

# Underground Railroad Station Outlines

## Ravine

### Goal

- Explain the conditions of slavery and escaping slavery
  - o What did the enslaved have to endure? What was involved in choosing to run or stay? What was the risk of running? Why did they want to leave slavery?
- Understand there were no “nice” slaveholders and “happy” slaves (ex. working in the homes wasn’t better, it was all terrible)

\*The wealth and power of the slave holders depended on the forced labor of the enslaved

### Information

- Enslaved people directly from Africa were kidnapped and forced to work without pay. All enslaved people were treated as property and had no rights. Enslaved people lacked adequate food, clothing, and supplies and were often separated from families. Reading, writing, and marriage were illegal. Enslaved people endured brutal treatment such as whippings, beatings, chains, etc. Slavery was based on race.
- Running from slavery was a powerful way to resist slavery.
- To escape, the enslaved traveled hundreds of miles with little or no shelter or medical care and constant threat facing wilderness, hypothermia, dehydration, hunger
- Enslaved either went north or south to Mexico/Florida; many never made it to freedom and either were captured or returned willingly because of the difficult journey (Risks of being captured include being

whipped, tortured, shackled, sold, killed). Difficult to trust those offering help!

- Supplies may have included pistol, knife (cutting, chopping, eating, defending, etc.), hard tack, free papers (borrowed or fake), money (stolen or their own), disguises, etc. They couldn't travel with much but would have had some items.

- Many traveled at night under darkness; followed North Star, looked for moss (growing on north side of tree), animal clues (such as bird migration), rising/setting of sun, winter offered longer days, many would have known how to find food or natural remedies

- Slaveholders perceived their slaves running away as a sin because they interpreted the Bible to be pro-slavery and part of God's design

### *Activity*

1. Walk students down to the ravine area, telling students they are going to learn about the conditions of slavery and escaping slavery
2. Begin by asking students to tell you what they already know about what the enslaved had to endure
3. Discuss what it meant to be enslaved
4. Discuss what it meant to flee slavery, asking students to brainstorm possible supplies that the enslaved may have taken with them, use five senses to help students imagine the enslaved running through the ravine
  - a. What were the natural parts of the ravine that would have been useful? Ex. Water, Medicinal Plants, Edible Plants, Etc.
5. Briefly review and end with a couple minutes for questions.

### *Discussion Questions*

-How do you think someone enslaved felt?

- How would you describe an enslaved person who chose to run away? Brave? Courageous? Powerful?

- Do you think those thinking about running away shared their possible plans with others? Why or why not?
- What obstacles did those escaping slavery face from white slaveholders and others? Do you think they faced any obstacles from other enslaved people? What might those obstacles be?

## Picnic Shelter

### *Goal*

- Get to know the Lathrop family
  - o Who was Lucian Lathrop? What jobs did he have? What were his interests? What are some interesting facts about Lucian? Who was his wife?
- Define an abolitionist and their role in the Underground Railroad

### *Information*

- Lucian Lathrop
  - o Previous jobs/roles: hotel employee, deputy sheriff, farmer, township trustee, township treasurer, postmaster, State representative, Universalist Church minister (10 years), Masonic Lodge member and “worshipful master”
  - o Member Free Soil Party (“free soil, free speech, free labor, free men,” formed after Liberty party ended, against slavery in new territories/states, demanded repeal of Fugitive Slave Law, grew into Republican party in 1854 when Free Soilers disbanded)
  - o Clarissa Lathrop -
- Abolitionists opposed slavery. Some wanted slavery to be abolished immediately and others wanted it gradually phased out.

- Many abolitionists fought for racial equality and justice, but not all abolitionists agreed on the same ideas (for example, some believed that African Americans were not equal to whites)
- Famous abolitionists: Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Abraham Lincoln, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Angelina Grimke, etc.
- Not all abolitionists assisted with the Underground Railroad, but those who helped with the Underground Railroad were abolitionists

### *Activity*

1. Exterior home tour (ex. original location, back basement steps)
2. Discuss the definition of an abolitionist
3. Group activity:
  - a. Ask students if they would have helped or not, give them a few minutes to think about their answer, but not to share.
  - b. Have the students split into two groups, one for helping and one against. Give the students a few minutes to share with their like group members about why they might help/not help. And explain that their goal is to try and convince the other side of their position.
  - c. Invite students to share from both groups, giving their reasoning for helping/not helping.
  - d. Invite any students who would like to “switch sides” to do so, but they must state their reasoning.
4. As a whole group, brainstorm possible reasons people would have helped/not helped with the Underground Railroad. Discuss risk for helping.
5. Briefly review and allow a couple minutes for questions

### *Discussion Questions*

- Is it important to tell the Lathrop's story? Do you think the Lathrop house is still important today? Should we continue telling the story of the Lathrop house's role in the Underground Railroad? Why?
- If you could talk with Lucian Lathrop today, what would you ask him?
- What risks did the abolitionists take?
- Do you think we still have people today that are abolitionists? Why?
- Some people think we should “get over” what happened in the past and move on. What do you think?

