

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LESSON/ Charles H. Wright Museum and Library of Congress

R. Lockridge

LESSON TITLE: "THE NORTH STAR", REPOrTER

OBJECTIVES: Students are to act as reporters for Frederick Douglass' paper, The North Star. As a reporter their assignment is to research people involved in the Underground Railroad and do (a mock) interview or discuss their experience in an article for the paper. Students can read and study the life of Frederick Douglass by studying the Frederick Douglass Papers on the Library of Congress site. The timeline on this site is very informative.

Time Frame: This lesson should take about one week using a 50 min. class period and homework time for investigation.

Grade Level: This lesson is designed for 8th graders in American History.

Curriculum Fit: This lesson relates to the following G.L.C.E.'s:

8-U4.2.1-Comparing Northeast and the South-Compare and contrast the social and economic systems of the Northeast and the South with respect to geography and climate and the development of...

8-U4.3.2- Describe the formation and the development of the abolitionist movement by considering the roles of key abolitionist leaders and the response of southerners and northerners to the abolitionist movement.

Topic or Era: The topic is the Underground Railroad. The eras are U.S. Era 4 and 5.

Vocabulary: journalist, narrative, Underground Railroad, conductors, safe houses, patrollers (pattyroller or patterollers ,in dialect)

Materials: Internet access, projector, white board or chart paper, markers, paper, pens/pencils, graphic organizer sheets, excerpts of selected narratives.

*****Explain the dialect and the use of the "N" word as it was used in this time period...do not allow the "N" word in the articles students write.**

Preparation:

- Teacher should preview the Frederick Douglas timeline on the LOC site titled The Frederick Douglas Papers at the Library of Congress (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtm/doughome.html>) .
- Students should have a basic understanding of the components of a news article: (Who, What, When, Where, How, Why)
- Teacher should become familiar with the site (Slave Narratives) and select slave narratives for student use. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>
- Teachers may research site for additional Narratives that may give more reference on escape.

Procedures:

Day 1: Introduce students to the LOC website and the American Memory site on The Frederick Douglass Papers. View and discuss the time line of Frederick Douglass' life. Have students create a web/graphic organizer labeling factors from Frederick Douglass' life. (Middle circle with his name and the outside circles childhood, family, education, politics, career.) As the students read through the timeline have them fill in the different categories. Highlight his career as a journalist and note the various papers he was associated with. Tell them that they have been hired as reporters for his North Star paper to act as associate journalist. Their challenge will be to create news stories researching narratives of former slaves. Allow them to keep their graphic organizers to be turned in with their articles.

Day 2: Guide students to the site, Slave Narratives, just to familiarize them with it. Discuss the dialect and walk them through some of it. Read through selected pieces together. Refer to points on the Underground railroad. Discuss the concept and assess students prior knowledge. Note narratives that speak on runaways, or escape. Develop questions they would like to ask slaves about runaways or the Underground Railroad . Draft a list on the chart paper. Introduce, define and discuss vocabulary. Student's assignment is to develop answers to these questions and compile an news article on the adventures or story of a runaway on the Underground Railroad. Articles should include: **Who** - the person's name (fictional), **What**-the decision to escape, **When**- give a pre- Emancipation date, **Where** – where was the plantation and where did they escape to. (Can give extra credit if they trace

their route to Michigan.), **How**-details on escape and use of the help of people along the Underground Railroad, **Why**-what made them want to escape, what did they hope to find?

***If needed students could spend one class period in the Computer Lab and additional evening or two at home. Making this a 5 day assignment.

Students may complete this as a power point, news story –live, written report or video report.

Assessment: Teachers may score the time line organizer. News articles students write on escaping using the Underground Railroad are to be graded. (fictional)

Extension Assignments (Differential Assessment)

- As practice for writing news articles students may practice locating the who, what, when, where, how and why of current news articles or interviews .
- Students may also design a logo for the paper .
- Students may write/create a historical cartoon for the times.

Excerpts of Slave Narratives, on escaping slavery, from The Library of Congress.

Sample A.) Jeff Davis -Alabama

Alabama

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begin to watch for a chance to slip off. Many a one was cotched an' brung back. Dey knowed de penalty what dey would have to pay, an' dis cause some of 'em to git desp'rite. Druther dan to take a beatin' dey would choose to fight hit out 'twell dey was able to git away or die befo' dey would take de beatin'.

