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and
Andrew P. Zak, M.D.
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: Escape From Slavery

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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The Underground Railroad: Escape From Slavery
Viewing Time: 25 minutes
Grades 5-9

Program Summary

This video is designed for students in grades 5 through 9. It describes the means by which many brave men and women escaped from the horrors of slavery prior to and during the American Civil War. The focus of this video is the loose-knit system of people and institutions which aided runaway slaves, known as the Underground Railroad.

The program was filmed in a wide variety of locations including Louisiana, North Carolina, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Quebec. Footage includes the actual plantations and slave communities from which fugitives fled, as well as the northern cities and countryside through which they traveled en route to freedom.

The use of actual historical etchings, broadsides, and photographs help to illustrate the reality of slavery in America, and the turmoil throughout the nation concerning the slavery issue. Original documents make the video come alive to students by tracing the route of an actual runaway slave from North Carolina, called Jesse.

The myths and realities of the Underground Railroad are revealed by exploring the difficult journeys attempted by African-American slaves over hundreds and even thousands of miles. The role that leading abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Sojourner Truth, played in bringing attention to the atrocities of slavery are discussed. The brave acts of leading figures on the Underground Railroad, including Harriet Tubman, Levi Coffin, and Lewis Hayden, provide examples of the daring acts of those committed to the freedom of those enslaved.
Not only are the specifics of the Underground Railroad addressed, but also its relation to other pertinent historical events of the time. Key events such as the development of the cotton gin, Fugitive Slave Act, Dred Scot Decision, publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and the Civil War are discussed in relation to their effect on slavery and the Underground Railroad.

**Student Objectives**

After viewing the video and completing the lessons and activities, students will be able to...

- Describe the difficult conditions under which slaves lived their lives, emphasizing the reasons why slaves felt compelled to risk their lives in order to escape to freedom.
- Define the term *Underground Railroad*, explaining what it was and was not.
- Explain the role key abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth, and Gerrit Smith, played in speaking out against slavery.
- Describe the methods by which fugitive slaves attempted to escape from slavery, and the many obstacles which they needed to hurdle.
- Identify the different parts of the country in which runaway slaves found refuge.
- Explain the role that active members on the Underground Railroad, such as Harriet Tubman, Lewis Hayden, and Levi Coffin, played in guiding slaves to freedom.
- Describe the chronology of the Fugitive Slave Act, the Dred Scott Decision, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and the Civil War.
- Identify key terms and people associated with the Underground Railroad.
**Teacher Preparation**

Before showing this program to your students, it is suggested you preview the video and review this guide. Decide which concepts and vocabulary students may be unfamiliar with, and review this information prior to showing the video.

It should be noted that there are many different dimensions of slavery and the Underground Railroad in the United States. Viewpoints vary with geographic location and historical perspective. It is suggested that you discuss these different viewpoints with students. Also discuss how these views have changed with time.

You may decide to duplicate and distribute some of the blackline masters so that students can reference them during the video program.

You are encouraged to tailor the video and accompanying blackline masters to the needs of your students and instructional needs. It is hoped that the video and blackline masters serve as a starting point for additional discussion and learning about this fascinating topic.

A Video Quiz follows the video presentation. The answers appear in the Answer Key on page 7 of this guide.

**Introducing the Video**

Before showing students the video, make sure they comprehend the historical context of slavery and the Underground Railroad. Explain the time periods in which slavery existed in the United States, with slaves first arriving in America to Jamestown in 1619. Slavery formally ended with the close of the Civil War in 1865. Stress the fact that slavery was abolished over 130 years ago, not a very long time. The Underground Railroad was active in the first half of the 19th century, with the most heated activity from 1820 to 1865.
Students may not be familiar with the institution of slavery; ask them what they know. What have they heard about slavery, and from whom? Have they heard about slavery that occurred in places other than the United States? Explain the role slavery has played in world history and its specific role in U.S. history. To provide a geographical perspective, use a United States map to show students the “slave states” in the South and the “free states” in the North prior to the Civil War. Emphasize that slavery was a legal institution in the entire nation as declared by the U.S. government.