## Basement Museum Area

### *Goal*

- Describe the Underground Railroad and how it operated.
- Explain the role Sylvania and Ohio played in the Underground Railroad.

### *Information*

- The underground Railroad was a “secret” and informal network and it wasn't underground or a railroad
- Travel was done by foot, horse, wagon, boat, train (depending), and there were no set routes
- Abolitionists provided food, clothing, shelter, information, etc.
- Secret code words were used to evade slave catchers and others (ex. station master, parcel, baggage, etc.)
- Sylvania Ohio
  - o Strongly opposed slavery (ex. a meeting opposing the fugitive slave act had 200 in attendance)

- o Lathrop and Harroun families!

- o The Harrouns were a major force for abolitionism in the area. It was because of the Harrouns that the Lathrops were as involved as they were.

#### -Northwest Ohio

- o Close to Michigan, Lake Erie, Canada

- o Richard Mott: former Toledo Mayor and US Congressman, part of Free Soil Party, lived on Jefferson Ave. where he hid freedom seekers in his home

- o James Ashley: US Congressman, drafted and introduced 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to end slavery, involved in anti-slavery legislation

- o Many unknown helpers

#### - Ohio

- o Free state

- o Ohio Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1835

  - Pledged to fight for abolition of slavery and laws to protect free African Americans

  - Lectured around Ohio and published papers and a newspaper

  - 120 chapters, about 10,000 members (approximately 1% of population)

- o Dumas Hotel in Cincinnati was a major information hub for enslaved people. Many enslaved people would stay there when traveling with slaveholders and would receive information from hotel employees about the Underground Railroad; this information would be shared with other enslaved people when they returned to the south

## Activity

- Ask for prior knowledge about Underground Railroad
- Explain the Underground Railroad(Why we call it the UGRR, how it was used, what it was needed, when it was used, etc.)
- Discuss Ohio/Sylvania's role in the Underground Railroad
- Introduce the students to the 2 maps, the one on the floor and the one on the wall. Use the 2 maps to guide discussion about how a person would use the UGRR, and how it was a secret network of people working together.
- Focus on the Map of Sylvania and Toledo on the Floor, what were the key elements of our area and who were the key players in our area?
  - The Harrouns and Lathrops, Richard Mott, James Ashley
- Briefly review and end with a couple minutes for questions

## Discussion Questions

- Why do you think it was called the Underground Railroad, when it wasn't underground, and it wasn't a railroad?
- Do you think history would have been different if there was no Underground Railroad? How?
- Why do you think there was a lot of Underground Railroad activity in Ohio?

## Kitchen

### Goal

- Define freedom and its meaning to others and self

### Information

- Story of hidden room in basement (ex. enter through oven)

- Use of basement as summer kitchen area
- The state of the upstairs of the house
- The original and non-original elements showcased

### Activity

- Give tour of kitchen, discussing secret room and the kitchen
- Enter classroom and choose story and intro to students (ex. Henry's Freedom Box, Unspoken, Freedom River), tell them think about what freedom means while listening to story
- Read story, stopping throughout to ask clarifying questions
- At end, discuss what "freedom" means and what it meant to characters in story (ex. Henry and the slaveholder)
- Tell students to think about what freedom means to them and hand out post-it notes and pencils. Students write or draw what freedom means to them and hang up.
- Briefly review and end with a couple minutes for questions.

### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think there are storybooks for children about slavery and the Underground Railroad?
- If you were able to interview someone that hid in this room, what would you ask?
- What might you do for freedom?
- What does "freedom" mean to the main character? To the "bad guy"? To their family members?

## Hexagonal Thinking

- Have students get into groups of 2 or 3
- Pass out Hexagon tiles
- Explain and show the activity. you need to connect all the tiles in a logical way based on the word written on each tile.
- Walk around as students connect their tiles; some words we may have not covered and they will not know yet. Answer any questions and/or guide them as they work through the connections.

### Reminders

\*We want students to feel empathy and not sympathy; we want them to feel connected, this creates meaningful and lasting impressions.

\*Students may need space and time to digest information, consider slowing down interpretation and not calling on first child who raises hand.

\*Students may feel more comfortable talking with their peers before sharing answers with presenter. Consider doing a “think-pair-share” where students think of their answer, share with a classmate, and then as a whole group, share their answers with the presenter.

\*Students should be doing a lot of answering questions and talking with one another appropriately.

\*Students should NOT be role playing (ex. pretending to be a person from the past). This can trivialize the past and make it seem like fun and games.

\*Stay away from putting students in the shoes of an enslaved person. For example, don't say things like "what would you do if you were enslaved?" or "where would you hide?" Instead, ask "how do you think an enslaved person would have..." or "where do you think an enslaved person might hide?"

\*Most of the time, our questions will not have right or wrong answers. Students of all ages can be excellent thinkers and problem solvers if they are given the space and support!

\*The kids won't remember everything, so keep it simple while getting the main points across.