

## HISTORICAL FICTION 4 US

# Thaddeus Stevens

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## The Making of an Inconvenient Hero

**Special Teacher Supplement**

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Thaddeus Stevens' role in civil rights for black slaves had been buried in archival accounts until the showing of the movie Lincoln, which highlighted his pivotal role in the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation and the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the US Constitution. This book tells a fictional story about Thad when he was thirteen years old and lived with his extended family in Danville, Vermont after his father deserted the family and left debts. This story fills a void in books for upper elementary and middle school students about his character, his challenges, and his strong opinions about slavery and leadership in helping runaway slaves. The book is available in paperback or e-book format for study.

## **Curriculum Activities**

### **Meets Core Educational Standards (CES) for: Literacy in History/Social Studies (grades 6-8)**

**Objectives:** Students will:

1. Determine which chapters in the book are based on Primary Sources; which are secondary sources. (Key idea 1) Where will you look to find this information?
2. Identify chapters in the text that describe the key steps of how laws were passed in the state of Vermont in the year 1805. (Key Idea 3) How are they passed today? (see appendices) How are they passed in your state?
3. Describe the process whereby the bill to abolish the slave trade became the law of the country by reading the chapters you've identified in objective 2. What year was the final bill enacted? Where will you look for this information? (Key Idea 3)
4. Find words or phrases in some of the quotations that seem accurate or cumbersome. How do they reflect that period of history? (craft & structure 4)
5. Select at least five historical information or facts about the early 1800s and Vermont history in particular you learned from reading the story. How was reading a story about it different than reading a history or social studies book? (craft & structure 5)
6. Since the story was written about Thaddeus Stevens when he was only 13-years-old, describe what you think the author's purpose was in writing a historical fiction account about his life? (craft & structure 6)
7. Identify in a three columned chart facts, fiction, and reasoned judgment about Thaddeus Stevens' early life in this story (Integration 8)

### **Meets IDEA (Student Disabilities Educaton Act)**

**Objectives:** Students will:

1. Read about Thaddeus Stevens' club foot and how it is described in the text and discuss how he felt about his disability. (6)
2. In the story Thad and his brother Joshua were bullied and made fun of when they walked. Find and read the part of the story where Joshua deals with the bullying. Find and read the places in the story where the author describes how Thad coped with the bullying. (16)
3. Find the drawing in the story by a 13-year-old boy named Luke showing Thad on his horse. Draw or paint your own picture of Thad at a different place in the story showing how he overcame his disability in a situation.

## **Other Discussion Starter Questions**

1. Why didn't Thad want to leave their farm and move in with their Cousin James' family?
2. Describe Thad's confused feelings about his father.
3. How did Thad attempt to fit in with his peers?
4. Why did Thad think his mother was mean after his father left?
5. How was schooling different in 1805 than it is today? How is it similar?
6. What made Thad talk back to his Cousin James?
7. Why do you think Thad became friends with Lucy and Festus Prince?
8. What experiences did Thad have that made him want to be a legislator in later life?
9. How were Cousin James and Cousin Abraham different? How did each treat Thad?
10. Since Thaddeus Stevens in his adult life provided leadership in passing the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the US Constitution, as well as urging President Lincoln to emancipate slaves during the Civil War, what influences in his early life led to his becoming an American anti-slavery hero?
11. Why did Thaddeus Stevens choose to write his own epitaph and why did he write what he did? What do his words tell you about him?

