Slavery and the Underground Railroad in New Jersey

From The Anti-Slavery Record, published by the American Anti-Slavery Society, July 1837.

Grade Level: 3-5

Time: Seven days

Objectives:

Student will be able to explain:
- Why slavery was encouraged in New Jersey by the British
- The harsh conditions of slavery in America
- Why New Jersey’s location and physical geography made it a transit point for the Underground Railroad
- Why some people took great risks to help fugitive slaves from the South to escape
- Why discrimination on the basis of religion, race, or ethnicity has been a continuing problem in American society
- What each individual can do to fight prejudice and discrimination

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies (2020):

6.1.5.CivicsDP.2: Compare and contrast responses of individuals and groups, past and present, to violations of fundamental rights (e.g., fairness, civil rights, human rights).
6.1.5.CivicsHR.1: Describe how fundamental rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights contribute to the improvement of American democracy (i.e., freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition, the right to vote, and the right to due process).
6.1.5.CivicsHR.2: Research and cite evidence for how the actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other historical civil rights leaders served as catalysts for social change, inspired social activism in subsequent generations.
6.1.5.CivicsHR.3: Cite examples from a variety of sources to describe how national and international leaders, businesses, and global organizations promote human rights and aid individuals and nations in need.
6.1.5.CivicsHR.4: Identify actions that are unfair or discriminatory, such as bullying, and propose solutions to address such actions.

6.1.5.CivicsCM.1: Use a variety of sources to describe the characteristics exhibited by real and fictional people that contribute(d) to the well-being of their community and country.

6.1.5.CivicsCM.5: Investigate the lives of New Jersey individuals with diverse experiences who have contributed to the improvement of society.

6.1.5.GeoSV.2: Use maps to explain the impact of location and place on the relationships between places in New Jersey, the United States and other countries.

6.1.5.EconET.1: Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.

6.1.5.HistoryCC.14: Compare the practice of slavery and indentured servitude in Colonial labor systems.

6.1.5.HistoryCA.1: Craft an argument, supported with historical evidence, for how factors such as demographics (e.g., race, gender, religion, and economic status) affected social, economic, and political opportunities during the Colonial era.

Common Core ELA Standards:

W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

W.4.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

W.4.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH.6-8.3 Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies.

RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

W.8.1.c Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

W.8.1.e Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question...

W.8.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
Essential Questions:

- What is fairness or justice?
- What is prejudice and discrimination?
- How have individuals or groups taken actions to promote the dignity and rights of people?
- What can you do as an individual to fight racism and hatred?

Focus questions:

- Why did slavery exist in New Jersey during the colonial period and what was its impact?
- How and why did England encourage colonists to bring slaves to New Jersey?
- Where were most slaves working in New Jersey and why?
- What efforts were made in New Jersey to abolish slavery during the Antebellum period (1815-1860) and how successful were they?

1. Day One: Slavery in New Jersey during the colonial period

Background: We think of slavery as existing only in the southern colonies. Although it became more extensive in the southern colonies, the enslavement of Black Africans existed in all British North American colonies by 1690. The Dutch West India Company first brought captured men from Africa to New Amsterdam (New York) in 1626 to build infrastructure. There is evidence of a Black slave presence in 1639 in Pavonia (near present-day Jersey City), which was part of the Dutch colony of New Netherland. Slavery spread as a response to the chronic shortage of free labor.

When the English proprietors established the New Jersey colony after the British took over in 1664, slavery was legalized and encouraged by offering settlers additional land for every slave ("servant") imported. In 1702, when New Jersey became a crown colony, Queen Anne urged Lord Edward Cornbury, the first royal governor of the colony, to keep the settlers provided with "a constant and sufficient supply of merchantable Negroes at moderate prices" to meet the labor needs. (See Handout 1)

Cooper's Ferry (Camden) served as the port of entry for enslaved persons bound for South Jersey counties (Burlington, Gloucester, Salem and Cape May) and Perth Amboy was the main port of entry for the northern counties (Bergen, Essex, Middlesex and Monmouth). There were an estimated 2,600 enslaved men, women and children in New Jersey in 1726 and 4,700 in 1745, three-quarters of them in its northern counties which tended to be both more economically developed and to suffer from labor shortages. There were also a greater number of Quakers in the southern counties who objected to slavery.