Ask students to describe what they thought life was like for American slaves. How were their lives different from their lives as free men and women in Africa? What would it feel like to be enslaved, and forced to work for no money under deplorable conditions? Encourage your students to imagine the conditions under which slaves lived, and why they would risk their lives to escape those conditions.

• **Present the video.** The viewing time is 25:00.

**Follow-up Activities**

• **Discussion**
Following the video, students may have questions they would like to have answered. Allow time for students to air their questions. Avoid answering the students’ questions directly. Ask them additional questions leading them to the answers on their own, or encourage other students in the class to answer questions.

There are numerous issues which may warrant further questions. As a class you may want to discuss the following:

(a.) What made slavery so awful that slaves were willing to risk physical harm and even death to escape it?
(b.) What were some of the factors that led to the increased reliance on slave labor?
(c.) Ask students to imagine that they are a slave living on a south-
ern plantation from which they want to escape. Ask them how they would plan their escape, what should they pack, how would they plan their route, how would they eat, what would be their fears, and what would be the consequences of being caught?

d.) Ask students to put themselves in the shoes of a person offering help on the Underground Railroad. Ask them how they would go about helping runaway slaves, what are the risks, and what are the rewards?

e.) Discuss the reasons why the nation was divided over the slavery issue, not only between North and South, but within the North and South as well? What were the different factions, voices, and activities and what was their message?

f.) Discuss the realities of life for those individuals who successfully escaped slavery. What kinds of opportunities awaited these people in Northern cities?

g.) What was the Underground Railroad? Was it underground? Was it a railroad?

• Field Trip Opportunities
Depending on the part of the country in which you reside, there may be many opportunities to take your class on field trips to sites that relate to the Underground Railroad. There may be homes in your community that housed fugitive slaves. Or there may be museums dedicated to the history of slavery and the Underground Railroad. Your local library may have information relating to these topics.

• Topics for Further Research
The following suggestions would make good topics for research papers, plays, creative writing exercises, and art projects:

• Harriet Tubman’s Experience During the Civil War.
• Anthony Cohen’s 1996 reenactment of escaping slavery in Maryland.
• Write a speech for Frederick Douglass on the abolition of slavery.
• Write a speech for Sojourner Truth.
• Write a song about a slave’s escape to the North.
• Create a broadside which looks for escaped slaves.
• Write an abolitionist newspaper.

Blackline Masters

Blackline Master 1, Video Quiz, is to be used at the end of the video program. At the completion of the video, there is a short quiz. The narrator will read the questions which are displayed on the screen. Students can use this sheet to record their answers. Answers to the questions are provided in the Answer Key on page 7.

• Blackline Master 2, Geography of the Underground Railroad identifies the geographical and transportation realities of the routes of escaping slaves. It encourages students to visualize the geography of Civil War America and the process by which slaves attempted to escape.

• Blackline Master 3, Underground Railroad Timeline enumerates the chronology of the events, publications, and legislation involved in the Civil War and the Underground Railroad.

• Blackline Master 4, Crossword Puzzle helps students identify key terms and people associated with the Underground Railroad.

• Blackline Master 5, Journey of Box Brown helps student imagine the experience of a runaway slave.

• Blackline Master 6, Beware of the Slave Catchers identifies the importance of broadsides and other communication devices in spreading information. It helps students associate the messages of Civil War era broadsides with the messages they see posted at school and in their communities.

• Blackline Master 7, Jesse’s Freedom at Stake illustrates the experiences of Jesse, the runaway slave profiled in the video.

• Blackline Master 8, Internet Lesson directs students to the National Park Service Underground Railroad Homepage, with accompanying questions.
• Blackline Master 9, **Key Figures in the Fight Against Slavery** identifies key figures in the Underground Railroad by the years in which they were active and their contributions.

**Answer Key**

Blackline Master 1, **Video Quiz**
1. property
2. abolitionist
3. cotton
4. Tubman
5. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

Blackline Master 2, **Geography of the Underground Railroad**
1. Okefenokee Swamp, Everglades and Cuba
2. Bayous and Mexico
3. Trace his route from North Carolina to Vermont in color pencil on the map.
4. Jesse had to travel by foot, boat, and wagon in order to reach safety in Ferrisburg, Vermont.
5. Slaves in northern states of the South tended to flee to cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, as well as Canada.
6. Answers will vary per class depending on geographic location.
7. Answers will vary, but may include foot, boat, horseback and wagon travel.

