

Isaac T. Hopper



Isaac Tatem Hopper - born Deptford, New Jersey, December 3, 1771, died New York City, May 7, 1852. He was an American abolitionist who was active in Philadelphia in the anti-slavery movement and protecting fugitive slaves and free blacks from slave kidnappers. He was also co-founder of Children's Village with 23 others.

He moved to New York City in 1829 to run a Quaker bookstore. From 1841-1845 he served as treasurer and book agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1845 he became active in prison reform and devoted the rest of his life to the Prison Association of New York.

Anti-slavery sentiment was particularly prominent in Philadelphia, where Isaac Hopper, a convert to Quakerism, established what one author called “the first operating cell of the abolitionist underground.” In addition to hiding runaways in his own home, Hopper organized a network of safe havens and cultivated a web of informants so as to learn the plans of fugitive slave hunters. Though a tailor by trade, he also excelled at exploiting legal loopholes to win slaves’ freedom in court. A friend of Joseph Bonaparte, the exiled brother of the former French emperor, Hopper moved to New York City in 1829. There, he continued helping escaped slaves, at one point fending off an anti-abolitionist mob that had gathered outside his Quaker bookstore.