Activity: Using the background information and Handout 1, have your students explain how and why England encouraged colonists to bring enslaved individuals to New Jersey.

2. Day Two: African Americans during the American Revolution

Background: It is estimated that the number of African Americans in New Jersey, almost all enslaved, increased from 200 in 1680 to 8-12 percent of the colony’s population at the start of the American Revolution in 1776. The 1790 census showed 11,423 slaves in New Jersey or 6.2% of its total population, although some historians estimate that it was closer to 7.7 or 8%. New Jersey did not abolish, or even mention, slavery in its 1776 Constitution. The Revolutionary War, however, was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the freedom of many slaves in New Jersey. Some slaves escaped, while others earned their freedom by fighting for the Continental Army or the New Jersey Militia.
Responding to the November 1775 proclamation by Lord Dunmore, royal governor of Virginia, which promised freedom to any slave who fought for Britain, several thousand blacks cast their lot with the British. One of the most notable was a fugitive slave from Shrewsbury (Monmouth County), Titus Cornelius, later known as Colonel Tye. After participating in the Battle of Monmouth (1778), he led several successful raids on the farms of Americans in Monmouth County before being killed in 1780.

Lord Dunmore’s declaration also resulted in the reversal of the American policy of excluding blacks from military service. As of December 31, 1775, free blacks could enlist, and one who did was Oliver Cromwell. Born free in Columbus (Burlington County) in 1752, he enlisted in a company attached to the Second New Jersey Regiment. Cromwell crossed the Delaware with Washington on December 24, 1776, and saw action at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Yorktown.

African Americans were present at all the major battles in New Jersey, including Trenton (1776), Princeton (1777), Fort Mercer (1777), Monmouth (1778), and Springfield (1780), as well as those elsewhere, such as Saratoga (1777), Savannah (1779), and Yorktown (1781). Most black soldiers were free and from the northern colonies, but some were enslaved, like Samuel Sutphen of Somerset County, a participant in battles in New York and New Jersey between 1776 and 1780.

Some enslaved African Americans, who had remained loyalists during the war, left the country afterwards for Canada or Britain. Others had been given freedom for their participation in the fight for independence. Some enslaved individuals took advantage of the chaos of war to escape and pass as free Blacks. Others were manumitted by their owners or the state legislature because of service in the American forces or in keeping with the egalitarian spirit of the Revolution.

According to the 1790 census, there were 11,423 slaves in New Jersey and 2,762 free Blacks, out of a population of 184,139 people. Slaves were 6.2% of the colonial population in New Jersey.

Activity: Have your students identify the contributions of African American slaves during the American Revolution. Research the history of African-American slaves, such as a “Colonel Tye”, from Monmouth County, NJ, who fought for the British. Compare their motivation, actions and the consequences with other African Americans in New Jersey, such as Oliver Cromwell or Samuel Sutphen, who fought for independence. For information and primary source documents regarding African Americans and the American Revolution go to http://nj.gov/state/njhistorypartnership/americanRevolution/africanAmericans/lesson/africanAmericansLesson.pdf.

3. Efforts to Abolish Slavery in New Jersey

Although New Jersey commercial interests supported slavery, there was also an early and persistent movement for abolition in the state. In 1688, the first anti-slavery tract written in the American colonies was read at the annual meeting of the Delaware Valley Quakers in Burlington. One of America’s earliest foes of slavery was John Woolman (1720-1772), a Quaker leader, clerk and tailor born in Burlington County. Woolman believed that slaves should be freed by the personal action of their masters rather than by political measures and traveled extensively championing the cause of Manumission.

During and after the Revolutionary War, opponents of slavery formed abolition societies in all the northern states, led by local elites such as John Jay, Gouvernor Morris and Alexander Hamilton in New York and Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania. In 1789, abolitionist John Cooper
(1729-1785) advocated for emancipation both for religious and civic reasons. Cooper was an influential Quaker from Gloucester County, New Jersey, who had served on several local revolutionary committees, the Provincial Congress, the Continental Congress and the committee that drafted the state’s first constitution in 1776. He was concerned that the continuation of slavery was inconsistent with a republican government as well as contrary to moral principles, and urged the immediate end to slavery. See his article in the New-Jersey Gazette from Sept. 20, 1780 attached as Handout 2.

