

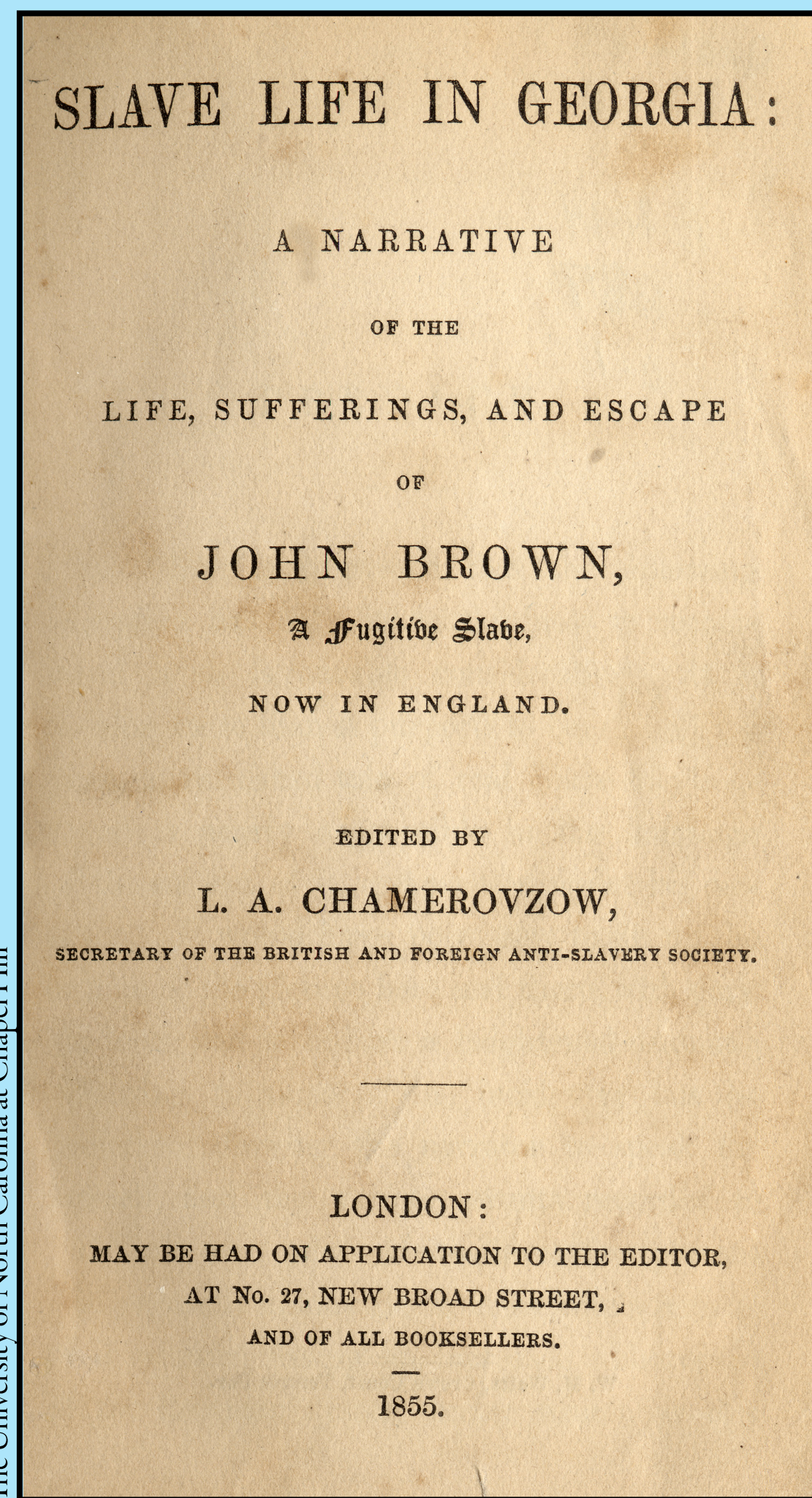
John Brown

A SLAVE NARRATIVE

**NAT
TURNER
TRAIL**

1831
Southampton
Insurrection

In 1854, John Brown, a freedom seeker born in Southampton County, first known as “Fed,” dictated his story to Louis Alexis Chamerovzow, secretary of The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The resulting book, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, A Fugitive Slave, Now in England*, provided a dramatic account of the harsh life of an enslaved person in the cotton-producing Deep South. His work is one of the few authentic slave narratives published before the Civil War that increased awareness of the need to abolish slavery.