Blackline Master 3, **Underground Railroad Timeline**
*Answers should be placed on the timeline in the following chronological order:*
1793–Cotton gin patented leading to the increased need for slave labor on large cotton plantations.
1837–American Anti-slavery Society formed.
1837–Elija Lovejoy, publisher of an anti-slavery newspaper, had his printing press destroyed. First person to be killed defending freedom of the press.
1847—Frederick Douglass begins publication of his abolitionist newspaper The North Star.
1849 — Harriet Tubman escaped and later led 19 missions to the South to free slaves.
1850—Fugitive Slave Act is passed, enacting stricter laws against slaves seeking refuge in free states.
1852—Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* published.
1857—The Dred Scott Decision determined a slave to be property and had no rights in court.
1861—The Civil War begins with slavery being one of the leading issues.
1863—The Emancipation Proclamation becomes effective, declaring slaves in the South free.
1865—The Civil War ends, and slavery is formally abolished.

Blackline Master 4, **Crossword Puzzle**

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    4  V
     C
   11  D O U G L A S S
       N
       D

   12  U N D E R G R O U N D R A I L R O A D
       C

    5  S
    9  L I A G E A T O R
       A
       A
       E

   8  T U A M A N
       J

   2  D R E D S C O T T
       T
       S
       M

     N

   10  T R U T H
       C
       E

     C O M M I T

     T
     E

     T
     E
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Blackline Master 5, **Journey of “Box Brown”**
1. “Box Brown” was placed in a sealed wooden box during his escape from slavery.
2. It is over 200 miles from Richmond, Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The journey probably lasted nearly 2 days.
3. He wanted to go to Philadelphia to gain his freedom from slavery.
4. His precautions may have included that he have enough to eat and drink, as well as enough clothing to keep warm during his journey. He also had to trust his benefactor that there would be someone in Philadelphia waiting to claim the box in which he was traveling.
5. Creative writing answers will vary.

Blackline Master 6, **Beware of the Slave Catchers**
1. The broadside was posted to warn free blacks that slave catchers were looking for ex-slaves to return south.
2. Abolitionists and Vigilance Committee members may have written, published and posted the broadsides.
3. It is warning this group of people to be aware of the harm that may come to them if they are captured by the slave catchers.
4. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 gave slave catchers greater legal rights to enter northern states to apprehend slaves and return them to the bonds of slavery in the South.
5. Answers will vary per student.
6. Broadsides will vary per student or student group.

Blackline Master 7, **Jesse’s Freedom at Stake**
1. Ephram Elliott was the slave-owner of Jesse. He lived in Perquimans County, North Carolina. Rowland Robinson was a Quaker who owned a sheep farm in Ferrisburg, Vermont.
2. The $150 referred to in the letters was money earned by Jesse which he wanted to put toward purchasing his freedom.
3. Jesse earned the $150 by working on the Robinson sheep farm.
4. Possibly Robinson said that “we cannot consciously contribute anything toward the purchase of a slave even for his liberation” because was a devout Quaker. As a Quaker, he felt that by contributing toward purchasing Jesse’s freedom, he was partici-
pating in the institution of slavery.
5. Student answers will vary.

Blackline Master 8, **Internet Lesson**
1. They wanted the Park Service to find out how to best interpret and commemorate the Underground Railroad.
2. The Underground Railroad story is nationally significant.
3. It was a loosely constructed network of routes that originated in the south, intertwined throughout the North, and eventually ended in Canada. Escape routes were not restricted to the North, but also extended to western territories, Mexico and the Caribbean.
4. The transatlantic slave trade which was primarily responsible for the dispersal of African Americans into the Western Hemisphere.
5. It occurred where ever bondage existed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Active Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick Douglass</td>
<td>1830s to 1860s</td>
<td>An escaped slave, who was a prominent anti-slavery speaker and writer. In 1847 he first published an anti-slavery newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Lloyd Garrison</td>
<td>1830s</td>
<td>In 1831, he published the first anti-slavery newspaper, called <em>The Liberator</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sojourner Truth</td>
<td>1828 to 1860s</td>
<td>A freed slave who spoke out widely against slavery, and became a national figure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerrit Smith</td>
<td>1830s to 1860s</td>
<td>He spoke out, preached against slavery, harbored runaway slaves in his home, and funded Frederick Douglass’ newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet Tubman</td>
<td>1849 to 1860s</td>
<td>In 1849 she escaped from slavery, and in the years following made 19 missions to the south leading slaves to freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dred Scott</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Sued the courts for his freedom, and lost a landmark decision which ruled that slaves were considered property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi Coffin</td>
<td>1830s to 1860s</td>
<td>A Quaker, who was referred to as the President of the Underground Railroad, aiding thousands of fugitive slaves on the run in Indiana and Ohio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Script of Video Narration  
The Underground Railroad:  
Escape From Slavery