The anti-slavery efforts of New Jersey Quakers and the Society for Promoting the Abolition of slavery led in 1786 to a ban on the importation of slaves into the state. The New Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, created in 1793, kept up agitation on the issue. However, in spite of early and persistent protests by Quakers, New Jersey came late and rather unwillingly to abolition. In 1804 the New Jersey Legislature passed "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery" that provided for females born of slave parents after July 4, 1804 to be free upon reaching 21 years of age, and males upon reaching 25. This left some enslaved people in New Jersey until the start of the Civil War.

**Activity:** Have your students read Handout 2: John Cooper’s Anti-Slavery article in the New-Jersey Gazette and discuss whether they found his argument persuasive and why.

**Day Three: Running from Enslavement**

1. **Opener:** Share Handout 3 with your students and ask them to compare the two images in Handout 1.

   - What is happening in each image? *African American families are moving during the night as fugitive slaves.*
   - What is the same? What is different? *It is dark in both images. In the top image they are walking. In the bottom image they are hiding.*
   - Why did fugitive slaves travel mainly at night? *Fugitives traveled at night so they could avoid being found by bounty hunters and other southern sympathizers who would return them. They followed the North Star to freedom in northern states.*

2. **Vocabulary**

   - Fugitive slave--An enslaved man, woman or child who is running away from his owner in the South to a northern location where there was no slavery.
   - Underground Railroad
     *The Underground Railroad was an informal escape network that helped fugitive slaves reach freedom. Also called the Liberty Line, this loosely organized system was neither "underground" nor a "railroad." Rather, it was a network of escape routes that originated in the southern slave states in the period of American history that led up to the Civil War. The railroad led the slaves to freedom in the northern free states, Canada, Mexico, the western territories, and the Caribbean.*
   - Conductor--Someone responsible for moving fugitive slaves from one station, safe house or secret hiding place to the next.
   - Stations—Homes and businesses where fugitive slaves could rest and eat
   - Safe houses—Locations where fugitive slaves could stay and hide
   - Operators—Individuals who helped fugitive slaves safely move from one place to another on their way to freedom in the north
3. **Historical Background**

- The Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 was enacted by Congress to allow “bounty hunters” to capture an escaped slave in any territory or state with only oral proof that the person was a runaway, making an escape from slavery more difficult, and imposed penalties on anyone who aided in their flight.
- Owners of slaves offered rewards for their capture and return (See Handout 4)
- The same year—1793—the New Jersey Society for the Abolition of Slavery was created.
- Although Quakers started this anti-slavery movement in the 1780s, the Underground Railroad became legendary after the 1830s, when abolitionists and other sympathizers began helping enslaved men, women and children escape to freedom. See the announcement by sympathizers warning fugitive slaves to be on their guard for “slave hunters” (Handout 5).
- In 1804, New Jersey passed an act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery: black children born after July 1, 1804 would be free after serving an apprenticeship to their mother’s owner after 21 years (female) or 25 years (males).
- Most Northern states “intentionally neglected” to enforce the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law. Several even passed so-called “Personal Liberty Laws” that gave accused runaways the right to a jury trial and also protected free blacks, many of whom had been abducted by bounty hunters and sold into slavery.
- Following increased pressure from Southern politicians, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 as part of the Compromise of 1850, a group of bills designed to quiet calls for Southern secession. The 1850 Act made it easier to retake fugitive slaves. It also denied slaves the right to a jury trial and increased the penalty for helping fugitives to escape to $1000 (a lot of money in the 1850s!) and six months in jail.
- The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was met with even more impassioned criticism and resistance than the earlier measure.
- The Underground Railroad reached its peak in the 1850s. It is estimated that more than 100,000 slaves escaped to freedom.

**Day Four: Map activity (and a little math and science)**

- Have your students look at the Map of the United States (Handout 6) and identify those states from which most of the fugitive slaves escaped to New Jersey.
  
