

# THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



## Teacher Overview

Most of us have heard of the Underground Railroad and are familiar with its famous heroine-conductor, Harriet Tubman. Many may not know just how important a role Ohio played in slaves' escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad, where it is estimated that close to three thousand miles of Underground Railroad routes existed in the state.

The Ohio River marked the point between freedom and slavery in the years preceding emancipation. As part of the conditions of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Ohio outlawed slavery when it gained statehood in 1803, thus becoming a free state. Yet, just across the Ohio River, men and women were held in bondage in the slave-holding state of Kentucky. The river which separated the free state of Ohio from Kentucky became the symbolic and more often actual gateway to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Ohioans began aiding freedom seekers' escape on the Underground Railroad as early as 1810. The Underground Railroad was not a railroad at all, but was in fact a network of "stations" — safe houses and hiding places — for runaway slaves. Fugitive slaves were aided by both African-American and white "conductors" who guided escaped slaves to safety. Many of the railroad conductors were important abolitionists whose goal it was to end slavery, such as Levi Coffin of Cincinnati, and John Rankin and his family of Ripley, Ohio.

Though escaping to a free state, many fugitive slaves continued their journey to freedom by heading north to Canada. For some, it was because of the racism present in Ohio, but for no escaped slaves did getting to Ohio guarantee freedom, due to the Fugitive Slave law of 1850. Under this law, slaveholders had the right to recapture runaway slaves. In addition, the law required that the United States government help slave owners recapture their slaves. Anyone aiding escapees faced harsh penalties if caught. For this reason, many slaves continued their journey to freedom to Canada, out of reach of United States law.

With the Cincinnati area's intense involvement in the cause to end slavery, and assistance to passengers on the Underground Railroad, as well as its symbolic position on the Ohio River, it is no wonder that this city was chosen as the site for the *Underground Railroad Freedom Center*. A museum and education center, its mission is to preserve the history of these brave men and women, and to promote racial understanding and cooperation around the country and the world.

## Video Synopsis

In this heritage segment of *Our Ohio*, the hosts visit the *Underground Railroad Freedom Center* in Cincinnati, Ohio to find out more about Ohio's important role in the Underground Railroad.

## Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the Underground Railroad and Ohio's important role as a gateway to freedom. They will learn how brave men and women risked their lives to cross the Ohio river to escape slavery, and about the people who helped them on their journey.





## Ohio Academic Content Standards

Grade

3

### Benchmark : People in Societies

3. Interaction: Describe the experiences of African Americans under the institution of slavery.

Grade

4

### Benchmark: Social Studies Skills and Methods

1. Obtaining Information: Obtain information about state issues from a variety of print and electronic sources, and determine the relevance of information to a research topic:
  - e. Multimedia/Electronic Sources
3. Use primary and secondary sources to answer questions about Ohio history.
4. Describe how archeologists and historians study and interpret the past.
8. Formulate a question to focus research.
9. Communicate relevant information in a written report including acknowledgement of sources.

Grade

8

### Benchmark: People in Societies

4. Analyze the economic, geographic, religious and political factors that contributed to:
  - a. The enslavement of African Americans in North America;
  - b. Resistance to slavery

### Benchmark: Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities

1. Participation: Show the relationship between participating in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals including:
  - b. The Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement/Abolition of slavery.

### Materials

- ☐ Computer Lab/ Internet access
- ☐ Overhead Elmo projector
- ☐ Posterboard
- ☐ glue stick
- ☐ printer

### Teacher Vocabulary

Abolitionist	Primary source
Secondary source	Oral History

## Procedure

### ACTIVITY A: Primary Source Analysis - A Man Named Tom

1. Start by asking students how they think historians, archeologists, and curators learn about the past. Explain to students that historians must use evidence to interpret and analyze the past.
2. Write the words "Primary Source" on the board and have students offer examples of primary sources and write their responses on the board (photographs, letters, diaries, maps, songs, oral history interviews, etc.).
3. Based on the information in the overview, describe the history of the Underground Railroad in Ohio. Then, show the *Our Ohio* video segment "The Underground Railroad Freedom Center." Instruct students to write down the names of the abolitionist and the name of the house where many slaves sought refuge. Advise them to pay close attention when the historian is describing how he used primary source documents to learn about the slaves in the exhibit.
4. Finally, pass out **Worksheet A** and have students complete the document based questions.

### ACTIVITY B: Primary Source Analysis - Lucy Ann Warfield

1. Start by writing the words "oral history" on the board. Ask students to think about what an oral history interview is and offer examples. Explain that oral histories are another type of primary source.
2. Explain that oral histories are like interviews, but with specific goals to learn about specific events, or periods from the past. For example, an historian might conduct an oral history interview with a war veteran to find out more about the experiences of that person, and the war itself.
3. Tell students that they will be analyzing an oral history interview conducted by the U.S. government in the 1930s in order to learn more about slavery. The subject of the interview is a former slave named Lucy Ann Warfield.
4. Now, pass out **Worksheet B** and have students complete the document based questions.



