

## SOJOURNER TRUTH (1797-1883)

Sojourner Truth was an African-American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, Ulster County, New York, in 1797, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. After going to court to recover her son, she became the first black woman to win such a case against a white man. Sojourner Truth was named Isabella ("Bell") Baumfree when she was born. She gave herself the name Sojourner Truth in 1843. Her best-known extemporaneous speech on gender inequalities, "Ain't I a Woman?", was delivered in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. During the Civil War, Truth helped recruit black troops for the Union Army; after the war, she tried unsuccessfully to secure land grants from the federal government for former slaves. She bore five children, all born after she and Thomas (an older slave) united. Truth died on November 26, 1883, at her home in Battle Creek, Michigan. More than 3,000 people crowded into the Battle Creek Tabernacle to pay their last respects to the black heroine. Uriah Smith presided at the services. She was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Battle Creek, beside other family members and many Seventh-day Adventist pioneers.