



North to Freedom The Underground Railroad to Canada

Mapping the Settlements

The Underground Railroad was a system of routes and safe houses used by escaping enslaved people on their journey to freedom. Many of the fugitives hoped to reach Canada so that they would be free from the threat of capture. To help students understand this important time in the history of the United States, they will watch the film, *North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad* and *North to Freedom: The Underground Railroad to Canada*. They will also read stories about the Underground Railroad and research information on this topic using appropriate websites. The students will complete a map of Michigan and Ontario for this period in history, showing major Canadian settlements for the runaways. They will select one site for further research. They will use this information to create a labeled drawing of one notable aspect of the site. They will display and explain their information

Grade Level: Middle School

National U.S. History Standard

ERA 4: EXPANSION AND REFORM (1801-1861)

STANDARD 4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.

- STANDARD 4a
The student understands the abolitionist movement.

Michigan Benchmarks

I.2.M.S.1

- Use narratives and graphic data to describe the settings that shaped development of Michigan as a state and the United States as a nation during the eras prior to Reconstruction.

V.1.MS.2

- Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make maps, graphs and tables.

Materials

Classroom set of atlases or maps of the United States and Canada with cities labeled

Colored pencils and markers

Copies of Michigan and Ontario outline map found below. These can be downloaded from: *Free Blank Outline Maps*. About, Inc. 19 October 2006
<http://canadaonline.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=canadaonline&zu=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.canadainfolink.ca%2Fblankmap.htm>

Hill, Daniel. *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*. Stoddart Books: Toronto, 1995. (This book is out of print, but can still be found in libraries and on the Internet. It is well worth the hunt.)

North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad and *North to Freedom: The Underground Railroad to Canada*. Film. Oak Park, MI: Phar Productions, 2006.

Poster board, about 8 sheets

Research links for the Underground Railroad:

The Black Thread in the Canadian Tapestry. 17 October 2006
<http://www.blackhistoricalmuseum.com/index.htm>

Follow the Drinking Gourd. 17 October 2006
<http://www.pocanticohills.org/tubman/gourd.htm>

Testimony of the Canadian Fugitives. From Revolution to Reconstruction. 17 October 2006
<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1826-1850/slavery/fugitxx.htm>

The Underground Railroad. National Geographic Online. 17 October 2006
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>

The Underground Railroad. Ontario Black History Society. 17 October 2006
<http://www.blackhistorysociety.ca/URR.htm>

Underground Railroad Routes 1860. 17 October 2006

<http://education.ucdavis.edu/NEW/STC/lesson/socstud/railroad/Map.htm>

What Was the Underground Railroad? 17 October 2006

<http://www.kathimitchell.com/undrr.html>

Directions

The students continue their exploration of the story of the Underground Railroad by watching the film *North to Freedom: The Underground Railroad to Canada* after having watched *North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad*. As the students watch, have them record the names of the settlements in Canada that are mentioned. They read or listen to books on the topic and research information on the Internet about the Underground Railroad. Through discussion and questioning the students understand that this was not a real railroad, but a system of routes and safe houses that escaping enslaved people used on their way to freedom.

Using maps found in their textbooks and the one that follows the students trace with their finger, various routes of the Underground Railroad to Michigan and then to Canada. The teacher leads them in a discussion of what these particular routes have in common. Ideas such as water passages, flat land, as direct as possible a route to freedom and help along the way might be brought up. Discuss the fact that after 1850 the escaping slaves had to go all the way to Canada to be safe. This journey took them many weeks and sometimes even months as they had to walk most of the way.

Using atlases and their textbooks, the students locate and label the following Canadian settlements on an outline map of Ontario (found below). This is not a complete list, as people settled in many parts of Canada.

- Dawn Institute near Dresden, Ontario
- Refugees' Home Society of Sandwich, near Windsor, Ontario
- Puce in Essex County, Ontario
- (New) Buxton, Elgin
- Wilberforce north of London, Ontario
- Amherstburg, Ontario
- St. Catherines, Niagara
- Toronto

Once the maps are complete discuss what they have in common such as proximity to the border and to water. Students might also speculate that the areas were sparsely populated in the 1800s and once a few people settled there more came because they would be offered assistance.