  *The coastal states: Georgia, the Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, but primarily the three upper southern states.*

- Why New Jersey?
  
  *New Jersey was close to the two most active Underground Railroad cities—New York and Philadelphia—and to Maryland and Delaware. Also, there were a large number of all-black communities in NJ that served as sanctuaries for fugitive slaves. For example, in the mid 1800’s Salem County, NJ had a population of 2,075 free blacks and a large number of Quakers, all who aided them in their escape. No other northern state exceeded New Jersey in the number of all-black communities that served as Underground Railroad sanctuaries for southern fugitive slaves.*

- What was the path?
  
  *Fugitive slaves crossed the Delaware Bay to New Jersey, travelled across at various safe houses to Jersey City and at the Morris Canal basin fled by boat across the Hudson River (called the “River Jordan”) to go to Canada, New England or New York City.*

- How long would it take a fugitive slave to travel from the south (select a location in Virginia or Maryland) to Jersey City?
For example, it is 328 miles from Richmond, Virginia, to Jersey City, New Jersey. How fast do you walk? How many hours can you walk, primarily in the dark, each day? How many days would it take to walk 328 miles? Students should calculate that even if they walked 10-12 hours a day, it would take 27-33 days to walk 328 miles (about 12 miles a day). Students can plot on a map how far they could go each day.

- How did the fugitive slaves know what route to follow?

Follow the Drinking Gourd (Winter, 1988) was a song with lyrics that hid directions for following the Underground Railroad. The “drinking gourd” is the Big Dipper in the sky which points to the North Star. “When the sun comes back and the first quail calls” meant spring. The river that “ends between two hills” was the Tombigbee River. The second was the Tennessee River and the “great big river” was the Ohio River, where fugitives could be ferried across to the free states. The lyrics are listed as Handout 7. The teacher might have the book read aloud to the whole class, have the students sing the song, and explain to them what the words mean. Or, the teacher might want to have students might look at the lyrics in Handout 5 or in the book and list the signs and explain what they mean.

Day Five: Some Famous (or infamous) “Conductors”

Harriet Tubman (See Handout 8 for image)

Known as "Moses," after the biblical hero who delivered the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, Harriet Tubman was the most famous conductor of the Underground Railroad. Born into slavery in Dorchester County, Maryland, Tubman escaped and fled to Pennsylvania in 1849. She worked summers in Cape May, NJ and returned to Maryland and rescued members of her family and others. It is believed that she made 19 trips into the South and, over a period of ten years, conducted approximately 300 people to freedom in the North without ever losing any of her charges.

Tubman’s formula for success was quite simple: although she frequently changed her routes leading to the North, Ms. Tubman always began the escapes on Saturday nights. This was significant for two reasons. First, enslaved individuals were often not required to work on Sunday. Therefore, their owners might not notice their absence until Monday morning. Secondly, newspapers would not be able to report runaway slaves until the beginning of the week. These two facts often gave Tubman and the escapees enough time to get a head start to their destination in the free states.

Harriet Tubman
During the American Civil War, Tubman moved to South Carolina where she served as a nurse, scout, and spy for the Union Army. She also helped prepare food for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, a heroic band of African-American soldiers who were known as the "Glory Brigade" after the fierce battle at Fort Wagner in 1863. She was never paid for her services, but she received an official commendation for her war effort. See https://youtu.be/fTbY8OjoIjI

William Still (See Handout 9 for image)

Born a free man in Burlington County, NJ, in 1819, to former slaves, William Still moved to Philadelphia in 1844 where he became a member of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and director of the General Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia. He managed the committee's finances, which were used to assist Harriet Tubman's rescue efforts. Still also established a network of safe houses and contacts stretching from the upper South to Canada.

Still interviewed the hundreds of fugitives as they made their way North. Although Still had intended to use his interview material to assist other escaped slaves find their loved ones, he decided to compile the accounts of the flights of the fugitives he assisted in Philadelphia into a book, the 1872 classic *The Underground Railroad*.


