

Harriet Tubman: The Underground Railroad's Most Famous Conductor

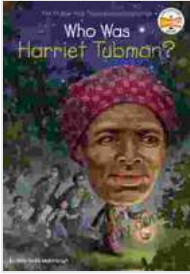


Who Was Harriet Tubman? (Who Was?)

by Yona Zeldis McDonough

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English



File size : 71231 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Print length : 110 pages



Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland in 1822. She escaped to freedom in 1849 and became a conductor on the Underground Railroad, helping over 300 slaves escape to freedom. She also fought for equal rights for all Americans, and she worked as a nurse and a spy for the Union Army during the Civil War.

Tubman was a remarkable woman who accomplished a great deal in her lifetime. She was a courageous leader, a tireless advocate for justice, and a true American hero.

Early Life and Escape from Slavery

Harriet Tubman was born Araminta Ross on March 1822, in Dorchester County, Maryland. Her parents, Harriet and Benjamin Ross, were enslaved Africans who worked on Edward Brodess's plantation. Tubman was the fifth of nine children.

Tubman's early life was filled with hardship and brutality. She was whipped and beaten by her overseers, and she was forced to work long hours in the fields. In 1834, when she was 12 years old, Tubman was struck in the head by an overseer with a two-pound weight. The injury caused a severe concussion and left her with lifelong headaches and seizures.

Despite the hardships she faced, Tubman remained determined to escape from slavery. In 1849, she heard about a network of secret routes and safe houses that helped slaves escape to freedom in the North. Tubman decided to risk her life and escape. She traveled by night, hiding in forests and swamps. She was helped by a number of abolitionists, including William Still and Frederick Douglass.

Tubman finally reached Pennsylvania in 1849. She was free, but she knew that her family and friends were still enslaved. She decided to return to Maryland and help them escape.

The Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses that helped slaves escape to freedom in the North. The railroad was organized by abolitionists, who were people who opposed slavery.

Tubman was one of the most famous conductors on the Underground Railroad. She made 19 trips back to Maryland and helped over 300 slaves escape to freedom. She was known for her courage and determination, and she was never caught. In fact, she became so well-known that a \$40,000 bounty was placed on her head.

Tubman's work on the Underground Railroad was dangerous and difficult. She had to travel at night, hiding from slave catchers. She had to find safe houses where slaves could stay. And she had to keep her identity a secret.

Despite the dangers, Tubman never gave up. She was determined to help as many slaves as she could escape to freedom. She once said, "I never run my train off the track, and I never lost a passenger."

The Civil War

In 1861, the Civil War began. Tubman joined the Union Army and worked as a nurse, a spy, and a scout. She was a valuable asset to the Union, and she helped the North win the war.

Tubman's work during the Civil War was just as important as her work on the Underground Railroad. She helped the Union win the war, and she helped to free the slaves.

Later Life and Legacy

After the Civil War, Tubman continued to work for equal rights for all Americans. She spoke out against segregation and discrimination, and she worked to help African Americans gain the right to vote.

Tubman died in 1913 at the age of 93. She is buried in Auburn, New York. Her legacy lives on today, and she is considered one of the most important figures in American history.

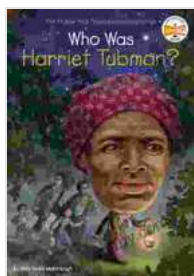
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Tubman's legacy is one of hope and determination. She showed that even in the darkest of times, it is possible to make a difference in the world. She is an inspiration to us all, and her story continues to inspire people around the world.

References

- PBS: American Experience | Harriet Tubman: About

- History.com | Harriet Tubman
- National Women's History Museum | Harriet Tubman

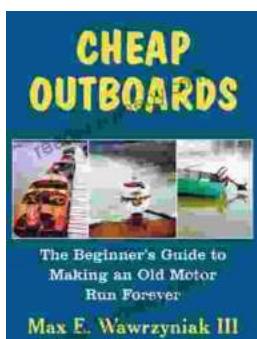


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