

LESSON 16

Museum Connection: Labor and the Black Experience

Lesson Title: Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom

Grade Level and Content Area: Elementary, Social Studies

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Purpose: In this lesson students will examine how the geographic characteristics of the regions where Harriet Tubman lived influenced her life. Working independently, students will use a map and photographs in order to create a book that describes Tubman's journey to freedom. They will also make a poster that explains how geographic characteristics influenced her life.

Correlation to Social Studies Standards:

USH 2.3.5.5 Examine the gradual institutionalization of slavery into America, including various responses to slavery, and how slavery shaped the lives of colonists and Africans in the Americas

GEO 4.1.5.3 Identify and locate physical and human characteristics of places and explain how those characteristics have affected people living there

GEO 4.3.5.3 Describe causes and consequences of migration to and within Maryland and the United States

Social Studies:

3.A.1 (Grades 4 and 5)

Maryland College and Career Ready Standards

Locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places using geographic tools

3.C.1.b (Grade 4)

Identify reasons for the movement of people to, from and within Maryland

5.A.1.c (Grade 4)

Describe the establishment of slavery and how it shaped life in Maryland

5.B.2.c (Grade 5)

Describe the different roles and viewpoints of individuals and groups, such as: women, men, free and enslaved Africans, and Native Americans during the Revolutionary period

6.F.1 (Grades 4 and 5)

Interpret information from primary and secondary sources

Objective:

Students will identify the geographic characteristics (both physical and human) of the regions in which Harriet Tubman lived and how those characteristics affected her life.

Vocabulary and Concepts:

Abolitionist – An abolitionist advocated or participating in the movement to end slavery.

Geographic characteristics – Divided into physical characteristics and human characteristics, geographic characteristics distinguish one place from another. Physical and human characteristics are explained in the Teacher Background.

Overseer – A slave owner would hire an overseer to tend to the daily control of the slaves.

Station – A “safe house” or stopping point along the Underground Railroad was called a station.

Underground Railroad – In the years before the Civil War, many slaves used the Underground Railroad—a secret network of “safe houses” and trails—in order to escape to freedom.

Materials**For the teacher:**

Teacher Resource Sheet 1 – Maryland Map
Teacher Resource Sheet 2 – Geographic Characteristics
Wall map that shows Maryland and surrounding states

For the student:

Student Resource Sheet 1 – Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Photographs
Student Resource Sheet 2 a, b, c, d– Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom
Student Resource Sheet 3 – Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Assessment

Resources**Books:**

Bentley, Judith. *Harriet Tubman*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1990

Chapelle, Suzanne E. and Glenn O. Phillips. *African American Leaders of Maryland, A Portrait Gallery*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2004.

Christian, Charles M. *Black Saga: The African American Experience*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Clinton, Catherine. *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004.

Fields, Barbara Jeanne. *From Slavery to Freedom on the Middle Ground*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Humez, Jean. *Harriet Tubman: The Life and the Life Stories*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Koestler-Grack, Rachel A. *The Story of Harriet Tubman*. Philadelphia: Chelsea Club House, 2004.

Larson, Kate Clifford. *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2004.

Petry, Ann. *Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1955. Reprint, New York: HarperTrophy, 1996.

Schroeder, Alan. *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*. New York: Dial Books, 1996.

Sterling, Dorothy. *Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954. Reprint, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1987.

Note to Teacher: Petry, Schroeder, and Sterling's accounts are partially fictionalized. Bentley's book is better and more closely factual. Koestler-Grack's book is the most up-to-date children's book about Tubman and uses the latest research findings and places Tubman's life within the context of slavery: how it functioned, the abolition movement, the Underground Railroad, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. It is written for 4th through 8th graders.

Web sites:

Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman by Sarah Bradford

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html>

This is the first book-length biography of Harriet Tubman. Published in 1869, it covers Tubman's life through the Civil War and was written in order to help Tubman pay her mortgage and support her large household of dependents. Bradford wrote this biography in less than three months, and in her haste she made many mistakes recording Tubman's story. Nevertheless, it is a good primary published source for the first half of Tubman's remarkable life.