Divide the students into groups, with each team selecting one of the settlements listed above for further research. Each group is to create a poster which depicts one aspect of life in that area for the new settlers. Their poster should contain a title, a small insert map and a labeled picture. Once all the posters are completed, they are displayed around the room. The students then discuss what qualities of character the people who settled here

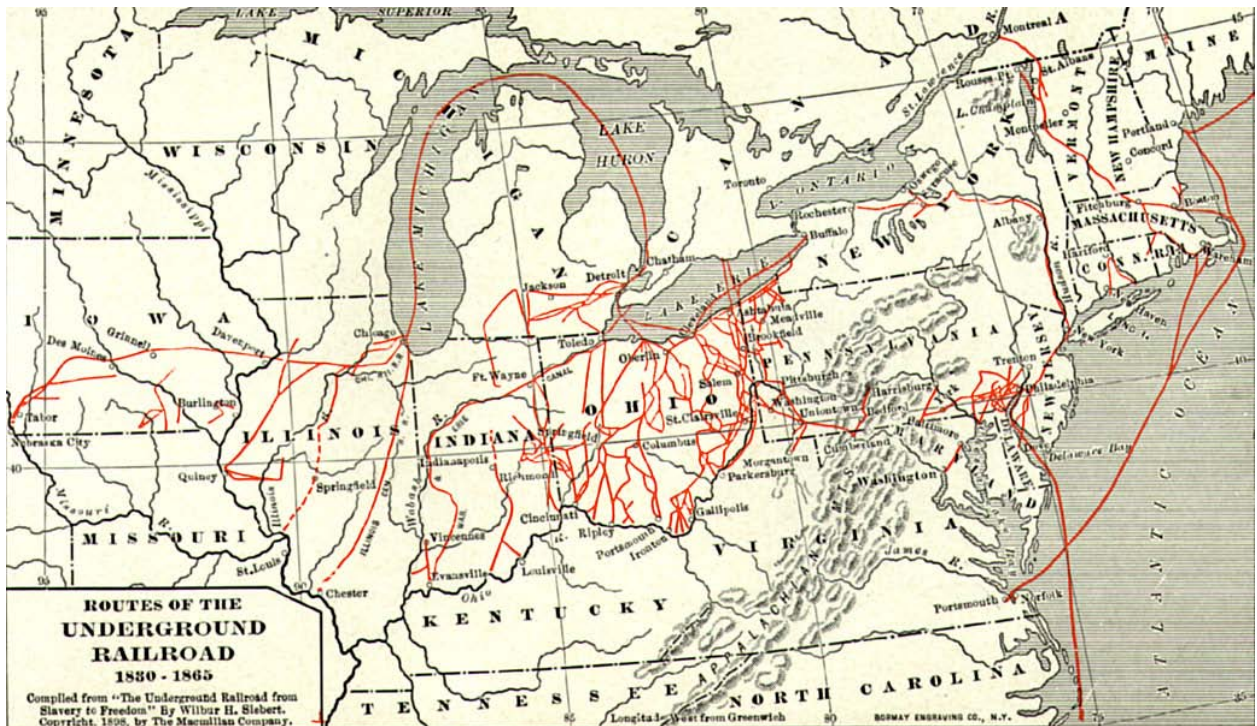
probably embodied to be able to flee from bondage, make the long, hard trek and settle in another country. The students are asked to think about how they would have handled such a situation.

Lesson written by Sharon Goralewski, 2006



“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” in Dresden, Ontario

Routes of the Underground Railroad 1830-1865



From *Underground Railroad*. Wikipedia. 17 October 2006.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_Railroad#The_Route

Reduced map of the Underground Railroad. Original source:

<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/CWPics/86139.jpg>

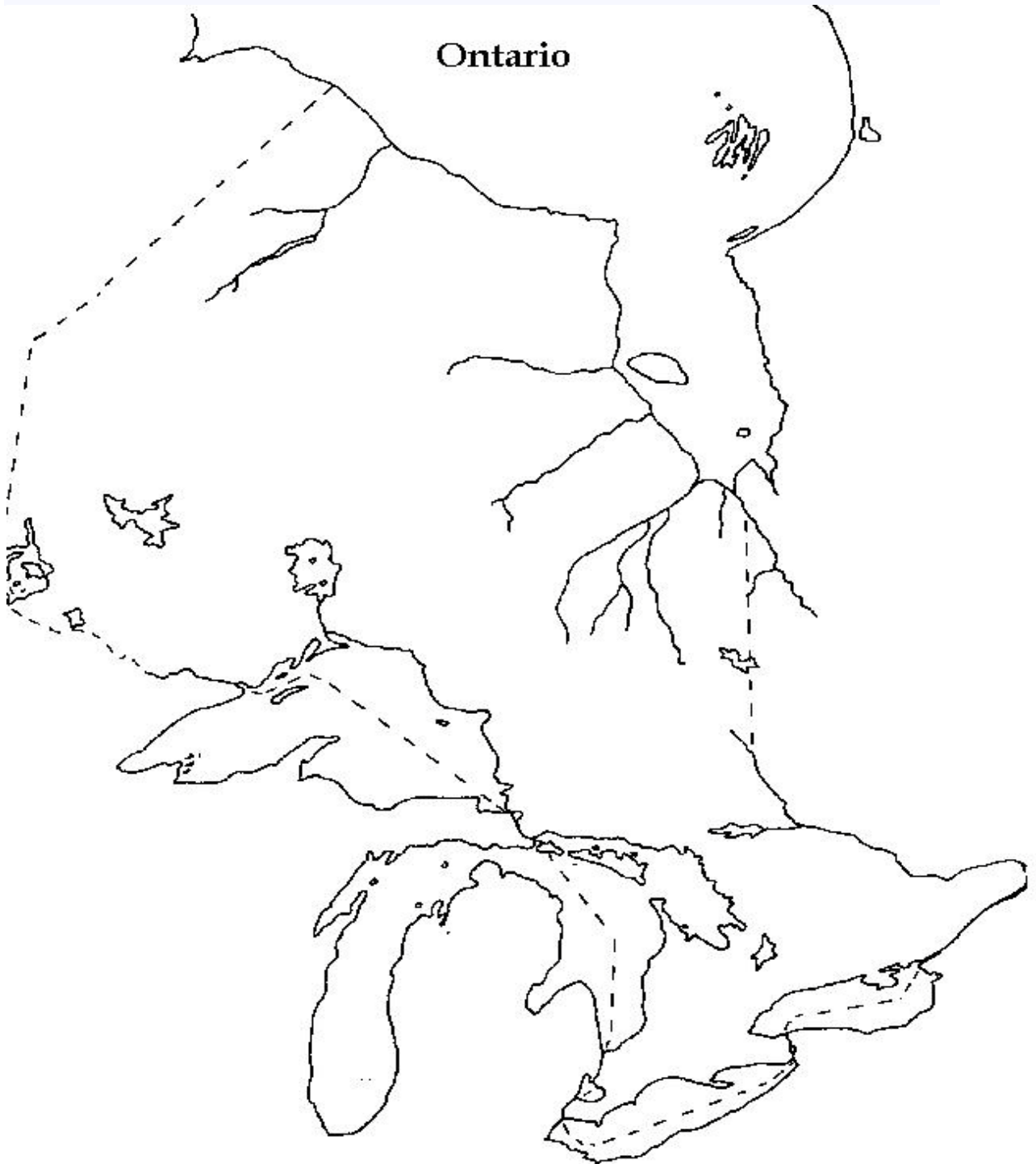
Copyrighted originally in 1895.

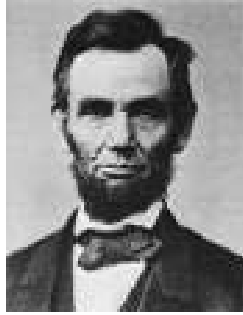


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Name _____ Date _____

Locate and label the sites of African-American settlements in Canada in the 1800s on the map below. Use the list of Canadian settlement discussed in class and in the film.





North to Freedom The Underground Railroad to Canada

Quotes of Freedom

The Underground Railroad was a system of routes and safe houses used by escaping enslaved people on their journey to freedom. Many of the fugitives hoped to reach Canada so that they would be free from the threat of capture. To help students understand this important time in the history of the United States, they will watch the films, *North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad* and *North to Freedom; The Underground Railroad to Canada*. They also read stories about the Underground Railroad and research information on this topic using appropriate websites. The students read a variety of quotations from people who lived during the time of slavery in the United States. They put the quotes in their own words and discuss what the meaning of the quotation was then and what implications it might have for today. Finally they write a quotation of their own.