"Lots of times when de patterollers would git after de slaves dey would have de worse fight an' sometimes de patterollers would git killed. After de war I saw Ned, an' he tol' me de night he lef' the patterollers runned him for fo' days. He say de way he did to keep dem frum ketchin' him was he went by de woods. De patterollers come in de woods lookin' for him, so he jes' got a tree on 'em an' den followed. Dey figured dat he was headin' far de free states, so dey headed dat way too, and Ned jes' followed dem for as dey could go. Den he clumb a tree and hid whilst dey turned 'roun' an' come back. Ned went on wid out any trouble much. De patterollers use ter be bad. Dey would run de folks iffen dey was caught out after eight o'clock in de night, iffen dey didn' have no pass from de marsa.

"After de day's wuk was done there warn't anything for de slaves to do but go to bed. Wednesday night they went to prayer meetin'. We had to be in de bed by nine o'clock. Ever' night de drivers come 'roun' ter make sho' dat we was in de bed. I heerd tell of folks goin' to bed an' den gittin' up an' goin' to yuther plantation. On Sat'day de han's wukked 'twell noon. Dey had de res' of de time to wuk dey gardens. Ever' family had a garden of dere own. On Sat'day nights the slaves could polie for a while. Dey would have parties sometimes an' whiskey and some-brew for de servants. On Sundays we didn't do anything but lay 'roun' an' sleep, 'case we didn' lack to go to church. On Christmas we didn't ave to do no wuk; no more'n feed de stock an' do de li'l wuk 'roun' de house. When we got through wid dat we had de res' of de day to run 'roun'

Sample B.) Callie Williams-Alabama

Alabama

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at four o'clock and be at work by sunup. To do dis, dey mos' all de time cook breakfast de night befo'.

"Pappy was a driver under de overseer, but mammy say dat she stay at de little nursery cabin and look after all de little babies. Dey had a cabin fixed up with homemade cradles and things where dey put all de babies. Der mammies would come in from de field about ten o'clock to nurse 'em and den later in de day, my mammy would feed de youngest on pot-licker and de older ones on greens and pot-licker. Dey had skimmed milk and mush, too, and all of 'em stayed as fat as a butter balls, me among 'em. Mammy saw dat I always got my share.

"De slaves got rations every Monday night. Dere would be three pounds of meat and a peck of meal. Dere was a big garden dat all of 'em worked and dey had all de vegetables dey needed and dere was always plenty of skimmed milk. Dey cooked de meals on open fireplaces in de big iron 'spiders.' Dem was big pots hangin' over the fire from a hook. Dey do de cookin' at night and den warm it over the nex' day if dey wanted it dat way.

"While mammy was tendin' de babies she had to spin cotton and she was supposed to spin two 'cuts' a day. Four 'cuts' was a hard day's work. What was a cut? You oughta' know dat! Dey had a reel and when it had spun three hundred yards it popped. Dat was a "cut." When it had been spun, den another woman took it to de loom to make cloth for de slaves. Dey always took Saturday afternoon to clean up de clothes and cabins, 'case dey always had to start work on Monday mornin' clean as a pin. If dey didn't, dey got whupped for bein' dirty.

"Some of de niggers, after dey'd been beat, would try to run away and some of 'em got loose, but de patterollers caught a lot of 'em and den dey'd get it harder dan ever befo' and have shackles out on dere feet wid jes' enough slack for 'em to walk so dey could work.

Sample C.) George Young

Alabama

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whut give 'em fever, dey say. Us had to go out in de woods an' git May-Apple root an' mullen weed an' all sich to bile for to cyore de fever. Miss, whar was de Lord in dem days? Whut was He doin'?

