

# The Underground Railroad

## Danger

In 1850 a law was passed that any fugitive slaves found in the free states must be returned to their masters. The brave people who helped runaway slaves could be fined or sent to jail if they were caught.

It took even more courage for a slave to run away. If captured, a slave was often severely punished. Sometimes a slave was branded with the letter "R" for "Runaway."

## Canada



Since fugitive slaves were not safe even in the free states,

they tried to reach Canada. Even when they reached freedom, they faced many problems. Most could not read and write. They had to find ways to support themselves and their families.

## Travel by night

The fugitives usually traveled on foot by night. Sometimes they wore disguises or rode in false bottoms of wagons. Sometimes they stowed away on Yankee steamships.



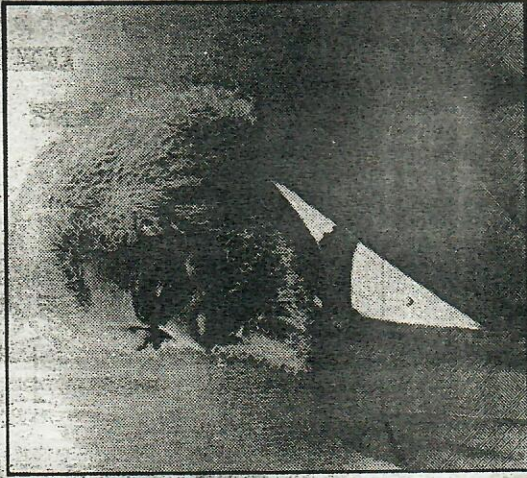
Many fugitives used the North Star as their guide.



## The North Star

Which way is north and freedom?

## Frederick Douglass



Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) was an outstanding black leader.

Frederick Douglass served as an agent for the Underground Railroad in Rochester, N.Y. He hid runaways and also raised money to help them reach Canada.

Douglass had escaped from slavery himself. He once wrote that "the thought of one less slave and one more freeman brought joy."

He was one of the first abolitionists (ab-o-LISH-un-ist), or people who spoke out and worked against slavery. He was an outstanding newspaper editor, author and speaker. He named his newspaper The North Star.

## Levi Coffin



Levi Coffin (1789-1877) of Fountain City, Ind., was a

## Harriet Tubman



Harriet Tubman (1820? -1913) lived to be more than 90 years old. She died in Albany, N.Y.

Harriet Tubman was known as the "Moses of her people." Moses was a leader from the Bible who led his people out of slavery to freedom.

Harriet Tubman was born in Maryland. She was badly treated. Her master thought her stupid, but she was really very smart. When she grew up,

Photo courtesy of the National Park Service

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## The North Star

Which way is north and freedom? Many conductors and other fugitives used the North Star as a guide. This star always appears to be in the same spot. The North Star is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper.

## Sleep by day

During the day they might sleep in schools, barns, attics, hay lofts, woodpiles and other hiding places. The agents at the stations offered food and sometimes disguises.



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photo courtesy the National Park Service

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Harriet Tubman was born in Maryland. She was badly treated. Her master thought her stupid, but she was really very smart. When she grew up, she escaped and became a conductor for the Underground Railroad.

She returned to the South 19 times to bring out more than 200 slaves. She was so successful that a \$40,000 reward was offered for her arrest.

Later, during the Civil War, she served as a soldier, spy and nurse for the Union forces.

Next week, celebrate Music in Our Schools Month with a story about singing.



The Mini Page thanks the National Park Service for help with this issue.

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Levi Coffin (1789-1877) of Fountain City, Ind., was a Quaker. Many members of this group worked against slavery.

Levi Coffin and his wife helped hundreds of slaves escape. He was very proud of the fact that not one of those he helped was recaptured. He was often called the "president of the Underground Railroad."