Clifford, after the War is over, are you going back to where your family live?

J.R. CLIFFORD

I hope so. They want to create a new state called West Virginia, and to join the Union. But no one knows if they can do it, or what it will be like.

PRIVATE ROBINSON

What about the white people in West Virginia? Aren't some of them fighting for the Rebels?

J. R. CLIFFORD

You're right, Private Robinson. But no one said that freedom is going to be easy.

PRIVATE ROBINSON

How about you, Mississippi John? Will you go home after the war?

MISSISSIPPI JOHN [halting speech]

I don't know. In Mississippi, I was chained and beaten like a dog.

What about you, Robinson?

PRIVATE ROBINSON

I guess I am going back to my family in Virginia -- no matter how hard it is there.

Corporal Clifford, do you think they will give us the right to vote after the war?

J.R. CLIFFORD

"Give" us the right to vote? Nobody's going to "give" me anything!

Colored soldiers are fighting and dying to win this war, just like white soldiers. I earned my rights – and I'm going to take them!

MISSISSIPPI JOHN [haltingly]

Corporal Clifford, can we hear that speech from Frederick Douglass?

I would like to hear it one more time.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Sure, John.

[Gestures to one of the Soldiers who reads it]

COLORED SOLDIER

"Men of Color – to Arms!

"Who would be free themselves must strike the blow....I urge you to fly to arms and smite to death the power that would bury the Government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave.

"This is your golden opportunity. Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship."

PRIVATE ROBINSON

(Softly) Amen, Brother.

[MISSISSIPPI JOHN'S head slumps.]

PRIVATE JEFFERSON

Corporal Clifford, I think Mississippi John has stopped breathing!

J.R. CLIFFORD

He's gone.

[Pause, in tribute...]

A brave young man from Mississippi gave his life for liberty and justice – for all.

Private Robinson, you get a burial detail in here for John.

PRIVATE JEFFERSON

Come on, Mr. "West Virginia!" If we can win this war, there's a new state waiting for you!

[End of Scene.]

ACT 3 – SCENE 1

[Train station]

MARY CLIFFORD

Dad, you were very brave to fight for our freedom.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Mary, I was lucky not to be killed. Men like Mississippi John gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Granville, I believe Captain Battelle also gave the ultimate sacrifice, did he not?

GRANVILLE HALL

Yes, he did. The last time I saw Captain Battelle was at a Union Army camp near Alexandria. Deborah, you listen closely now, and I will tell more about this West Virginia hero.

DEBORAH

Yes Grandpa.

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 3 – SCENE 2

[in a battlefield hospital tent]

GRANVILLE HALL

Excuse me, Nurse, My name is Granville Hall, and this is Julia Pierpont, the wife of Governor Francis Pierpont. We are here to visit Captain Gordon Battelle.

NURSE MAYS

Captain Battelle is here, Mr. Hall, but he is not well.

JULIA PIERPONT

Oh -- he was ill when he left Wheeling, and we begged him not to come. But he said it was his duty to be among his troops.

NURSE MAYS

I will tell *you* -- but you must not tell Captain Battelle, for it would only burden him.

He is not likely to last the day.

GRANVILLE HALL

Oh, my God!

NURSE MAYS

I have seen many people die of camp fever, and I know the signs. The end comes quickly.

GRANVILLE HALL

Please, may we see him?

NURSE MAYS

Of course.

[NURSE MAYS leads them to GORDON BATTELLE's bedside, where he is cared for by a runaway slave NURSE].

GORDON BATTELLE

My dear Julia – and young Granville Hall -- what are you doing here?

GRANVILLE HALL

We have come to bring you the latest news from Wheeling, Captain.

How are you feeling?

GORDON BATTELLE *[waving his hand dismissively]*

As well as can be expected. I have some wonderful nurses who keep my spirits up. Many of them are escaped slaves, who have sought shelter in our camp.

So tell me, how goes our new State of West Virginia?

JULIA PIERPONT

Congress has finally passed the West Virginia Statehood Bill, but with a condition.

As you predicted, Congress insisted that we put an emancipation clause in the new West Virginia constitution, bringing slavery to an end – or they will not accept West Virginia in the Union.

[GORDON BATTELLE slumps in pain.]

GRANVILLE HALL

Nurse!

JULIA PIERPONT

Gordon, I promise you – we will not rest until every West Virginia child, whatever their color, is free.

[GORDON BATTELLE is too weak to respond.]

NURSE MAYS (to GORDON BATTELLE)

Shall I sing you a hymn?

GORDON BATTELLE

That would be wonderful.

[NURSE MAYS sits and sings softly, "Amazing Grace"]

GORDON BATTELLE

[Over the singing]

Tell me, young Granville . . . do you remember our mass meetings in Clarksburg and Fairmont, when the War began? The slave owners called us . . . traitors . . . because we would not leave the Union, just so they could continue to hold people in bondage.

GRANVILLE HALL

I shall never forget those heady days, Captain.

GORDON BATTELLE

It seems like a lifetime ago. I long for the day when I can return to my students, and my family and church.

GRANVILLE HALL

You have fought hard, Captain -- and now you must rest. We will continue the struggle.