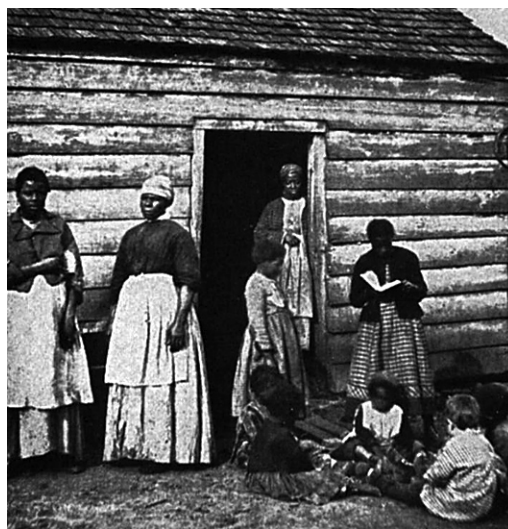
## Procedure

### ACTIVITY C: Underground Railroad Research Roadmap

1. Start by explaining how historians conduct research by visiting archives, libraries, historical sites, and reading books. Explain that though a powerful tool, the Internet is not the only place to go to conduct research. However, some archives and libraries have made collections of their primary sources available online.
2. Distribute **Worksheet C**. This activity will need to be done in a computer lab with Internet access and printer. Have students visit the Ohio Historical Society Web site *Ohiopix* at <http://www.ohiohistory.org/etcetera/exhibits/ohiopix/> in order to complete the Underground Railroad Research Roadmap.

### ACTIVITY D: You're the Historian

1. Refer to the *Our Ohio* video segment students viewed to help describe the mission and purpose of museums. Ask students to name examples of different types of museums (history, natural history, art, science, etc.). Ask students what it is they think museums do and write their examples on the board.
2. Next, have them offer examples of what components make up an exhibit in a museum. (examples would include artifacts, pictures, text, etc.)
3. Tell students they will create their own classroom museum made up of exhibits students will create themselves. Divide students into groups of three or four and distribute **Worksheet D**. They will use the three steps as outlined on the worksheet to create their own *Underground Railroad Freedom Center* exhibit based on the research they have already completed in **Activity C**.
4. Advise students that their exhibits should be on poster board or trifold boards, must be typed, neat, and creative. Tell them to model their work based on the exhibit design they have seen in museums.





## Answer Key

### ACTIVITY A:

#### Primary Source Analysis - A Man Named Tom

1. Tom is a runaway slave; for this reason a reward is being offered for his capture
2. Kentucky
3. Tom would likely head across the Ohio River and cross north to freedom
4. You can tell he had a hard life and was abused based on the description of his scars from whippings. It is also possible to argue that Tom may have tried to escape before or had rebelled against his owners based on the evidence of his beatings.
5. A person named B.L. Boston

### ACTIVITY B:

#### Primary Source Analysis - Lucy Ann Warfield

1. Jessamine County Kentucky
2. She did not know her age because her owners did not keep track; it is also likely that she and her family did not learn to read and write and could not keep records
3. The Civil War
4. She means that like chickens, slaves were treated like property
5. Lucy performed hard manual labor including tasks like splitting fence rails, building fences, breaking hemp, plowing fields, planting corn
6. Canada; she likely passed through Ohio
7. She possibly escaped through Ohio with the help of people like John Rankin, or other southern Ohio abolitionists or Underground Railroad conductors
8. They could be scared of beating or punishment
9. She would have gone to Canada to escape to avoid being recaptured and sent back to her owners under the Fugitive Slave Law
10. Perry

### ACTIVITY C:

#### Underground Railroad Research Road Map

Answers will vary based on the research subject; the Find It column should list who, what, when, where, and why facts. The Web address and image should be included for each.

### ACTIVITY D:

#### You're the Historian

All exhibits should include an introduction and conclusion paragraph, primary source images that include captions, and an exhibit title.



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## WORKSHEET A:

### Primary Source Analysis - "A Man Named Tom"

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read the primary source document below to answer the questions in your own words.

#### **\$150 REWARD**

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Monday July 11<sup>th</sup>, a negro man named

**TOM,**

about 30 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high; of dark color; heavy in chest; several of his jaw teeth out; and upon his body are several old marks of the whip, one of them straight down the back. He took with him a quantity of clothing; and several hats.

A reward of \$150 will be paid out for his apprehension and security, if taken out of the State of Kentucky; \$100 if taken in any county bordering on the Ohio river; \$50 if taken in any of the interior counties except Fayette; or \$20 if taken in the latter county.

july 12-84-tf

B. L. Boston

(Ohio Historical Society)

1. Who is Tom, and why is there a reward being offered for his capture?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. From where has Tom run away?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Based on what you have learned about the Underground Railroad, why might Tom be expected to be found near the Ohio River?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What can the description of Tom tell you about what his life must have been like? What evidence in the description of Tom's appearance supports this?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who is Tom's owner?