What would you think if you had to run or walk over 500 miles with little rest?

You could bring very little food and therefore, would need to forage along the way. Also you would not have any money or modern-day credit cards, and you would not be welcome or could not afford to stay in hotels along the way.

To make things even more difficult, you would not have maps or even road signs to help you determine your route.

And finally, imagine that every policeman and nearly every stranger is a potential threat; ready to capture or harm you.

How would you feel, and how could you possibly reach your destination safely?

This is what African-American slaves escaping to freedom from bondage in the South faced—a long, difficult, life-threatening journey. Slaves making this journey were alone, cold, hungry, and always in fear.

But some were able to get assistance from people along the way. This loose-knit network of people offering shelter, food, safety, and encouragement to fugitive slaves is referred to as the “Underground Railroad.”

What is this institution called “slavery”? What made it so horrible? Why was it worth risking one’s life to escape?

Slavery in the Americas meant: People were frequently bought and sold like cattle, fed just enough to survive, were poorly clothed, and were housed in cold shacks, which barely kept out the biting wind. worked from sun up to sundown to exhaustion in the burning sun or freezing cold, and, occasionally were brutally punished.

Captured, beaten, and frequently killed, people were enslaved from Africa and shipped as cargo throughout the world. Ships brought thousands of slaves to America under deplorable conditions. Many got sick and died as a result of lack of food, clean water, and very poor sanitation.
The first African slaves came to the eastern shores of North America in 1619 to Jamestown on a Dutch ship. Early in the 1700s, it was believed that slavery would not flourish and would gradually disappear as it did not appear to be profitable.

But the invention and widespread use of the cotton gin and other machinery after the 1790s made cotton-growing a successful business for a privileged few in America.

Large plantations depended on hundreds of slaves to perform the backbreaking work of growing cotton.

Generally, on the more southern plantations, the worse the working and living conditions. Large plantations boomed throughout the South, especially in the lower Mississippi River valley. Here, Oakly Plantation, located north of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, had over 3,000 acres, and over 200 slaves.

Plantation owners, or planters as they were called, such as James Pirrie, owner of Oakly Plantation, prospered and built beautiful homes, while hundreds of slaves lived in primitive shacks.

In 1850, half of the millionaires in the United States lived between Natchez and New Orleans.

Slavery impacted business, not only in Louisiana, but throughout the South and the North. The North benefited from slave-produced raw materials, such as cotton, that was made into fabric in these Massachusetts mills.

Slaves were often referred to as bondsmen, their ownership was legal in all but selected areas of the United States.

All slaves held one thing in common—they lacked their physical freedom and freedom to make their own decisions.

Considered property, they were bought and sold on the auction block or traded at will, without regard for their personal interests, happiness, or well being.

Husbands could be separated from their wives, and children from their mothers whenever owners demanded it, without any hope of reunion.

The major terror among slaves was to be “sold South,” where conditions were even more severe. Slaves were marched south in huge “slave gangs” or “coffles.”
Slaves had absolutely no control over their destiny. All family ties and culture were destroyed and not allowed to flourish.

Some slaves worked from dawn to dusk in the fields with inadequate food and clothing, under very brutal overseers who frequently administered severe physical punishment. Others became skilled laborers in trades, such as blacksmithing and carpentry, and were hired out for wages paid to the owner, but not to the slave, or as house servants, cooking meals in the plantation kitchen and caring for the mansion, while slaves lived in a shacks.

