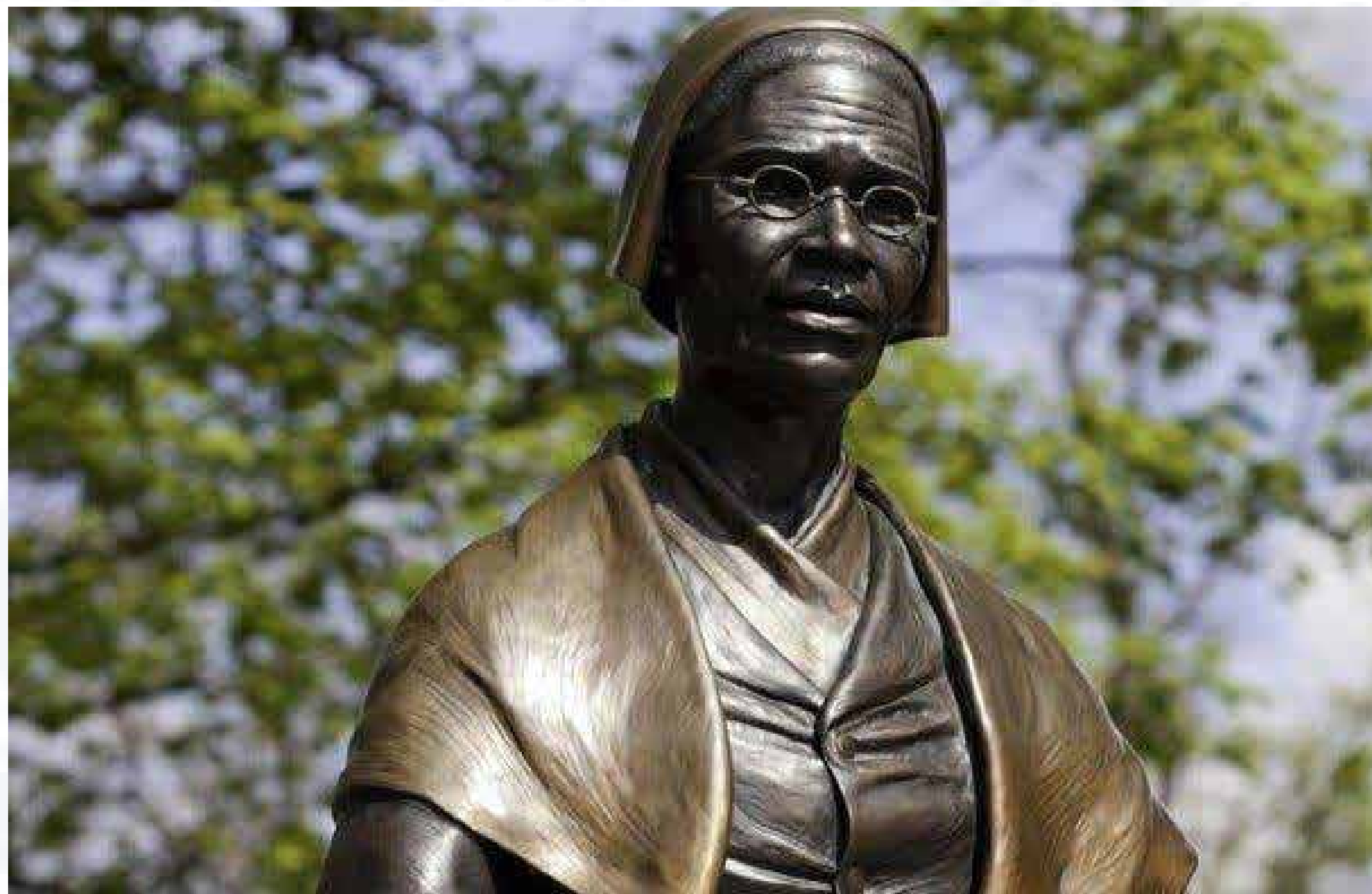


Sojourner Truth

1797 - 1883



This statue of Sojourner Truth, in Florence, Massachusetts, was dedicated in 2002. MASS MOMENTS

Sojourner Truth commanded the stage with a powerful voice and humor, advocating women's rights and racial equality.

“You may hiss as much as you please, but women will get their rights anyway.”
Sojourner Truth to hecklers



The Northampton Association of Education and Industry was a utopian community dedicated to reform. Sojourner Truth worked and lived in the factory building for a time.

From Isabella to Sojourner

Born into slavery in upstate New York, “Isabella” took the name Sojourner Truth at the age of forty-five. She had been sold five times before “walking” away from slavery, one year before it was officially abolished in the state. (In her Narrative, she emphasized “I did not run away, I walked away by daylight.”) Although she never learned to read or write, Truth became a powerful itinerant evangelist, stressing religious themes at first.



From 1850 to 1857 Sojourner Truth lived in this Florence home. She spent fifteen years in Massachusetts and dictated an early version of her Narrative while in Florence. MASS MOMENTS

Thought - less

Sojourner Truth's first language was Dutch. When sold to an English speaking family she was whipped for not following instructions in a language she could not understand.