\_\_\_\_\_

## WORKSHEET B:

# Primary Source Analysis - "Lucy Ann Warfield"

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The following account is an excerpt from an oral history interview taken in the 1930s from a former slave named Lucy Ann Warfield, who at the time lived in Clark County, Ohio. Read the interview carefully to help answer the questions.

Lucy Ann Warfield

Ex-Slave, age said to be 117 years.

"I waz born en Jass'mi [**Jessamine**] County, Keintucky, but I can't say what year, kaze [**because**] white folks didn't keep no 'count of dey slaves ages. Dey wuz jes' like chickens -like many chickens.."

"I know I waz er married when deh wah [**war**] come...Nannie she say I'se about 117. But I jes doan know...My mother was Betsy Hawkins and my father was Milo Hawkins, how come us comer ter have de name of Hawkins, I caint say kaze [**because**] de only slave owners I knowed wuz Scotts en Perrys. Dey owned all our family...You see the Scott girl married en ter de Perry family, en dey jes give em er lot er slaves, en so all our fam'ly wuz der property."

"Dey nebber did give me er whipping, but dey sho done wuk me hard. I done er man's work on de place; putting up stone fences en rail fences, splittin rails, breakin hemp, plowin' fiel's, doin cawn [**corn**] plantin..."

"I member one of my mother's sisters run off en got safe en ter Canady [**Canada**]. She was a fine 'oman en she didn keer fer nothin' on'y ter be free. She done what more of dem orter [**ought to**] done -me too cuz I was grown en size long time before I wuz free -but dey was jes fraid."



(Ohio Historical Society)

Find the original document at: <http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam>





## WORKSHEET B:

# Primary Source Analysis - "Lucy Ann Warfield"

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read the primary source document on **page 7** to answer the questions in your own words.

1. In what state was Lucy Ann and her family enslaved?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why doesn't Lucy Ann know how old she is?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Lucy Ann describes being married by the time the war started. What war is Lucy Ann referring to?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you think Lucy Ann means when she explains that to the white people, slaves were like chickens?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What kind of work was Lucy Ann forced to do while she was a slave?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Lucy Ann describes her aunt's escape to freedom from Kentucky. Where did her aunt go, and what state did she likely pass through on her way?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Think about where Lucy Ann's family lived. Who might have helped Lucy Ann's aunt escape?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. According to Lucy Ann, fear kept slaves from escaping to freedom. What reasons did slaves have to be scared of running away?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Why would Lucy Ann's aunt have gone to Canada?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What was the name of the family who owned Lucy Ann when she was a slave?

\_\_\_\_\_



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## WORKSHEET C:

# Underground Railroad Research Road Map

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** You will use the following Web site <http://www.ohiohistory.org/etcetera/exhibits/ohiopix/> to find primary source examples that match the description in the list of people and places in the **Find it!** column in the organizer below. For each person, place, or thing you will list facts that describe its connection to the Underground Railroad. In the **Facts** column, be sure to include information like who, what, when, and where. As any responsible historian will tell you, you must cite your sources. In the **Source** box, include the Web address where you found your evidence. Finally, print out the image of the person, place, or thing you found and paste it in the **Image** box.

Find It!	Facts	Source	Image
A person who escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad			
An Abolitionist			
Safe House or Station on the Underground Railroad			
An agent or conductor on the Underground Railroad			
Ripley, Ohio			

## WORKSHEET D: You Be the Historian

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Historians and curators create exhibits and write books based on the primary source evidence they have found. Now that you have researched places and people on the Underground Railroad, you are ready to make your own exhibit, just like a curator at the *Underground Railroad Freedom Center*.

**Step 1:** Working as a group, compare each of your **Research Road Maps** to find a unifying theme for your exhibit. For example, one of your group members may have found an Underground Railroad station in Yellow Springs, while another may have found an escaped slave who settled in the town. You may decide that your theme will be "Yellow Springs and the Underground Railroad." Or, for example, you might find that you have gathered information that illustrates a route traveled on the Underground Railroad and decide that your theme is "The Journey North to Freedom."

**Step 2:** Once your group has decided on a theme, you can begin to organize your exhibit. Your exhibit should include an introduction paragraph, a conclusion paragraph, as well as pictures, maps, and other primary source images like letters. Use your **Research Road Map Source** and **Image** columns to help you locate the primary sources you found and print them in a larger size to fit your exhibit. Your exhibit should include at least one example from each **Find It!** box from your **Research Road Maps**.

**Step 3:** Now that you have written your introduction and conclusion about the people and places you have included in your exhibit, you will write a short caption for each of the visuals you are using in your exhibit. Then, using a poster board or trifold board, use a glue stick to attach your images and captions, as well as your introduction and conclusion. Remember to include the title of your exhibit. People will be coming to visit your exhibit in your own classroom museum. Make your exhibit as creative, neat, and attractive as possible.