## Significant Dates in Thaddeus Stevens' Life

- 4 April 1792 : Born near Danville, Vermont to Joshua and Sarah Morrill Stevens
- 1807: Sarah Stevens and children move to Peacham, Vermont
- 1807–11: Attends Caledonia County Academy in Peacham
- 24 Aug 1814: Graduates from Dartmouth College
- 1815–16 : Teaches in York, Pennsylvania, and reads law under David Casset
- 26 Aug 1816 : Passes bar in Bel Air, Maryland
- 16 Sept 1816: Admitted to practice in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; opens law office
- 1832: Supports William Wirt as Anti-masonic presidential candidate
- 3 Dec 1833: Takes seat in Pennsylvania House of Representatives; 44th session
- 27 May 1834: Attends convention of Pennsylvania Whig Party
- 2 Dec 1834– 15 April 1835: 45th session of Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 1 Dec 1835– 16 June 1836: 46th session of Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 30 May 1836: Issues resolutions in Pennsylvania legislature against slavery extension
- Oct 1836: Defeated in election for Pennsylvania legislature
- Nov 1836: Elected as delegate to Pennsylvania constitutional convention
- 1837: Erects Caledonia Iron Works in Franklin County
- May 1837: Delegate to Pennsylvania constitutional convention,
- 21 June 1837 : Introduces amendment to Pennsylvania constitution that “every freeman of the age of twenty-one years” who has been a resident and paid taxes “shall be entitled to vote”
- Fall 1837: Reelected to Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 5 Dec 1837–17 April 1838 : 48th session of Pennsylvania House
- 22 Feb 1838: Refuses to sign revised state constitution;  
re-elected to Pennsylvania House
- 13 Nov 1838: Nominates William Henry Harrison as party’s presidential candidate at Anti-masonic Convention in Philadelphia
- 4 Dec 1838– 25 June 1839: 49th session, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 24 May 1839: House votes to exclude him
- 14 June 1839: Reelected to Pennsylvania House of Representatives for term ending 25 June 1839
- 19 June 1839: Takes oath of office in House
- Fall 1840: Campaigns for Harrison for US president
- Oct 1841: Reelected to Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 4 Jan–26 July 1842: 52d session of Pennsylvania House of Representatives; his final term
- 16 Aug 1842: Admitted to Lancaster bar, moves from Gettysburg to Lancaster
- April 1843: Moves to 47–49 S. Queen St., where he lives and practices law
- Aug 1843: Tries to revive Anti-masons and block Henry Clay’s nomination
- 1844: Reluctantly campaigns for Clay for president

1847: Brother Abner Morrill, a doctor (known as Morrill), dies in March; brother Alanson dies in December

1848: Nephews Alanson, Jr., and Thaddeus, Jr., become his wards and Lydia Smith comes to work for him

23 Aug 1848: Nominated by Whig county convention as congressional candidate

10 Oct 1848: Elected to 31st Congress;

3 Dec 1849– 30 Sept 1850: 31st Congress, 1st session

20 Feb 1850: Delivers “Slave Question” speech before Congress

14 Aug 1850: Re-nominated by Whig county convention as congressional candidate

Oct 1850: Oliver et al. v Weakley — he defends Stephen Weakley and others on charges of harboring fugitive slaves; judge declares mistrial

2 Dec 1850– 3 March 1851: 31st Congress, 2d session

24 Nov–8 Dec 1851: Thaddeus and other attorneys successfully plead in Philadelphia for defendants Caster Hanway and forty others (thirty-eight blacks) on trial for treason

1 Dec 1851– 31 Aug 1852: 32d Congress, 1st session

Aug 1852: Whig convention chooses more conservative Whig, Isaac Hiester, as its candidate for Congress

Fall 1852 : Supports Whig candidate Winfield Scott for president

6 Dec 1852– 3 March 1853: 32d Congress, 2d session

March 1853 : Returns to Lancaster after congressional session

Sept 1854 : Lancaster Whigs accuse him of joining Know-Nothings lodge in Lancaster

5 Oct 1854 : Sarah Morrill Stevens dies in Vermont

Oct 1854: Independent Whig candidate Anthony E. Roberts backed by him and Know-Nothings. Roberts was elected to Congress

17 June 1856: Delegate to Republican convention in Philadelphia;

April 1858 : Brother Joshua dies in Indianapolis

25 Aug 1858: Nominated by convention in Fulton Hall, Lancaster, as Republican Congressional candidate

12 Oct 1858: Elected to 36th Congress

5 Dec 1859–25 June 1860: 36th Congress, 1st session

Dec 1859: Rents home at 279 South B St., Washington, DC (permanent Washington residence)