Slaves had little hope for a better life. They had no control over their future and did not share in the profits of their labor.

Living in small, poorly constructed cabins, most slaves were forced to tolerate difficult living situations with few possessions.

In the early days of the United States, there were small pockets of people who disagreed with slavery, but for the most part, the nation “turned its head and looked the other way.”

But in the North, many felt slavery was wrong. In Vermont, the 14th state, the original constitution, adopted in this building in July, 1777, prohibited slavery.

Later, slavery was also outlawed in Massachusetts, here in the Old State House.

Despite these states’ efforts, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, there was not a strong anti-slavery movement in the North or the South.

As time progressed, however, small factions of anti-slavery advocates became more vocal and more organized. Religious groups, such as the Quakers and other activists, formed the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1837.

Anti-slavery activist William Lloyd Garrison published the first significant anti-slavery newspaper called The Liberator.

Vigilance Committees organized for the care, protection, escape and rescue of slaves and free Blacks that were in danger.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, individuals called Abolitionists began speaking out publicly against the sins of slavery.
America’s leading black Abolitionist was Frederick Douglass. Douglass escaped to freedom in upstate New York. He wrote and traveled widely speaking out against slavery.

Douglass did not stand alone; many others, such as Sojourner Truth, an early black female Abolitionist, was an inspiring speaker, preacher, and a national figure.

Gerrit Smith, a noted Abolitionist from Peterboro, New York was one of the founders of the New York State Anti-slavery Society.

He was friend, advisor, and a major funder of Frederick Douglass’ newspaper, both seen here at a meeting in upstate New York.

Many Abolitionists voiced their anti-slavery message in all parts of the country, with the greatest concentration here in Boston.

The growing anti-slavery movement created tremendous turmoil in the way people viewed the economy, politics, religion, and even their neighbors.

Riots over the slavery issue were a common occurrence in the 1830s. This statue depicts the rescue of a slave from an angry mob in Syracuse, NY. Elijah Lovejoy, an Abolitionist and publisher of an anti-slavery newspaper, in 1837, was killed by anti-abolitionists in Indiana and his printing press destroyed.

While the country continued to debate the issue of slavery, thousands of blacks continued to suffer in the bondage of slavery and many attempted to escape to freedom.

Many slaves escaped using the Underground Railroad, which perhaps got its name when a runaway slave named Tice Davids fled Kentucky and was aided by the local farmers.

Davids was chased to the Ohio River where he mysteriously disappeared. The slave owner said it was as if he disappeared on some “underground railroad.”

The term “Underground Railroad” is confusing; it was not a “railroad” and it was not “underground.”

It is not an accurate term because it implies that runaway slaves traveled on direct routes with specific stops, time schedules, and conductors guiding their path.
The Underground Railroad was a loose-knit system of people helping fugitive slaves to reach freedom. Those involved primarily relied on help from those that gathered here at the African Meeting House in Boston.

Free Blacks, Vigilance Committees, and anti-slavery sympathizers helped fugitives in their own way.

The Underground Railroad is a difficult subject to research because very few records and documents exist. Much was done in secret.

Why did the Underground Railroad exist? It existed because people from a wide variety of backgrounds wanted to help slaves escape the chains of bondage.

One of the earliest recorded instances of slaves being assisted in their escape was in 1786 when Quakers in Philadelphia helped runaways from Virginia.

While it is commonly thought slaves were trying to escape to Canadian cities, such as Montreal as seen here, in reality most were not attempting to go to specific places, but instead were just trying to escape from the horrors of slavery. They went to anyplace where life hopefully was better and more secure, and where they were able to live in peace—where they weren’t beaten and required to toil long hours in terrible conditions.

Many slaves fled to Cuba or Florida or Mexico. In the swamps of Florida, they lived amongst the Native American Seminoles and were known as black Seminoles.

Many escaped slaves found refuge in free black communities in northern cities and lived among houses, such as these owned by free blacks.

Here they were helped by free blacks to find work, shelter, obtain an education in this integrated school, and could more easily hide in the established community.

Most of the people involved in the Underground Railroad were just normal, everyday people like us.