"But some of 'em runned away, anyhow. My brother, Harrison, was one, an' dey sot de "nigger dogs" on him lack fox houn's run a fox today. Dey didn't run him down till 'bout night but finely dey catch-ed him, an' de hunters feched him to de do' an' say: "Mary Ann, here Harrison." Den dey turned de dogs loose on him agin, an' sich a screamin' ^{you} ~~yet~~ never hyared. He was all bloody an' Mammy was a-hollerin', 'Save him, Lord, save my chile, an' don' let dem dogs eat him up!' Mr. Lawler said, 'De Lord ain't got nothin' do wid dis here, an' hit sho' look lack He didn't,' 'caze dem dogs nigh 'bout chewed Harrison up. Dem was hard times, sho'.

"Dey didn't larn us nothin' an' didn't 'low us to larn nothin'. Iffen dey ketch us larnin' to read an' write, dey cut us han' off. Dey didn't 'low us to go to church, neither. Sometimes us slip off an' have a little prayer meetin' by usse'ves in a ole house wid a dirt flo'. Dey'd git happy an' shout an' couldn't nobody hyar 'em, 'caze dey didn't make no fuss on de dirt flo', an' one stan' in de do' an' watch. Some folks put dey head in de wash pot to pray, an' pray easy, an' somebody be watchin' for de overseer. Us git whupped fer ev'rything iffen hit was public knowed.

"Us wasn't 'lowed visit nobody from place to place, an' I seed Jim Dawson, dis here same Iverson Dawson' daddy; I seed him stobbed out wid fo' stobs. Dey laid him down on his belly an' stretch his han's out on bofe sides an' tie one to one stob, an' one to de yuther. Bofe his feet was stretch out an' tied to dem stobs. Dey dey whupped him wid a whole board whut you kiver a house wid. De darkies had to go dere in de night an' take him up in a sheet an' carry him home, but he

Sample D.) Richard Toler (Ohio)

brick-layin'. Ah was a blacksmith heah fo' 36 yea's. Learned it down at Tolah's.

"Ah stayed on the plantation during the wah, and jes' did what they tol' me. Ah was 21 then. And ah walked 50 mile to vote for Gen'l Grant at Vaughn's precinct. Ah voted fo' him in two sessions, he run twice. And ah was 21 the fust time, cause they come and got me, and say, 'Come on now. You can vote now, you is 21.' And thesh now - mah age is right thesh. 'Bout as close as you can get it.

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"Ah was close to the battle front, and I seen all dem famous men. Seen Gen'l Lee, and Grant, and Abe Lincoln. Seen John Brown, and seen the seven men that was hung with him, but we wasn't allowed to talk to any of 'em, jes' looked on in the crowd. Jes' spoke, and say 'How d' do.'

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| Sanford American History, and was published in 1784. But ah don't know where it is now, ah misplaced it. It is printed in the book, something ah said, not written by hand. And it says, 'Ah am a ãle slave which has suvved fo' 21 yea's, and ah would be quite pleased if you could help us to be free. We thank you very much. Ah trust that some day ah can do you the same privilege that you are doing for me. Ah have been a slave for many yea's.' (Note discrepancy).

"Aftah the wah, ah came to Cincinnati, and ah was married three times. Mah fust wife was Nannie. Then there was Mollie. They both died, and than ah was married Cora heah, and ah had six child'en, one girl and fo' boys. (Note discrepancy) They's two living yet; James is 70 and he is not married. And Bob's about thutty or fo'ty. Ah done lost al mah rememb'ance, too ole now. But Mollie died when he was bo'n, and he is crazy. He is out of Longview (Home for Mentally Infirm) now fo' a while, and he jes' wanders around, and wo'ks a little. He's ~~(not)~~ ha'mless, he wouldn't hurt nobody. He ain't married

Sample E.) Anna Smith (Ohio)

C. R. McLean,
District Supervisor

Geo. H. Conn,
Writer

Page #4
District #5
Summit County
#240, folklore

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Wilbur C. Ammon,
Editor

June 11, 1937

ANNA SMITH

Many instances during those terrible war days are fresh in her mind: men and boys, in pairs and groups passing the "big house" on their way to the recruiting station on the public square, later going back in squads and companies to fight; Yankee soldiers raiding the plantation, taking corn and hay or whatever could be used by the northern army; and continual apprehension for the menfolk at the front.

She remembers the baying of blood hounds at night along the Ohio River, trying to follow the scent of escaping negroes and the crack of firearms as white people, employed by the plantation owners attempted to halt the negroes in their efforts to cross the Ohio River into Ohio or to join the Federal army.