Jan 1860: Argues last major legal case in Lancaster

16 May 1860 : Attends Republican convention in Chicago

27 Sept 1860: Delivers “Presidential Question” speech at Cooper Union, NYC

6 Nov 1860: Abraham Lincoln elected president

3 Dec 1860– 2 March 1861: 36th Congress, 2d session

29 Jan 1861 : Delivers “State of the Union” speech before Congress

4 July– 6 Aug 1861: 37th Congress, 1st session

8 July 1861: Named chairman of Ways and Means Committee

2 Dec 1861– 17 July 1862 : 37th Congress, 2d session

22 Jan 1862 : Delivers “Subduing the Rebellion” speech before Congress  
 6 Feb 1862: Delivers “Treasury Note Bill” speech before Congress  
 25 Feb 1862: Legal Tender Act (HR 240) becomes law  
 8 April 1862 : Delivers “Tax Bill” speech before Congress  
 1 July 1862: Comprehensive Tax Bill (HR 312) becomes law  
 22 Sept 1862 : Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation  
 1 Dec 1862– 4 March 1863: 37th Congress, 3d session  
 1 Jan 1863: Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation  
 8 Jan 1863: Delivers “Conquered Provinces” speech before Congress  
 2 Feb 1863: Delivers “Negro Soldiers” speech before Congress  
 24–26 June 1863: His iron works at Caledonia burned by Jubal Early’s troops  
 20 Sept 1863: Nephew Alanson Stevens killed at battle of Chickamauga  
 7 Dec 1863– 4 July 1864: 38th Congress, 1st session  
 28 March 1864: In the House introduces 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery  
 2 May 1864 : Delivers “Government of Rebellious States” speech before Congress  
 7–8 June 1864 : Serves as delegate to Republican convention in Baltimore  
 8 Nov 1864 : Lincoln reelected president  
 5 Dec 1864– 3 March 1865: 38th Congress, 2d session  
 13 Jan 1865 : Delivers “Abolition of Slavery” speech before Congress  
 31 Jan 1865: Congress approves 13th Amendment  
 15 April 1865: Lincoln dies  
 6 Sept 1865 : Delivers “Reconstruction” speech in Lancaster  
 4 Dec 1865– 28 July 1866: 39th Congress, 1st session  
 11 Dec 1865 : Named chairman of the newly formed Appropriations Committee  
 13 Dec 1865 : Named House chairman of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction  
 18 Dec 1865: Delivers “Reconstruction” speech before Congress  
 18 Dec 1865: 13th Amendment ratified  
 31 Jan 1866: Delivers “Basis of Representation” speech before Congress  
 19 Feb 1866: Breaks openly with President Andrew Johnson when he vetoes Freedmen’s Bureau Bill  
 6 April 1866: Congress overrides Johnson’s veto of Civil Rights Bill  
 8 June 1866: Reconstruction Committee report presented to Congress  
 13 June 1866: Congress approves 14th Amendment, giving blacks citizenship and civil rights protection  
 4 Sept 1866: Delivers “The Pending Canvass” speech in Bedford, Pennsylvania  
 3 Dec 1866– 2 March 1867: 39th Congress, 2d session  
 13 Feb 1867: Delivers “Government of Insurrectionary States” speech before Congress  
 2 March 1867: Congress Passes Reconstruction Act of 1867  
 4–30 March, 3–20 July, and 21–30 Nov 1867: 40th Congress, 1st session  
 19 March 1867: Delivers “Damages to Loyal Men” speech before Congress

2 Dec 1867– 27 July 1868: 40th Congress, 2d session  
24 Feb 1868: House votes to impeach Johnson  
2 March 1868: Elected as one of seven impeachment managers  
4 March 1868: Impeachment trial begins  
27 April 1868 : Delivers “Impeachment of the President” speech before Congress  
16 May 1868: Senate acquits Johnson of Article XI charges  
20–21 May 1868 : Republicans nominate Ulysses S. Grant in Chicago  
11 July 1868 : Delivers “Democracy and Its Policy” speech before Congress  
28 July 1868: 14th Amendment ratified  
11 Aug 1868: Dies in Washington, DC; buried in Shreiner’s Cemetery, Lancaster