

Phillis Wheatley



Born in the Senegal-Gambia region of West Africa, Phillis Wheatley arrived in Boston on a slave ship when she was about seven years old. When Mrs. Susanna Wheatley purchased her as a personal servant, she named Phillis after the ship. After 16 months, Wheatley could read and understand any part of the Bible, and she began writing poetry at age 12. She was one of the best-known poets in pre-19th century America; her name was a household word among literate colonists and her achievements a catalyst for the fledgling antislavery movement.