Harriet: The Moses of Her People by Sarah Bradford

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bradford/bradford.html>

Originally published in 1886, this book is the second biography about Harriet Tubman written by Sarah Bradford. It contains many of the same stories revealed in the first biography, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, but some of them have been significantly altered or altogether removed from the text. This book is also more overtly

racist and uses derogatory terms when referring to African Americans. Bradford quotes Tubman with a “thicker” plantation dialect than in the original edition of the biography.

Both of these books, among others, can be viewed and downloaded for free online at the University of North Carolina’s “Documenting the American South” Web site: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>. This site has hundreds of slave narratives, fugitive slave narratives, and other examples of African-American literature from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Harriet Tubman Biography
www.harriettubmanbiography.com

This site is filled with the latest research, photographs, a brief narrative, a timeline, and information about Tubman’s work along the Underground Railroad among other activities.

The Life of Harriet Tubman
<http://www.graceproducts.com/tubman/life.html>

Harriet Tubman, The Library of Congress
<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/tubman>

Teacher Background:

Harriet Tubman was born a slave in Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland around 1822. Her real name was Araminta Ross, and she was the fifth of nine children of slaves Harriet and Ben Ross. Although she used her mother’s name, Harriet, when she got older, as a child she was simply called “Minty.”

When Harriet was young, her master (Edward Brodess) often hired her out to other plantation owners, who were cruel and who forced her to live under very harsh conditions. As a young teen, Harriet once refused to help an overseer punish a fellow slave, and the overseer seriously injured her by hitting Harriet in the head with a heavy object. As a result, Harriet suffered from headaches, seizures, and sleeping spells for the rest of her life. In 1844, 22-year old Harriet married John Tubman, a free African American. Five years later, she escaped because she was afraid that she would be sold South. Since her husband John was already free, however, he did not want to follow her North.

On her path to freedom, a white neighbor helped Harriet to the first “safe” house, a place where abolitionists would protect her. After receiving assistance from many black and white abolitionists, she settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she met William Still, Philadelphia’s most famous African American “Stationmaster” on the Underground Railroad. With help from Still and other members of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, Harriet learned how the Underground Railroad operated. Having operated successfully for decades, the Underground Railroad included in its network both African American and white agents throughout Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

In 1851, Harriet began relocating members of her family to St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. In order to finance her activities as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, she worked as a cook and domestic worker in private homes and hotels in Philadelphia. Harriet returned to Maryland approximately thirteen times to rescue sixty or seventy friends and members of her family. She also passed along valuable information about the Underground Railroad to many more family and friends on the Eastern Shore of Maryland so that they could find their way to freedom on their own.

Family and community—for whom she frequently risked her life—remained the focal point of Harriet’s long life. Three of Harriet’s sisters, Linah, Soph, and Mariah Ritty, had been sold into the Deep South before she ran away, but she successfully rescued her four brothers, Robert, Ben, Henry, and Moses. Her remaining sister, Rachel, died before Harriet could rescue her. Harriet herself would be called Moses for her remarkable efforts to save her family and friends from slavery.

During the Civil War, Harriet served in the Union Army in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida as a soldier, spy, and nurse. She also served as a nurse at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, at the end of the war. After the war she returned to her home in Auburn, New York, where she helped settle her parents and other family and friends. There she also married veteran Nelson Davis, and together they operated a brickmaking business and a small farm. Later she purchased an adjoining property and opened a convalescent home for aged and sick African Americans. These buildings still stand in Auburn.

Harriet Tubman died in 1913 and was buried with military honors in Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, New York. Since her death, she has received many posthumous honors, including the naming of the World War II Liberty ship *Harriet Tubman*.

Geography

Students must understand the meaning of “geographic characteristics”—distinctive characteristics that distinguish one place from another—in order to complete the activities in this lesson. This lesson contains information about the geographic characteristics of places in Maryland that slaves might have used to help them in their flight to freedom. Geographic characteristics are divided into two categories: physical characteristics and human characteristics.