They were farmers, merchants, escaped slaves, such as those in the swamps of Louisiana, free Blacks, such as Lewis Hayden an
active person on the Underground Railroad in Boston, and people with deep religious beliefs that prompted them to help slaves on the run.

There were many heroes, including those who were fleeing for their freedom and lives.

One of the bravest and most well-known people on the Underground Railroad was Harriet Tubman.

As a slave on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, she worked fields like this one, developing a strong body and will.

Upon hearing of her impending sale to a Southern plantation, she chose to take the risk of escaping to the North. Trudging through marshes, swamps, and rivers, she made her way to where she felt safer—the North.

Called the “Moses of her People,” Harriet Tubman returned 19 times to guide her parents, family, and other slaves to freedom.

Later she established this home for elderly free slaves in Auburn, New York.

Others who fought hard to help runaway slaves included the Quaker who was referred to as the President of the Underground Railroad, Levi Coffin.

It is estimated that he guided thousands of runaways fleeing through the countryside of Ohio and Indiana.

In most cases, fugitive slaves stayed or settled where they found safety, shelter, employment, and food. One such place was Rokeby, a sheep farm in Ferrisburg, Vermont, owned by the Robinsons, a Quaker family.

Original letters tell us that runaway slaves lived and worked for wages at Rokeby Farm for the Robinsons.

Also for a number of years, the Robinsons conducted a school for black and white children.

One such runaway who we know lived and worked there was named Jessie.
The majority of escapees were likely to be young men ages 18 to 30. They were tough, hard, desperate, and often armed. While we do not have a painting or photograph of Jesse, he probably looked something like this.

Jesse faced danger everywhere he went—someone, anyone, could capture him, brutally punish him, and maybe even kill him.

From original letters, we know that Jesse was a slave in Perquimans County, North Carolina. Jessie labored on a plantation located near Albermarle Sound. He probably worked long hours in fields like this one, recently planted with cotton.

While we do not know the specifics of Jessie’s escape to Ferrisburg, Vermont, like many slaves, he faced a difficult and dangerous journey totaling over 500 miles. If Jesse was lucky, he sailed on a boat from Albermarle Sound, North Carolina, to a northern city, such as Philadelphia, New York, or Boston.

But most fugitives, like Jesse, made the slow and arduous journey on foot, through swamps and over dirt roads.

If fortunate enough, he might be offered a ride on a wagon pulled by mules or horses. Or find a boat he could paddle. He may have slept in the forest or perhaps he hid in a barn and slept under the hay. He probably ate whatever he could get his hands on, including berries, roots, or wild game.

If fortunate, runaways like Jesse were taken in by those sympathetic to their hardships. These “safe houses” served as temporary stopping points for slaves on the move. Perhaps you have a home in your community in which slaves were harbored.

Runaway slaves were lodged where there was extra room in the house, cellar, or barn.

Once he arrived at Rokeby Farm, Jesse was relatively safe, and able to rest, visit, and work. Jessie earned at least $150 working at the Rokeby’s sheep farm over one to two years. He wanted to use this money to purchase his freedom.

We do not know if Jesse ever purchased his freedom. Perhaps he made the 70-mile trip along Lake Champlain to the Canadian border.
While actual escape routes are difficult to trace, this map illustrates what is believed to be the general flow of fugitive slaves.

Slaves in the Deep South found refuge in Florida, Cuba, and Mexico, while slaves in the more northern southern states fled to Canada and states such as New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont.

There are many well-known escapes along the Underground Railroad. One famous escape involves a slave nicknamed “Box Brown,” who traveled in a box on a train between Richmond and Philadelphia.

It became ever more difficult and dangerous for slaves to escape to freedom. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, permitting the recapture and extradition of escaped slaves in the entire United States.

Bounty hunters raided northern cities capturing both escaped slaves and Free Blacks, shackled them and returned them to slavery.

Tensions between North and South continued to grow. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* focused attention on the atrocities of slavery. It increased Northern sympathies against slavery.

The Dred Scott Decision further widened the gap between North and South when the Supreme Court found that Scott, a slave brought into a free state by his owner, was not recognized as a U.S. citizen because he was considered property.

In 1861, the Civil War broke out, with slavery being one of the central issues for which hundreds of thousands fought and died.