Turning Point

As “Sojourner Truth” she joined a utopian community in the Florence section of Northampton, Massachusetts. There she met William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass and developed an interest in abolitionism and women's rights. Retaining her religious sensibility, she stressed the moral imperative of reform.

Her first recorded appearance, as a social reformer, was at the 1850 Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester. She delivered an early abolitionist lecture in Plymouth, criticizing Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster for supporting the Fugitive Slave Law.

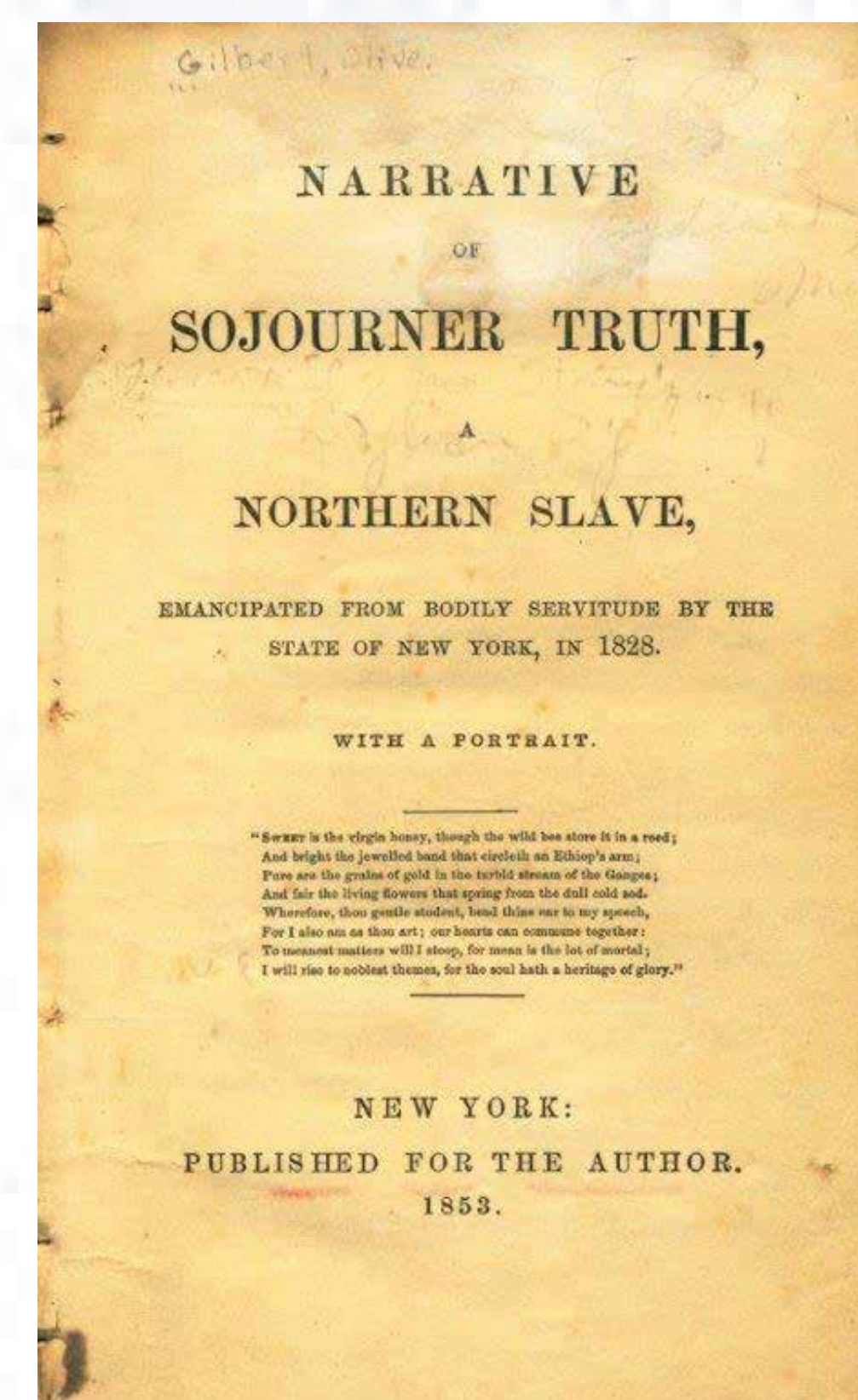


Truth sat for several versions of this image, and sold it at lectures, along with her Narrative. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Currency reimaged. Jack Lew, Treasury Secretary in the Obama administration, proposed placing images of Sojourner Truth and other suffragists on one side of the ten dollar bill. (artist rendering)

Sojourner Truth dictated, and later revised her Narrative, working with sympathetic friends. She supported herself, in part, from sales at speaking engagements. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



“Ain't I a Woman?”

Sojourner Truth was an early advocate of women's suffrage and equal pay. She urged that women should be lawyers, judges, and members of Congress, noting that many elected officials drank heavily and treated women with disdain “for their own amusement.” In an 1851 Akron, Ohio speech Truth compared her abilities to those of men. It is legendary that she used the phrase “Ain't I a Woman” after each example.