Physical characteristics describe the natural environment of the place. They include:

- physical features – land forms and bodies of waters
- weather and climate – the short-term conditions of the atmosphere determined by variables such as temperature, wind, moisture, and pressure
- climate – the average temperature and rainfall for a place over hundreds of years
- soil – the thin layer of material on the earth’s surface; sand, silt, and clay are the basic types
- minerals – naturally occurring, non-living solids with a characteristic crystal, structure, and chemical makeup

- vegetation – four types: forest, grassland, tundra, and desert. Climate affects the vegetation that grows in a place.
- animal life – all the large and small animals that live in a place

Human characteristics describe the people of the place (past and present) and their languages, religions, economic activities, political systems, population distribution, and modifications of the environment. Human characteristics include:

- human-made features – modifications people have made to land (e.g., buildings, bridges, tunnels, railroad tracks, dams, monuments, piers, cultivated land)
- language – a way of communication with words, symbols, signs, or gestures that are used and understood by a group of people
- religion – a set of beliefs and practices relating to a god or gods and generally agreed upon by a number of people
- political system – structures of power, authority, and government
- economic activities – how people make a living in a place
- population distribution – the pattern of the number of people who live in a place

Lesson Development:

1. **Motivation:** Display Teacher Resource Sheet 1, Maryland Map. Tell students that Harriet Tubman was born enslaved on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1822 and later escaped to freedom. Have students use the map to:
 - describe the relative location of the Eastern Shore (*in Maryland, east of the Chesapeake Bay, between the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware, etc.*)
 - name the states that border Maryland (*Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia*) *Note to teacher: You may need to show students a wall map so that they can identify Virginia since it is not labeled on Resource Sheet 1.*
 - find the Choptank River, near the Brodess where Harriet was raised, and describe the river's location (the Choptank River is between Delaware and the Chesapeake Bay on the Eastern Shore of Maryland). The Big Black Water River is also near where Harriet was born and raised, and it is now a National Wildlife Refuge.
2. Tell students that they will use pictures and text boxes of information to learn about Harriet Tubman, who lived in Maryland in the 1800s. Ask students what they know about her.
3. Tell students that the geographic characteristics of a place affect the people who live there. On the board write "Geographic Characteristics" and under this the words "physical characteristics" and "human characteristics." Review these concepts with the students. Next, display Teacher Resource Sheet 2, "Geographic Characteristics."
4. Tell students to look at each photograph and decide in which category each one fits. (*Top photo shows mostly physical characteristics. The bottom photo shows mostly*

human characteristics.) Tell students that these two photographs were taken in places where Harriet Tubman lived.

5. Next, have students look at the photographs and identify specific geographic characteristics in each one. (*Top photograph - physical characteristics: physical feature - coastal plain; weather & climate - cloudy; soil - sandy; vegetation - crops; animal life - geese; human characteristics: human-made feature - cultivated land. Bottom photograph - physical characteristic: vegetation - tree, grass, bushes, flowers; human characteristics: human-made features - grave markers, political system - flags; religion - cemetery; language - English*) Explain to students that each photograph contains both kinds of geographic characteristics, but one shows more physical characteristics and the other shows more human characteristics.
 6. Tell students that the top photograph was taken on the Eastern Shore and shows fields near where Harriet Tubman was raised. The bottom picture shows her gravesite in Auburn, New York.
 7. Tell students they will be making a book about Harriet Tubman that shows how geographic characteristics influenced her life and her journey from slavery to freedom.
 8. Give each student a set of Student Resource Sheet 1, "Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Photographs," to cut out.
 9. Next, tell students to sort all the photographs into categories of either "physical" or "human" characteristics. (*physical characteristics: c - e - g - h - l - n; human characteristics: a - b - d - f - i - j - k - m - o - p*)
 10. Distribute Student Resource Sheet 2 a-d, "Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom." Tell students to read the information about her on each page and match it to a photograph. Students should not glue the photographs onto the pages until all are discussed.
 11. When students have completed this task, discuss the information and photographs with them. Tell them to correct any incorrect matches and then glue the photographs onto the pages.
- Answer Key for pages of the book: Page 1: b, e; Page 2: f, g; Page 3: a, d; Page 4: c, l; Page 5: h, n; Page 6: j, p; Page 7: m, i; Page 8: k, o.
12. **Assessment:** Have students complete the "Physical Characteristics and Human Characteristics" page of the Harriet Tubman book using information in the boxes and the photographs.