Abigail Goodwin (See Handout 10 for image)

The daughter of a Quaker farmer who had freed his slaves during the American Revolution, Abigail Goodwin and her sister, Elizabeth, were fervent abolitionists. In the 1830s, Abigail emerged as an active figure in the Underground Railroad movement and the Goodwin home in Salem, NJ became a station on the Underground Railroad.
When Amy Reckless, a slave for one of Salem County’s wealthiest families, who set herself free (see: “How one woman set herself free”) returned to Salem, she partnered with the Goodwin sisters in collecting goods and financial contributions to help fugitive slaves escape. Because of her frank and eloquent writings, Abigail is better known than Elizabeth. Many of Abigail’s letters and a portrait were published in William Still’s *The Underground Rail Road*, published in 1872. Only Abigail lived to see slavery abolished as they had both desired.

Abigail Goodwin

In 2008, the Goodwin Sisters House on Market Street in Salem was the first site in New Jersey accepted into the National Park Service’s National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. The house is also a site on the New Jersey Women’s Heritage Trail.

**Reading Activity:** Have students read and report on:
- one of many excellent books about Harriet Tubman (E.g., *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom* (Weatherford))
- and/or view a video such as the History Channel’s at [https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/underground-railroad](https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/underground-railroad)
- and explain why Harriet Tubman was courageous

**Day Six: Underground Railroad Sites in New Jersey**

No other northern state exceeded New Jersey in the number of all-black communities that served as Underground Railroad sanctuaries for southern fugitive slaves. Springtown (Cumberland County), Marshalltown (Salem County), Snow Hill (present-day Lawnside, Camden County), and Timbuctoo (Burlington County) were among such places, located mainly in rural South Jersey, in which fugitive slaves also settled. See Handout 11: Map of Underground Railroad Communities in New Jersey.

**History Activity:** There are many myths about the Underground Railroad (“UGRR”). Tales of secret tunnels, trapdoors and secret compartments abound. Many places claim to be sites of the risky operation of moving fugitive slaves from the South to freedom. Since the location of Underground Railroad Stations needed to be kept secret for the operation to be successful, how do we know that certain buildings were secretly used for the Underground Railroad? The existence of certain buildings in New Jersey as sites for the Underground Railroad are often based on oral history, personal letters and the known existence of members of church congregations, primarily AME Churches, as being operators for the Underground Railroad. Divide into groups and have groups research one or more of the following Underground railroad sites and explain why and how they were part of the Underground Railroad:
1. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, (Springtown) Greenwich (Cumberland Co.)—housed fugitive slaves as they arrived from Maryland and Delaware crossing the Delaware Bay.

2. Goodwin Sisters House (Salem, Salem County)—By 1838, Abigail Goodwin and her sister, Elizabeth, both Quaker abolitionists, were using their home as an Underground Railroad station. One source of documentation is correspondence between Abigail and William Still, Philadelphia’s famed UGRR operative. Another source of documentation is a diary kept by a nephew of the sisters.

3. Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, Woolwich Township (Gloucester County) — area identified as being part of the Underground Railroad network in New Jersey; the residents of this community were runaway slaves; and members of primary-source documentation indicates that two members of this congregation—Pompey Lewis and Jubilee Sharper—were UGRR operatives.

4. Mott House, Lawnside Borough (Camden County.)—Peter Mott was a free black farmer who served as pastor of Lawnside’s Pisgah AME Church. His home provided the only black-owned and operated UGRR station in an all-black town, Lawnside.

5. Barcklow House, Moorestown (Burlington County)—Built and owned by Elisha Barcklow, an English Quaker, this house is regarded as an Underground Railroad station according to the oral tradition of the community. It is located on Kings Highway, an early major transportation artery that connected South Jersey to the northern part of the state

6. Haines House, Medford (Burlington County)—Dr. George Haines, Medford’s first resident physician and one of its most prominent citizens during the first half of the nineteenth century, built this house in 1826. According to local oral tradition, Haines, who was also a Quaker, abolitionist, and advocate for the cause of temperance, used this house as a safe haven for runaway slaves. The succeeding owner of the house, Dr. Andrew E. Budd, another physician, continued its role in the UGRR.