Grade Level: Middle School

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- STANDARD 4a
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Michigan Benchmarks

I.2.M.S.2

- Identify and explain how individuals in history demonstrated good character and personal virtue.

Materials

Hill, Daniel. *The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada*. Stoddart Books: Toronto, 1995. (This book is out of print, but can still be found in libraries and on the Internet. It is well worth the hunt.)

North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad and *North to Freedom: The Underground Railroad to Canada*. Film. Oak Park, MI: Phar Productions, 2006.

Quotes of Freedom worksheet (found below), one copy for each student.

Research links for the Underground Railroad:

The Black Thread in the Canadian Tapestry. 17 October 2006

<http://www.blackhistoricalmuseum.com/index.htm>

The Underground Railroad. National Geographic Online. 17 October 2006

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>

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What Was the Underground Railroad? 17 October 2006

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Directions

The students learn of the history of the Underground Railroad by watching the films *North to Freedom: Michigan's Underground Railroad* and *North to Freedom: The Underground Railroad to Canada*. They discuss the courage and fortitude of the people who escaped and those who helped them. To further this information, they complete the worksheet, "*Quotes of Freedom*" which can be found below. The students may use their books and the Internet if available to research the source of the quote.

Once everyone has had time to complete the worksheet, a guided discussion follows. The people who were quoted are studied and the meaning of their words examined. The students are then asked to think of a situation today where people are being treated unjustly. On the back of their worksheet they are to write a one-sentence description of the situation. They are then to write their own "quote" about how they feel. Have them put the saying in quotation marks. Ask if some of the students are comfortable sharing the information they have written with the class.

Background notes:

Harriet Tubman, a former slave, was a conductor on the Underground Railroad who led many enslaved people to freedom using the Underground Railroad.

Frederick Douglass was one of the foremost leaders of the abolitionist movement. A former slave who escaped to freedom, he helped many others on their journey.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, abolitionist, anti-slavery writer and author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States, was president during the Civil War.

Harriet Tubman



Frederick Douglass



Harriet Beecher Stowe



Lesson written by Sharon Goralewski, 2006

Name _____ Date _____

Quotes of Freedom

Here are four quotes from well-known people. Read them carefully, thinking about life in the 1800s and the UGRR. On the lines below each one, rewrite it in your own words.

"I never run my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."

---Harriet Tubman

"No man can put a chain around the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck." ---Frederick Douglass

"I won't be taken Eliza; I'll *die* first! I'll be free or I'll die!" ---Harriet Beecher Stowe (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*)

"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy."

---Abraham Lincoln

North to Freedom

The Underground Railroad in Michigan and to Canada

Special Vocabulary Terms for the UGRR

Conductors – Brave men and women who guided the escaping travelers on their journey to freedom in the north.

Jordan or Canaan – The promised land of freedom, often meaning Canada.

Passengers – The enslaved people who traveled by foot, wagon and boat to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Promised Land – Underground Railroad code for Canada.

Stations (or Depots) - Safe houses or other buildings where the fleeing enslaved people could rest and hide on their journey.

Station Keepers - The people who opened their homes to the escaping passengers along the Underground Railroad.

Stockholder – Code for someone who donated food, clothing or money to the Underground Railroad.

UGRR – Abbreviation for the Underground Railroad.

Underground Railroad – A secret system of safe houses and routes that helped enslaved people escape to freedom. It was not an actual railroad.

General Vocabulary Terms for the UGRR

abolition – the legal end of African American slavery

abolitionist – a person who believed that slavery should be ended immediately, or abolished

agricultural economy – an area where the main income is derived from farming

bondage – under the control of another

emancipation – the freeing from slavery or other control

enactment – passing of a law

enslaved people – people who are owned by others and can be sold against their own will

fugitive – someone who is fleeing from the law

Fugitive Slave Law – laws that governed the return of runaway slaves, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was much stronger than the 1793 one as it required state and federal officials to help in the capture of runaways

plantation – a large farm with many workers, usually in the South

Quaker – a common term or nickname for a member of the religious Society of Friends, they often helped run-away slaves.

slave – a person who is owned by another and can be sold at the master's will

states' rights - all rights not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution nor denied by it to the states

Uncle Tom's Cabin – a book written in 1852 by Harriet Beecher Stowe, it was the story of an enslaved man who was treated very cruelly by three different masters