Civil War Book Drop

Cheivaler’s novel *The Last Runaway* is the story of Honor Bright, an English immigrant who finds her way to Ohio and marries a farmer in a Quaker community. Historically, Quakers were active participants in the Underground Railroad and Cheivaler built her story around that theme. Much attention was given to the Fugitive Slave Law, as one of the main characters was a slave hunter. Honor had several encounters not only with the slave hunter, but also with runaway slaves, even though her husband and her family forbade her to lend assistance. This puzzling stance from a Quaker family built tension throughout the book, but came to a satisfying resolution at the end. Thus, my choices for the primary sources for this book drop are focused on slavery, Quakers, and the Underground Railroad. Once slaves reached Lake Erie, they were afforded safe passage to Canada. As I read the book I began to wonder what happened when slaves arrived in Canada so I included the piece on the Final Destination. The practice of pairing nonfiction and fiction books to increase student interest and understanding prompted me to include Douglass’ famous book. It is truly an engaging read! Levi Coffin, of Quaker heritage, was a prominent businessman who used his personal resources for the benefit of runaway slaves. His story provides historical background for many of the characters in Cheivaler’s novel. The piece on the fugitive slave law was important to include as it plays a vital part in the final chapters of the book. The hand drawn map of the Underground Railroad is unlike most maps students will be asked to analyze. Given the secret nature of this pathway to freedom, it is not difficult to understand why so few maps of this kind have been recovered and archived. Finally, I included the slave songs because I was so touched by Douglass’ insight on those songs: “**they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains.”**