7. Burlington Pharmacy, Burlington City (Burlington County)—according to the oral tradition of the local community, this building was used frequently to harbor Underground Railroad runaways. It was owned by William J. Allinson, a Quaker abolitionist and community benefactor, who also used it as a forum for antislavery rallies.

8. Middleton House, Hamilton (East Crosswicks Village)(Mercer County)—Oral tradition suggests that Enoch Middleton, a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchant, moved to his summer house in Hamilton and helped guide fugitive slaves to Allentown, Cranbury or New Brunswick.

9. The Cranbury Inn, Cranbury (Middlesex County.)—The inn is located in a community identified by various sources, including a strong local oral tradition, as having been connected to the Underground Railroad. Runaways were brought from Crosswicks Village or Allentown to Cranbury and then on to New Brunswick and places farther north. The nature of an inn—a place where people could stop for food and accommodations at all times of the day—would have made it an ideal place to serve as a UGRR station.

10. Springtown Stagecoach Inn, South Pohatcong (Warren County)-- a stagecoach stop on the road leading out of Easton, Pennsylvania, through Phillipsburg, NJ, to points east, such as Somerville and Trenton; some of the stagecoaches traveled the New Brunswick Turnpike, there is a very strong local oral tradition that the inn served as an Underground Railroad safe house. The normal trafficking to and from an inn would have provided a perfect cover.

11. Holden Hilton House, Jersey City (Hudson County)—David Holden was Jersey City’s best-known abolitionist. His home at 79 Clifton Place, the only house on the block during the 1850s, was known as a "safe house." It was used to hide the fugitive slaves in the basement, which had a fireplace for the temporary occupants. As an amateur astronomer, Holden had an observatory on the roof of the house from which he received signals for the movement of the slaves he sequestered in his home.
Critical thinking activity: Why was helping fugitive slaves so risky?

Have a class discussion about why helping fugitive slaves was so risky.

- Many New Jersey residents were antagonistic to the abolitionist movement. It became increasingly profitable to kidnap fugitive slaves as well as dangerous for those assisting fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad.
- New Jersey's enforcement of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and the Dred Scott Decision made neither New Jersey nor Jersey City the final destination of most fugitive slaves, although some runaways remained in the black communities in New Jersey because they offered some physical safety. There were several instances recorded of slave catchers being run out of town when they were discovered in such communities.
- The penalty for helping fugitives to escape was $1000 (a lot of money in the 1850s!) and six months in jail under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.

Day Seven: Critical thinking activity: How have individuals or groups taken actions to promote the dignity and rights of people?

- What were responses to slavery by slaves, their masters, abolitionists and upstanders who chose to help slaves escaping north?
- Read Henry’s Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad (Levine) and/or Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt (Hopkinson) and explain how slaves took heroic measures to free themselves
- Write a short essay and/or prepare an oral presentation comparing and contrasting the stories in three or more of the following books to explain how prejudice can hurt people; analyze why some people (groups and nations) act like bullies and others act with kindness and caring; and identify different types of resistance.
- What can you do as an individual to prevent fight racism and hatred?

Assessment

The Hungry Visitors: Students pretend that they are confronted with hungry, desperate travelers on the Underground Railroad in antebellum New Jersey, and must decide between helping these people and risking their freedom and their homes, or obeying the law and turning the former slaves over to the authorities. Write a letter to a relative explaining the situation, what you did and why. Good score references: the harsh conditions of American slavery, New Jersey’s role in the Underground Railroad, fugitive slave laws, ethical decisions, the inherent worth of human beings.
Secret Journal: Write a “secret journal” of a slave who has successfully run away from his master in Virginia and escaped to New Jersey, starting with his or her plans, including what should be taken in the small scarf that will be his or her “baggage”, through the journey, explaining who helped and how he or she felt along the way to freedom. Good score references: the harsh conditions as a slave, the appreciation of the risk involved in running away, what you would need to take to survive, how others helped, the difficulties, your fears and your hopes.