[GORDON BATTELLE closes his eyes. NURSE MAYS covers GORDON BATTELLE'S eyes and gestures to NURSE to tend to him. GRANVILLE and JULIA PIERPONT see he is dead.]

GRANVILLE HALL

Mrs. Pierpont, he is gone.

[NURSE MAYS rises with telegram.]

NURSE MAYS

This telegram was delivered for Captain Battelle.

JULIA PIERPONT

Thank you for all you did for Captain Battelle.

GRANVILLE HALL *[reads]*

"To Captain Gordon Battelle, from Archibald Campbell:

Today Wheeling Convention delegates voted overwhelmingly to add emancipation clause to new West Virginia Constitution, as required by Congress. Stop. Statehood is assured. We will have our New State of West Virginia at last. Stop. Signed, A. Campbell."

JULIA PIERPONT

Gordon would have been so proud to hear this news. But why is the price of liberty is always so high?

GRANVILLE HALL

I do not pretend to understand God's Providence, Mrs. Pierpont. I only know that Captain Battelle has done his duty – and we must do ours.

[SCENE ENDS]

ACT 3 - SCENE 3

[Train Station]

MARY CLIFFORD

Mr. Hall, thank you for telling us Captain Battelle's story.

GRANVILLE HALL

You are very welcome. J.R., my train leaves in a few minutes. May I ask you one more question before I go?

J.R. CLIFFORD

Of course.

GRANVILLE HALL

J.R., tell me honestly, how do you think that Negroes have fared, since the State of West Virginia was formed? Our hopes were high, and I am afraid they have not been fully realized.

Did we really create a "New Home for Liberty" for all West Virginians?"

J.R. CLIFFORD

Granville, when I was a boy in Chicago, I was in a classroom with children of all colors. Fifty years later, colored and white children in West Virginia still cannot attend the same schools.

When I returned from the war, I wanted to live in a state where the color of a person's skin was no more important than the color of their hair. But we still have a long way to go in West Virginia – and all over America.

MARY CLIFFORD

But Dad, you say in your newspaper that here in West Virginia, colored people have been able to hold on to our rights -- while those rights are being taken away in other places.

J.R. CLIFFORD

Mary, you are right – as usual!

Under Jim Crow laws, colored people in Virginia have lost the most important right of all -- the right to vote.

But here in West Virginia, we have tens of thousands of Negro voters. And even if our schools are segregated, we have excellent teachers, and many of our children are going to college. We have even elected Negroes to the Legislature.

DEBORAH

I wouldn't want to live in a state where people can't vote because of the color of their skin. That doesn't sound like America to me!

GRANVILLE HALL

Deborah, you sound a lot like your Great-Aunt Louisa.

DEBORAH

Grandpa, please tell us just a little more about when West Virginia was finally created.

GRANVILLE HALL

Deborah, after Congress approved the Statehood Bill, the word came from Washington that President Lincoln might veto the Bill. Everyone in Wheeling was on pins and needles.

[End of Scene]

ACT 3, SCENE 4

[Grand Hall]

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

Governor Pierpont, the city is buzzing with rumors. Do you think President Lincoln will sign the Statehood Bill?

FRANCIS PIERPONT

[holding a telegram]

I hope so. Let me read you a telegram that I just sent the President:

President Lincoln, I am in great hope you will sign the bill to make West Virginia a new state. The loyal troops from Virginia have their hearts set on it; the loyal people in the bounds of the new state have their hearts set on it; and if the bill fails, God only knows the result. I fear general demoralization and I must not be held responsible.

Mr. Campbell, young Granville, I do not know what the President will do, but we have laid the case before him as strongly as we can. The President knows that we love the Union. I believe he will hear our cry.

[SOLDIER enters.]

SOLDIER

Please rise for the Honorable Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States for America.

[Lincoln enters and goes to table; as he speaks, the entire CAST slowly gathers onstage behind him.]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

We can scarcely dispense with the aid of West Virginia in this struggle; much less can we afford to have her against us, in Congress and in the field. Her brave and good men regard her admission into the Union as a matter of life and death. They have been true to the Union under very severe trials. We have so acted as to justify their hopes, and we cannot fully retain their confidence, and cooperation, if we seem to break faith with them.

[GOVERNOR PIERPONT gives LINCOLN a copy of the PROCLAMATION].

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Many have sacrificed to create this new State of West Virginia. We honor them today. West Virginia has made the changes in her constitution required by Congress, providing for the gradual abolition of slavery in the new state.

Therefore, pursuant to the authority granted to me by the Congress of the United States, I hereby proclaim that sixty days from this date, on June 20, 1863 and for all time thereafter, there will be a new star in Old Glory – a new home for liberty in the United States – the State of West Virginia!

God protect the United States and all of her people.

[LINCOLN signs PROCLAMATION.]

JULIA PIERPONT (To GEORGE and MARTHA who are standing in the crowd of on-lookers. MARTHA is visibly pregnant.)

This is a great day for all of us – because from this day forward, your child, and all children born in the State of West Virginia, whatever their color and whoever their parents are, will be free!

Oh, I wish that Granville Hall had lived to see this day.

[From the group behind them, a single voice begins “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and is joined by the entire cast, as we move into curtain call]

THE END