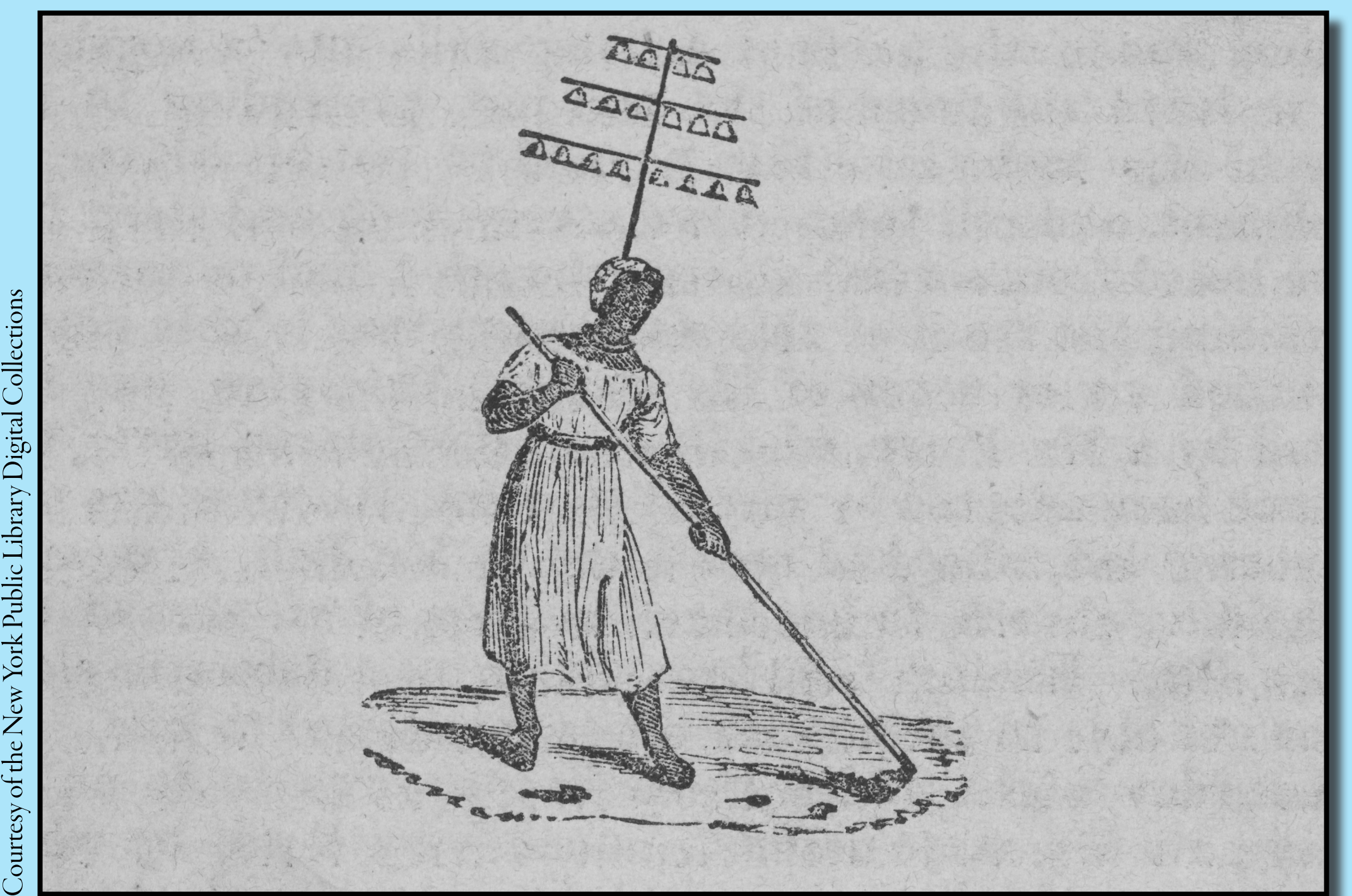


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*Title page of
John Brown's
book, published
in 1855.*

