

Harriet's Underground Railroad

By: AMAIA



The Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad is not a real railroad! The Underground Railroad helped slaves from South get to freedom in the North. Slaves ran on the Underground Railroad to stay safe while escaping. Sometimes they got help to hide but sometimes they had to hide alone. The Station Masters made the slaves comfortable when they were there. They disagreed with slavery. The Station Masters let them sleep and fed them. The railroad workers and conductors led you to the next station. This is how slaves got freedom.

How the Underground Railroad got its Name

There was a slave name Tice Davids. In 1831 Tice Davids made a great escape from his plantation owners. The owner couldn't figure out to where Davids had gone. The owner said He must of gone on a underground road. Rumor spread the news about Tice Davids. Rumors were saying Davids had escaped on a Underground Railroad. Slavery began in 1619. The Underground Railroad didn't get its name until the 1800s but slaves were escaping long before then. And that is how the Underground Railroad got it name.

Underground Railroad Escapes

Slaves would have to hide somewhere for days or maybe weeks or even months before they could come out of their hiding spot. The slaves would need a signal so they know it was safe to go and they have help. Slaves would face dangers like getting caught and wild animals. In order for a slave to escape they had to be brave and cautious. Slaves would eat anything they saw and when they cook they would have to be very very careful so no one saw the smoke. This is how dangerous and long the slaves' journey was.

Clever Disguises

Some slaves wore disguises and some of them dressed up like a funeral group.

William and Ellen Craft were two famous slaves Who Used a disguise. Ellen was Williams White owner and William was her slave. Ellen was light-skinned so she could dress like a Plantation owner. Ellen had a bandage over 1 of her eyes then she had a cast on one of her arms. That way she didn't have to sign papers saying she was Williams owner. Ellen also cut her hair (really short). Her owners neighbor was right next to her on the train and didn't even recognize her.

Special Signals and Codes

Slaves, conductors, and station masters all used a secret code. Not just one secret code a bunch of secret codes. Everything related to escaping had to be secret. A station master would send someone down to the next safe house to tell them (in code) that someone will be staying at their house. When slaves arrived at the safe house they would knock a certain amount of time to let the person know (Some of them threw rocks at the window). Mr. Piatt and Mrs. Piatt who lived in Ohio disagreed on slavery. Mr. Piatt was a judge so he was a rule follower. Mrs. Piatt did not like slavery. Mr. Piatt and Mrs. Piatt had a statue in front of their house. So whenever Mr. Piatt was at work Mrs. Piatt put a flag in the statue's hand which meant slaves are welcome. And when Mr. Piatt was home Mrs. Piatt took the flag off (this meant "please go to another station").

Harriet Tubman's Early Life

No one knows her exact birthdate, but she was probably born around 1820. She was born in Bucktown, Maryland. Her grandparents were captured in West Africa. Her mother and father were born as slaves. When she was born, her parents named her Araminta.

She started to babysit her plantations owner's children when she was 5. When she was 6, she started to weave, but she also started to be rebellious. When her owner took her to the swamp they told her to get muskrats from traps but she ended up letting them free. The owners kept giving her away to other families to work because she wasn't following all the rules.

When Harriet Tubman was 13, she got injured. A man said he was going to the village store (he didn't get permission). Harriet followed him. But they got caught by the overseer. The overseer was going to whip the man, but Harriet stepped between the two men. Instead of the man getting hit Harriet got hit with a heavy weight (he meant to hit the man). Harriet's skull was crushed and she had blackouts for the rest of her life. When Harriet was better she went back to the field. Harriet could do anything a man could do because she was very strong. Her father taught her about the woods. Harriet saw family members working sunrise to sunset. Then she started thinking of a new life for her family and her. Once in awhile Harriet would fall asleep and when she woke up she wouldn't remember her falling asleep. She would have good and bad dreams in her mind.

Harriet's Plan

In Harriet's twenties Harriet met John Tubman. He had been a Slave But now he was a free man. They got married. She heard from rumors that she was going to be sold and sent farther south. Mr. Brodess doesn't have much money. Linah was sold south and Ben was in jail and almost sold south. Harriet didn't want to be sold, but she did want freedom for the rest of her life. After she heard you're going to be sold south she wanted to go north. Her husband said it was too dangerous and her two brothers gave up so she decided to go by herself.

Harriet's Big Escape

Harriet had directions to 1 of the station houses on the Underground Railroad but She was scared her owners would be waiting for her there. But when she arrived the woman took her in and welcomed her and gave her food and water. One of the stationmaster's put Harriet into a wagon and covered her up with a Burlap bag and vegetables and then she was driven to the other station. Sometimes Harriet had to walk at night all by herself. She would have to look for moss or the North Star to help her get North. In the day she sometimes got help to hide. Harriet traveled from Bucktown, Maryland to Delaware and then to Pennsylvania. When she got to Pennsylvania she was free. A woman told her to change her name so that she had a free name. She changed her name from Araminta to Harriet Tubman. She went to Philadelphia and worked as a dishwasher and a cook. She also met abolitionists (people who wanted to end slavery).

Harriet and the Underground Railroad

Harriet was brave enough to go after her whole family to get them free. In 1850 she first went to Maryland to get her sister and her sister's children. She made several trips to get more of her family. She rescued more of her brothers and sisters and their families. She also went to get her husband but he had married someone else.

Harriet made 19 trips back to Maryland to get 300 hard-working slaves. Slave owners offered a \$40,000 reward for her capture. In 1857 she was able to rescue her parents. They moved to Canada and then to Auburn, New York.

Harriet Tubman's Later Life

During the Civil War Harriet was a spy for the union. She spied on the Confederate Army and brought back important information. Harriet took of hurt soldiers and did so much more. After the war Harriet wasn't paid for how much work she did during the Civil War. Sarah Bradford helped Harriet. She wrote a book about her and gave her the money. Harriet married Nelson Davids in 1870 and lived with him for 18 years until he died in 1888. Harriet built the Tubman House where she took care of sick and elderly African Americans. Harriet died in 1913 at the age of 93. Harriet was rebellious, brave, and important. Even though her life was very hard she was always doing something for others.