African-Americans, escaped slaves, and Free Blacks contributed to this cause serving as soldiers, nurses, guides and spies.

The Underground Railroad played an important role in this struggle by not only providing a means to freedom for thousands of slaves, but it served as a festering reminder that slavery was an institution which had to end. The close of the Civil War saw an end to slavery in America.
By studying the Underground Railroad, its perils and rewards, we can shine a light on the many brave men and women of all races who risked their lives for the sake of freedom.

VIDEO QUIZ

Students may write the answers to the following questions on a separate piece of paper or on Blackline Master 1, Video Quiz

1. Slaves, like land or a house, were considered ____________.

2. A person who spoke out against slavery was called an ____________.

3. Slaves enabled southern plantation owners to obtain wealth by growing sugar, indigo, and ________________.

4. Harriet _______________ was a heroic figure on the Underground Railroad making 19 mission to free slaves.

5. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a book titled _______________ that helped the nation understand the tragedy of slavery.
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:  
Escape from Slavery  
Video Quiz

Directions: At the end of the video, there is a short quiz. You may write your answers to the quiz on this sheet.

1. Slaves, like land or a house, were considered ____________.

2. A person who spoke out against slavery was called an _________.

3. Slaves enabled southern plantation owners to obtain wealth by growing sugar, indigo, and ____________.

4. Harriet _______________ was a heroic figure on the Underground Railroad making 19 mission to free slaves.

5. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote a book titled ______________________ that helped the nation understand the tragedy of slavery.
Directions: Using the above map of probable routes of fugitive slaves traveling the Underground Railroad, answer the following questions. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. To what areas would runaway slaves from Georgia most likely escape to?

2. To which two areas would slaves in Louisiana likely escape?

3. After Jesse (the fugitive slave discussed in video) escaped from Perquimens County, North Carolina, describe his possible route(s) to Vermont. Trace his route in color pencil on the above map.

4. What modes of travel would Jesse have used in order to reach safety in Ferrisburg, Vermont?

5. What were the two most likely destinations of slaves fleeing states in the northern part of the South?

6. Locate your town on the map. What fugitive slave routes are closest to your community?

7. What modes of transportation might fugitive slaves traveling near or through your community have used? Where might they have stayed?
Underground Railroad Timeline

Directions: Cut out the following descriptions of historical events and place along an Underground Railroad Timeline in the correct chronological order. Create your own timeline on a separate piece of paper starting with 1793 and ending with 1865.

⭐ Frederick Douglass begins publication of his abolitionist newspaper *The North Star*.

⭐ Cotton gin patented leading to the increased need for slave labor on large cotton plantations.

⭐ Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* published.

⭐ Harriet Tubman escaped and later led 19 missions to the South to free slaves.

⭐ The Civil War ends, and slavery is formally abolished.

⭐ Fugitive Slave Act is passed, enacting stricter laws against slaves seeking refuge in free states.

⭐ The Civil War begins with slavery being one of the leading issues.

⭐ William Lloyd Garrison begins publication of the abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*.

⭐ The Dred Scott Decision determined a slave to be property and had no rights in court.

⭐ The Emancipation Proclamation becomes effective, declaring slaves in the South free.

⭐ American Anti-Slavery Society formed.

⭐ Elija Lovejoy, publisher of an anti-slavery newspaper, had his printing press destroyed; first person to be killed defending freedom of the press.
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:
Escape from Slavery

Crossword

Down
1. an individual who held strong anti-slavery views
2. a group of enslaved individuals transported together for sale
3. a person held in servitude as human property to another
4. one who helped escaping persons move from station to station on the Underground Railroad
5. a person who was not a free person and was considered property
6. groups of people who aided slaves on the run by providing shelter and food.

Across
7. slave who sued for his freedom after being taken into free territory by owner
8. female slave (last name only) who escaped to freedom and later made 19 missions to free slaves
9. abolitionist newspaper published by William Lloyd Garrison
10. woman (last name only) who was well-known Abolitionist and former slave
11. famous Abolitionist, publisher, and activist on Underground Railroad
12. a movement in the United States from the early 19th century on to help bondsmen escape from slavery and reach freedom

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Directions: Take a few minutes to study the above photographs illustrating the escape of the fugitive slave nicknamed “Box Brown,” then answer the following questions.