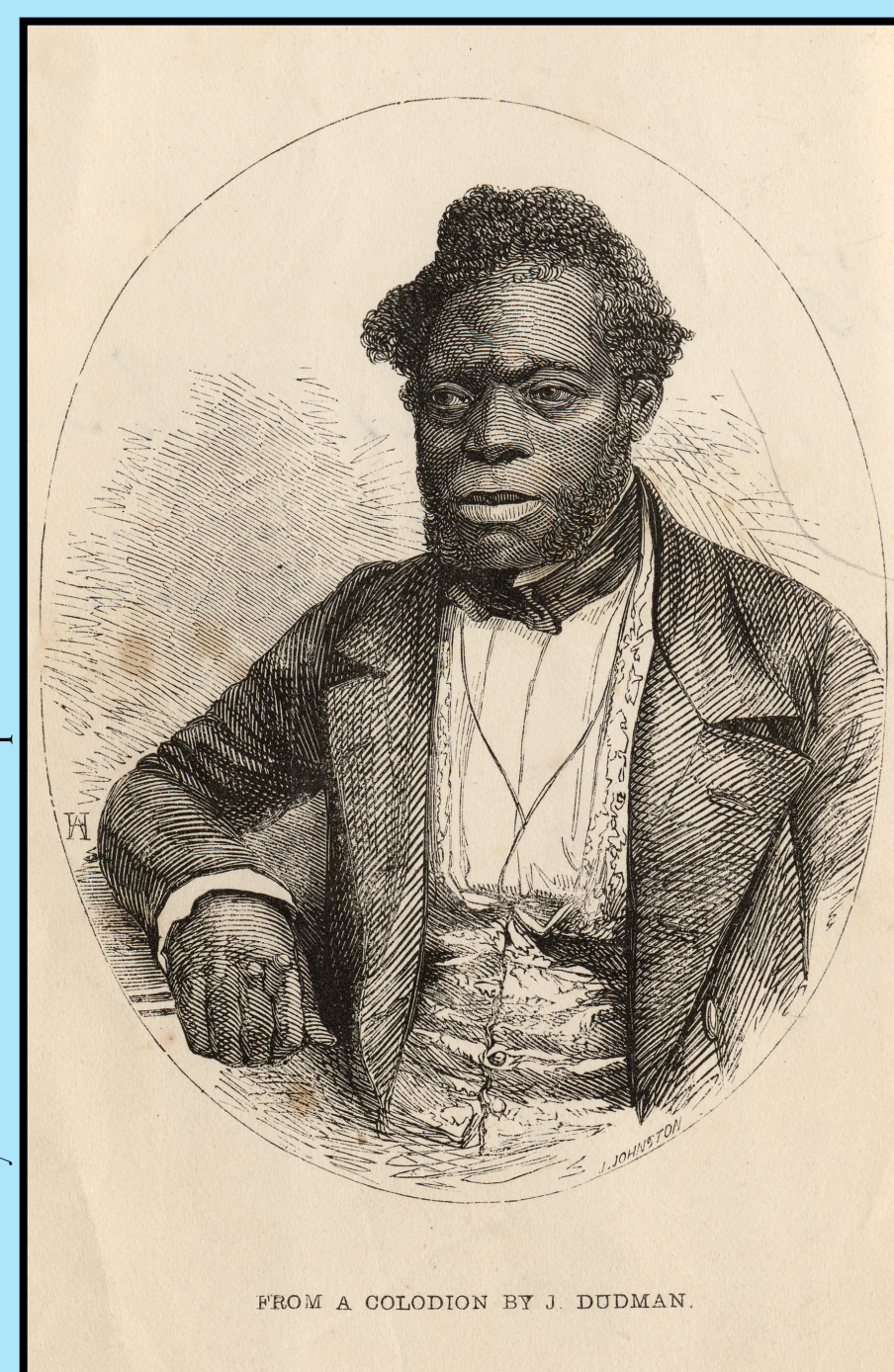
Cruel and Unusual Punishment: 'bells and horns on my head'

“Stevens fixed bells and horns on my head ... I have seen many slaves wearing them. A circle of iron ... is fastened round the neck. Another circle of iron fits quite close round the crown of the head. The two are held together in this position by three rods of iron, which are fixed in each circle. These rods, or horns, stick out three feet above the head, and have a bell attached to each. [They] do not weigh less than twelve to fourteen pounds. When Stevens had fixed this ornament on my head, he turned me loose, and told me I might run off now if I liked.” — *John Brown*



Courtesy of the New York Public Library Digital Collections

Drawing with the caption: “A woman with iron horns and bells on, to keep her from running away.”



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*Frontispiece
image of
John Brown
from his book,
Slave Life in
Georgia.*

Jerusalem to London

John Brown (Fed) was born about 1810 on the Betty Moore farm, three miles from Jerusalem on the Nottoway River. At age 10, he was separated from his family and taken by a slave dealer to Georgia. Thomas Stevens, a cruel enslaver, purchased Fed for \$350. After several failed attempts, Fed self-liberated. He allowed himself to be recaptured and sold to an enslaver in Louisiana, where he became known as “Benford.” Escaping once more, he made his way to Indiana, where he assumed his free name, John Brown. With Quaker conductors’ help on the Under-ground Railroad, Brown moved to Canada, working as a carpenter at the Dawn Institute. He later moved to England, settling in London, where he worked as an herbalist until he died a free man in 1876.