
Nation Building

— Underground Railroad —

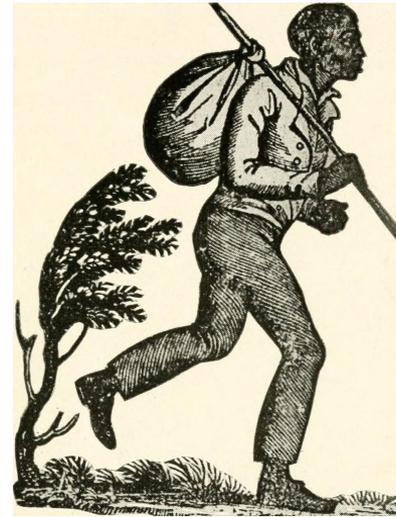
Agenda

1. What do we know so far?
 - History before War of 1812
 - Briefly how colonization affected aboriginal peoples
 - The Irish Potato Famine caused mass immigration to North America
2. Review Irish Potato Famine and Immigrant Experience

Underground Railroad

A few key points...

1. It was not underground
2. Nor was it a railroad
3. It was the largest North American freedom movement, and a highly secret one that transported the majority of escaped slaves from the Southern States to the Northern US and Canada



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 since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Shun them in every possible manner, as so many HOUNDS on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.
Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open.
APRIL 24, 1851.



Underground Railroad

The underground railroad was made possible due to **ABOLITIONISTS**:

- People who fought to **abolish** slavery. They established safe houses and took many risks to help runaway slaves get to the safety of Canada and the Northern United States.



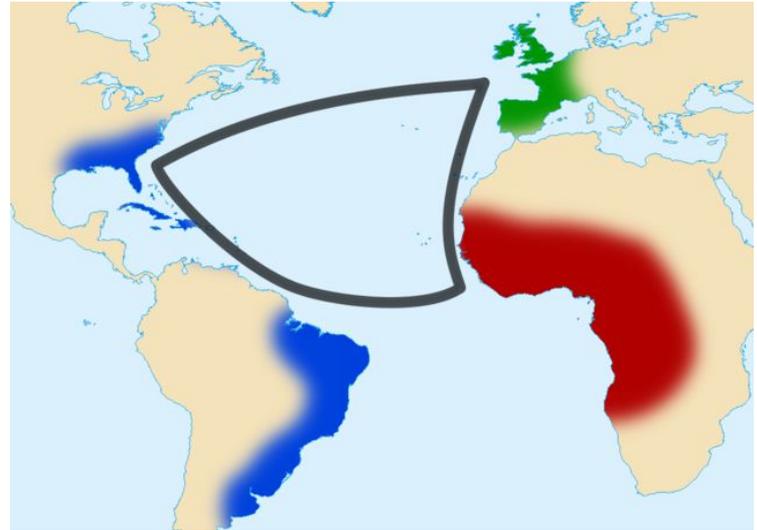
Slavery- Where and When?

Where and when did slavery begin?

In the 1400s the Portugese captured the first slaves in Africa

12,000,000 Africans were uprooted from their homeland and sold into a life of slavery between 1450-1850.

Of this total, 5% were delivered to British North America and to what later became the United States of America



Slavery in Canada

Compared to the US slavery in Canada was minimal... Why?

A short growing season meant there was not the same industry of cotton and sugar that was dependent on slaves for cheap labour.

Most slaves were domestic slaves, and a sign of wealth and status.



Slavery in Canada

When did it end?

In 1793, the **Upper Canada Abolition Act** introduced by Lieutenant Governor Colonel John Graves Simcoe, freed any slave entering what is now the province of Ontario, and stated that any child born to a slave mother would be freed at 25 years of age.

This act was later followed by the **British Imperial Act of 1833** (and became effective on August 1, 1834). It abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, including the developing country of Canada.



Slavery in the USA

The Fugitive Act of 1850 increased slave owners' rights regarding the capture and return of slaves, and even threatened free Blacks living in the Northern states. South of the Mason-Dixon Line, professional slave catchers would legally detain and hold anyone of African descent as a runaway slave; dogs were often used in the hunt for slaves.

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Slavery in the USA

The Fugitive Act also increased the flow of traffic along the Underground Railroad. It took the US about another thirty years and a bloody civil war before slavery was abolished in the Southern states. Many slaves freed themselves at the onset of the war, finding refuge behind the Union Army's lines.



The Underground Railroad

Because of the secrecy of the Underground Railroad, written records of those who took this route to freedom do not exist, nor do the numbers of the escapees. It is believed to have been in existence as early as 1837; some sources state even earlier. Historians and scholars have estimated that between 40,000 and 100,000 slaves escaped on the Underground Railroad. This number never presented a serious threat to the institution of slavery, but the escape stories filled slave owners with dread and fear.

How it worked

<http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/shows/list/underground-railroad/stories-freedom/underground-railroad-terminology/>

How did the slaves escape?

The journey to Canada was not an easy one. Fleeing slaves had to travel hundreds of miles on foot without a map, compass, often in the dark . They needed something to guide them...

ANY GUESSES?

The Drinking Gourd

The Gourd is the ladle that slaves drank from when they were working on plantations in the South...

So what?

Also the drinking gourd was the big dipper constellation and used as a reference point to find the North Star



What else was used?

Moss on trees

- Moss always grows on the North side of a tree, because it is shady



Lanterns in windows

- Hung on posts or placed in windows to indicate a safehouse



Was Canada the “Land of Promise”?

NO

Most African Americans did not find acceptance in Canada

African Americans usually stayed together, they formed tight knit communities in the Maritimes and other remote areas of Upper Canada

Many of these communities still exist within the Maritime provinces

Activity

You will be given a piece of writing about an influential figure throughout the time of slavery, abolition, and the underground railroad.

Complete the graphic organizer.

Historical Significance

1. How notable was the event or person at the time?
2. How widespread and lasting are the consequences or impacts after the event?
3. Has the event or person become symbolic or representative of key historical issues or trends?

Reflection

1. Should black history be covered more or less in high school social studies? Why or why not?
2. Is black history fairly represented in our textbooks? Why or why not?
3. Can all things that have occurred be covered? Why or why not?
4. How do **you** decide what is “important” in history?