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**Henry Box Brown and the Road to
Philadelphia - II**

Lead: In 1848 after Richmond slave Henry Brown saw his wife and children for the last time after they had been "sold South" he decided it was about time he got out of there. He risked his life for a taste of freedom.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: After his family was gone Henry Brown devised a daring and bold plan to escape this system that had so cruelly broken his heart. In 1849 he enlisted the help of a white shoemaker, paid him \$84.00, and had

himself shipped to Philadelphia. Brown crammed himself, all 5 feet, 8 inches, 200 pounds, into a box three feet long, two feet wide and two feet, eight inches deep and it was nailed shut. The box was labeled “dry goods.” He sat with his knees jammed into his chest and was equipped with a bladder of water, crackers and a sharp tool to poke holes if there was not enough air.

The box was addressed to the members of the Anti-Slavery Committee of Philadelphia which at that time was a hub in that network of safe houses and clandestine activists known as the Underground Railroad. The box, with its human cargo, was also labeled “this side up”

but during the twenty-seven hour journey to Philadelphia via train, steamboat and wagon, at times it ended up upside down while being shuffled around in transport. At one point, Brown said he nearly lost consciousness, but the box was turned upright side up just in time.

Brown survived the journey, was safely delivered, and earned the name “Box” Brown. His autobiography was published in 1851 and he traveled in the free states lecturing and giving a panoramic display of his life. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Brown was in real danger so he went to England where he lectured and gave firsthand descriptions of the horrors of slavery. He was living in

**Wales in 1864 and there disappears
from the historical record.**

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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