Possible Answers:

Physical Characteristics

- *physical features: marsh, river, swamp, Atlantic Coastal Plain*
- *weather & climate: cloudy, foggy, sunny, cold-icy*

- *soil: sandy*
- *vegetation: corn, wheat, other grains, fruit, tobacco, forest, moss*
- *animal life: muskrat, birds*

Human Characteristics

- *human-made features: building (houses, cabin, church, store, court house), signs, marker, cultivated land, pier*
- *religion: Bazzel Church, Quaker Meeting House*
- *political system: Dorchester County Court House*
- *language: English*
- *economic activities: farming, maritime industries (shipping, shipbuilding, travel), services*

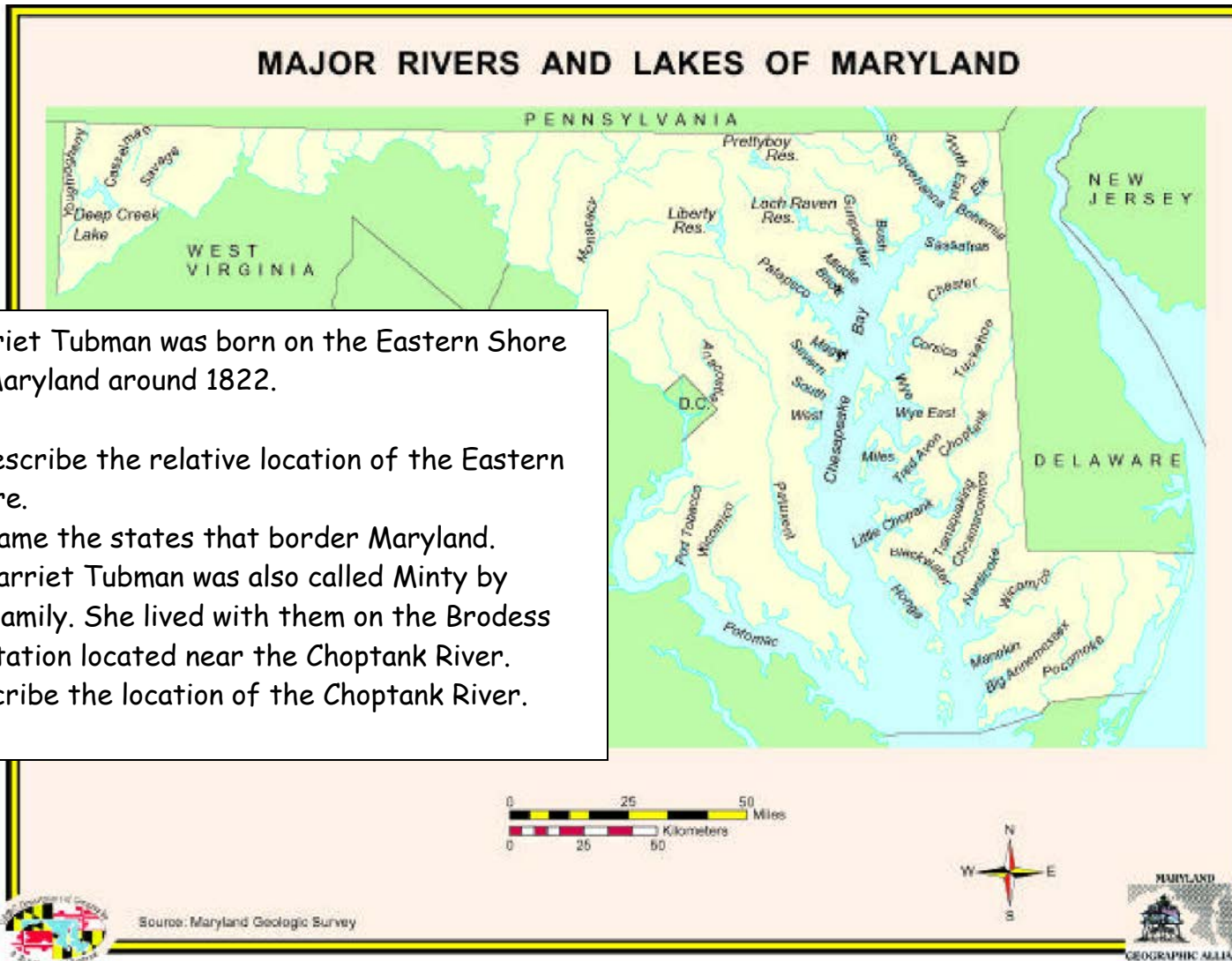
Then have students complete Student Resource Sheet 3, Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Assessment.