Referring to her early life, she recalls no special outstanding events. Her treatment from her master and mistress was pleasant, always receiving plenty of food and clothing but never any money.

In a grove not far from the plantation home, the slaves from the nearby estates met on Sunday for worship. Here under the spreading branches they gathered for religious worship and to exchange news.

When President Lincoln issued his proclamation freeing the slaves and the news reached the plantation, she went to her master to learn if she was free. On learning it was true she returned to her parents who were living on another plantation.

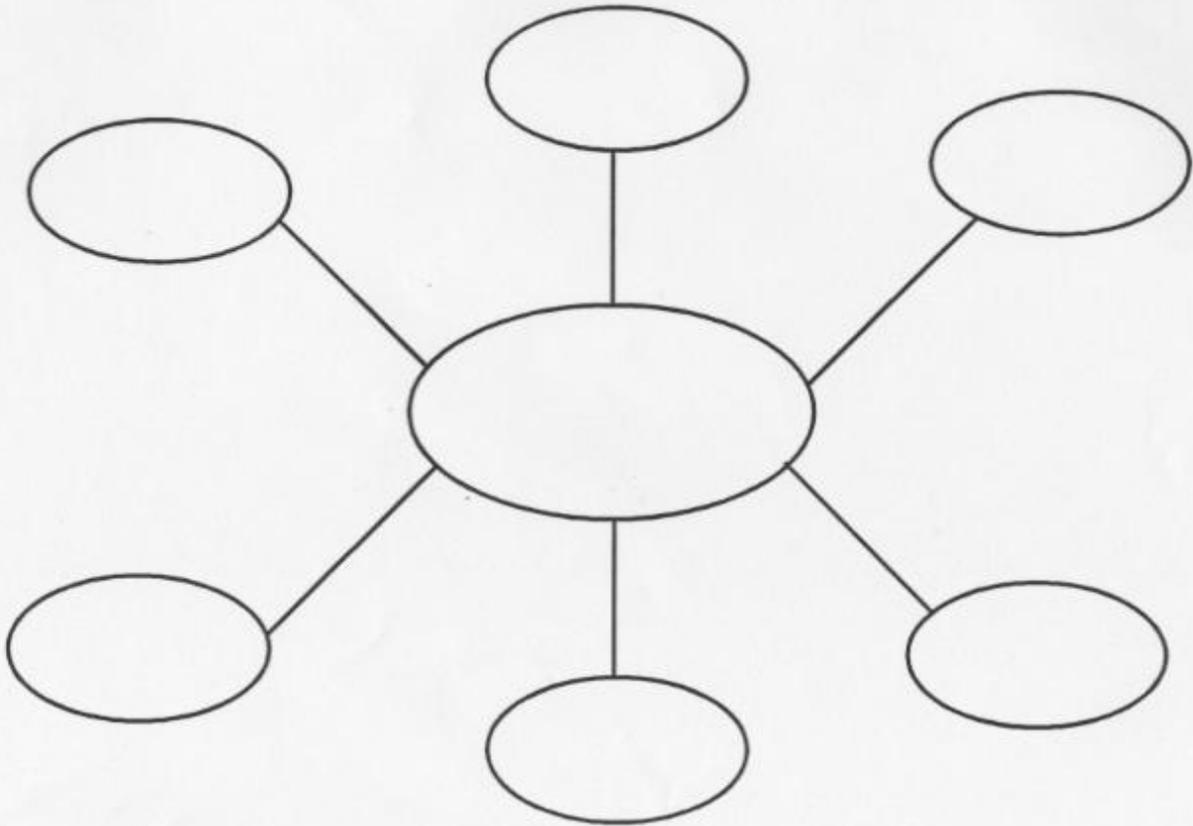
She has been living with her grandchildren for the past nine years, contented but ready to go when the "Good Lord calls her."

6-14-37. HVL

Web for use with Timeline Activity.

Name _____

Web - 1



Reference:

The Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress. Special Presentation. From the Library of Congress, *American History Home*. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/doughome.html>. (accessed June 28, 2012).

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Special Presentation. From the Library of Congress, *American History Home*. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>. (accessed June 28, 2012).