1. Describe how “Box Brown” traveled during his escape.

2. Using a map, measure the length from Richmond, Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; how long do you think the journey lasted?

3. Why did he want to go to Philadelphia?

4. What precautions do you think he made to ensure that he arrive safely?

5. Imagine that you are “Box Brown.” Write a short essay or poem on what he may have experienced along his trip. Describe the sounds, emotions, environmental conditions, pain, etc., that he may have experienced.
Directions: Take a couple of minutes to study the above broadside that was posted in Boston, Massachusetts. A broadside is commonly referred to today as a poster or notice. They were used frequently to communicate important news. After you have studied the broadside, answer the following questions. Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. For whom was the broadside written?

2. What group of people might have written, published, and posted the broadside?

3. Describe in your own words the basic message being stated in the broadside.

4. What law greatly increased the ease of operation of slave catchers in northern cities?

5. Describe any broadsides or notices that you have noticed in your community or school. What messages do they provide? How does their urgency compare with the one above?

6. Create your own broadside with a message that you think is important.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:
Escape from Slavery
Beware of the Slave Catchers

CAUTION!!
COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston.
For your own ORDER OF THE MAYOR &
ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
And that you already have actually provided in
KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING
SLAVERS. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY,
and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, refrain
them in every possible manner, as we have
ORDER on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.

APRIL 26, 1850.
Jesse’s Freedom at Stake

Directions: Carefully read the following excerpts from correspondence between Ephram Elliott, Jesse’s master in North Carolina and the abolitionist Rowland Robinson, a Quaker in Ferrisburg, Vermont, who is safely harboring Jesse. After reading through the excerpts, answer the questions. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room. Letters are courtesy of Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburg, Vermont, and Sheldon Museum in Middlebury, Vermont.

Letter from Ephram Elliott to Robinson
April 19th 1837
Perquimans County, North Carolina

Robert T. Robertson:
Your letter of 12th March is before me in regard to my slave Jesse (h)is situation at this time places it in his power to give me what he thinks proper. But I do not feel disposed to make any title for him for less that Three Hundred Dollars which is not more than one third what I could have had for him before he absconded. . . . If he should be disposed to give me the above sum he can forward the money to some one with instruction to take a Bill of sale.
Respectfully your friend,
Ephram Elliott

Response from Robinson to Elliott
3rd of 5th 1837

Ephram Elliott::
Thy letter of the 19th which was received last evening. I regret to (?) that the sum thou requires for the freedom of Jesse places this desirable object - the most anxious wish of his heart beyond his reach. Since leaving thy service he has by his industry and economy laid up $150 and he is willing to give the whole of this sum for his freedom: and the whole of his savings is all that he can offer - for much as I and his other friends here may desire his liberty I am bound to inform thee without the least wish to offend that we cannot consciously contribute anything toward the purchase of a slave even for his liberation; because we believe it would be recognizing a principle which God forbids. . . .
Thy friend,
RTR

1. Who was Ephram Elliott and who was Rowland Robinson?

2. To what is the sum of money discussed in the letters referring?

3. How did Jesse earn the $150?

4. Why do think that Robinson said that “we cannot consciously contribute anything toward the purchase of a slave even for his liberation”?

5. What would you have done if you were in the shoes of Rowland Robinson?
THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:
Escape from Slavery
Internet Lesson

Directions: Find the National Park Services Underground Railroad Home Page at the following address: http://www.nps.gov/undergroundrr/contents.htm

Click on Summary of the Underground Railroad Study

1. Why did Congress direct the National Park Service to study the Underground Railroad?

2. What was the first major finding?

Go back - Click on Purpose and Background


Go back - Click on History and Geography of the Underground Railroad

4. What was the triangular trade?

5. Where did slave resistance occur?
## Key Figures in the Fight Against Slavery

Directions: The people listed in the chart below were key individuals who were instrumental in the fight against slavery. Some were abolitionists who spoke and wrote against slavery. Others were active members on the Underground Railroad aiding fleeing slavery in the pursuit of freedom.

After each person’s name write the approximate date or range of dates during which they were active, and also explain the role they played in the fight against slavery.

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<thead>
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