13. **Closure:** Tell students that Harriet Tubman is perhaps the best known conductor of the Underground Railroad. Tell students that the Harriet Tubman Museum is in Dorchester County, Maryland. Instruct them to design a poster for display in the Tubman Museum and in the Reginald F. Lewis Museum that shows the geographic characteristics that influenced Tubman's life.

Lesson Extensions:

- Visit the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture.
 - Visit the Postal Service Web site <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub354.pdf> in order to see stamps created in Harriet Tubman's honor in order to see the stamps created in Harriet Tubman's honor.

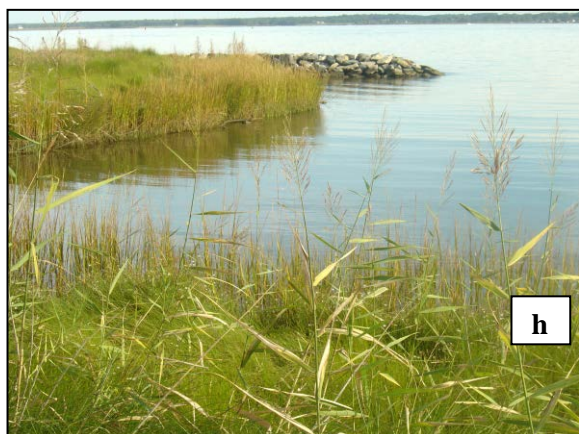
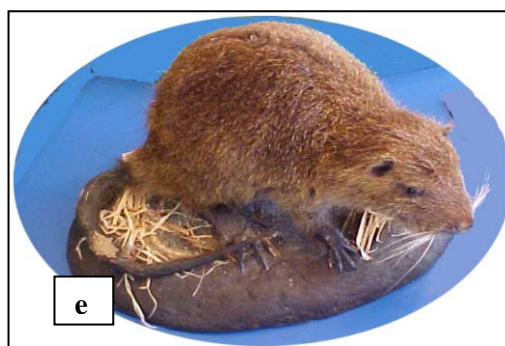
Maryland Map



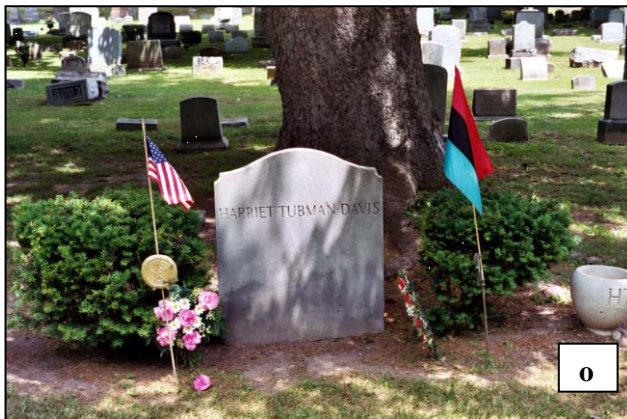
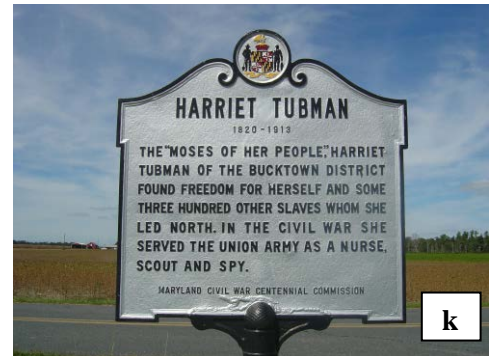
Geographic Characteristics



Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Photographs



Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Photographs





Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-7816]

**Harriet Tubman:
A Journey to Freedom**

Physical Characteristics

physical features:

weather & climate:

soil:

vegetation:

animal life:

Human Characteristics

human-made features:

religion: _____

political system: _____

economic activities: _____

Page 1 Textboxes

Harriet Tubman was born Araminta Ross in Maryland in 1822. Her parents were both slaves owned by different masters. Harriet's grandmother Modesty had been brought in chains to the United States from Africa. Harriet, her mother, her brothers, and sisters, were owned by Edward Brodess, and they worked on his plantation. Harriet had eight brothers and sisters. Find the photograph of the road that led to her birthplace.

When Harriet was six years old, Mr. Brodess rented her to Mr. & Mrs. Cook. One of her jobs was to watch the muskrat traps. Wading into the icy river looking for the animals made Harriet very ill. Mr. Cook sent her back to the Brodess Plantation. Find the photograph of the muskrat.

Page 2 Textboxes

On the Brodess plantation, Harriet's family lived in a small cabin that had a fireplace and a dirt floor. They had few possessions, and did not have beds to sleep on. Enslaved people were not sent to school because their owners did not want them to learn to read and write. Find the photograph of a cabin where enslaved people lived.

One of her jobs on the plantation was to pick bugs off the tobacco plants. Tobacco was called a "cash crop" because it was grown to be sold and not used by the growers. Find the photograph of a tobacco field.

Page 3 Textboxes

When the Bucktown Methodist Church [Scotts Chapel] was no longer used, the enslaved people asked to use it for their services. Before they had the church, enslaved people worshiped in their cabins, or in the churches of their masters. In 1876, Bazzel Church was later given to the African American community in Bucktown, near where Harriet had lived when she was a slave. Find the photograph of this church.

Harriet often thought of running away. When she was a teenager she refused to help catch a runaway. She was hit in the head by a heavy object thrown at the escaping enslaved person. This event may have happened at the Bucktown Village Store. Find the photograph of the store.

Page 4 Textboxes

Harriet knew that some day she would run away to find freedom. Her father taught her how to find food in the forest. He also told her that she would have to travel north to find a place where she would be free. He taught her that moss grew on the north side of trees, and he told her about the North Star. Find the photograph of the tree with moss.

She also learned to use marshes as an escape route. Traveling through water made it harder to be caught because dogs of the slave catchers would lose the scent of the escaping slave. Find the photograph that shows a marsh.

Page 5 Textboxes

When she was 22 years old, Harriet married John Tubman, a free African American. She told him of her plan to escape, but he was already free and did not want to go with her. When Harriet finally escaped she may have followed the Choptank River. Runaways often traveled late at night following the North Star. Sometimes foggy or cloudy weather made it difficult to see the North Star. Harriet knew that the water in the Choptank River flowed North, so she knew to follow it. Find the photograph that shows foggy weather.

As she traveled on her journey north, Harriet often traveled through swamps. Harriet had to be careful not to disturb birds resting and nesting in tall marsh grasses and trees for they could betray her hiding places. Find the photograph of a swamp.

Page 6 Textboxes

The Underground Railroad was not an actual railroad but a group of people and places organized to help runaways reach freedom in the North. The term “underground” was used because runaways were hidden in secret places. Find the photograph that shows a mode of transportation enslaved people could hide in as they were transported to safe places.

As part of the Missouri Compromise, slavery was made illegal in Pennsylvania. Once Harriet reached Pennsylvania she was free, so she wanted to help others do the same. She met William Still who was the secretary of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society. She went to meetings with him. Find the “Welcome to Pennsylvania” sign.

Page 7 Textboxes

Thomas Garrett was a conductor on the Underground Railroad. He was a hardware merchant in Wilmington, Delaware. In his store and home he often hid runaways until it was safe for them to leave. After his death, he was carried by Black Wilmingtonians to the Quaker Cemetery. Find the photograph of his grave marker.

After finding her freedom, Harriet returned to Maryland and helped some of her relatives escape from the Dorchester County Court House, where they were being sold. Find the photograph of the Court House.

Page 8 Textboxes

When the Civil War broke out, Harriet joined the fight by becoming a spy, a scout, and a nurse for the North. Find the photograph that tells you this information.

Harriet later lived in Auburn, New York, where she took care of her parents after helping them escape. She had made about thirteen trips south and brought more than 60 people to freedom, and gave instructions to another 60 or 70 who made their way along the Underground Railroad to freedom themselves.. She died at the age of 91, surrounded by family and friends. Find the photograph of her grave site in Auburn, New York.

Harriet Tubman: A Journey to Freedom Assessment

Based on what you have learned, choose two physical characteristics that were mentioned in the book you made and place them in these boxes.

Explain how these physical characteristics influenced Harriet Tubman's life.

Now select two human characteristics that were mentioned in the book you made and place them in these boxes.

Explain how these human characteristics influenced Harriet Tubman's life.