Possible Resources

- Emma’s Escape: A Story of America’s Underground Railroad (Smithsonian Institution, 2003)
- Follow the Drinking Gourd (Winter, 1988)
- Harriet Tubman: Conductor of the Underground Railroad (Petry, 2007)
- Harriet Tubman: The Moses of her People (Bradford, 2004)
- Henry’s Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad (Levine, 2007)
- Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom (Weatherford, 2006)
- Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt (Hopkinson, 1995)
- “Steal Away, Steal Away...”: A Guide to the Underground Railroad in New Jersey (NJ Historical Commission)
- The Hundred Dresses (Estes, 1944)
- The Butterfly (Polacco, 2000)
- The Gold Cadillac (Taylor, 2001)
- The Underground Railroad: Authentic Narratives and First-Hand Accounts (William Still, 1872)
- Through My Eyes (Ruby Bridges, 1999)

Extension

Bring your students to visit one of the many houses where enslaved labor was used. For example, visit Marlpit Hall, a c. 1760 historic house museum in Middletown, NJ, which includes exhibits about the long-silenced voices of the enslaved who lived there. Marlpit was the home of Edward Taylor, a prosperous landowner and merchant who was active in colonial government and an ardent loyalist. (See https://www.journeythroughjersey.com/sites/marlpit-hall/. Check with your school or town librarian to find out if there is a colonial home that held enslaved laborers.

Bring your students to visit one or more of the buildings in New Jersey that were part of the Underground Railroad. The following website might help identify nearby sites: www.visitnj.org/new-jerseys-underground-railroad.
To the Speediest Improvement of the Province
Queen Anne’s Instruction to Lord Cornbury, 1702

..And in order to the better consolidating and incorporating of the two of East and West New Jersey into and under one government

...

You shall give all due encouragement and invitation to merchants and others who shall bring trade unto our said province or any way contribute to the advantage thereof and, in particular, the Royal African Company of England...

And whereas we are willing to recommend unto the said company that the said province may have a constant and sufficient supply of merchantable Negroes at moderate rate in money or commodities so you are to take especial cate that payment be duly made and within competent time
Handout 2

John Cooper Advocated the Abolition of Slavery

(From the New-Jersey Gazette, Sept. 20, 1780)

Whilst we are spilling our blood and exhausting our treasure in defence of our own liberty, it would not perhaps be amiss to turn our eyes towards those of our fellow-men who are now groaning in bondage under us. We say “all men are equally entitled to liberty and the pursuit of happiness;” but are we willing to grant this liberty to all men? The sentiment no doubt is just as well as generous; and must ever be read to our praise, provided our actions correspond therewith. But if after we have made such a declaration to the world, we continue to hold our fellow creatures in slavery, our words must rise up in judgement against us, and by the breath of our own mouths we shall stand condemned.

...And if we keep our present slaves in bondage, and only enact laws that their posterity shall be free, we save that part of our tyranny and gain of oppression, which to us, the present generation, is of the most value.
$100
REWARD.

Ran away from my farm, near Buena Vista P. O., Prince George's County, Maryland, on the first day of April, 1855, my servant MATHEW TURNER.

He is about five feet six or eight inches high; weighs from one hundred and sixty to one hundred and eighty pounds; he is very black, and has a remarkably thick upper lip and neck; looks as if his eyes are half closed; walks slow, and talks and laughs loud.

I will give One Hundred Dollars reward to whoever will secure him in jail, so that I get him again, no matter where taken.

MARCUS DU VAL,

Buena Vista P. O., Md.
May 14, 1855.
Handout 5

Image at https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTn4sITtoWNtz2FH61lOMwQY44NE1ApC1MiOBsHQ0-CASzIOLiEw
Follow the Drinking Gourd

Chorus

Follow the drinking gourd! Follow the drinking gourd!

For the old man is a waiting for to carry you to freedom if you follow the drinking gourd.

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls, follow the drinking gourd.

For the old man is a waiting for to carry you to freedom if you follow the drinking gourd.

The riverbank makes a very good road,

The dead trees will show you the way.

Left foot, peg foot, traveling on.

Following the drinking gourd.

Chorus

The river ends between two hills,

Follow the drinking gourd.

There’s another river on the other side,

Follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus

When the great big river meets the little river,

Follow the drinking gourd.

For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom

If you follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus
Handout 8

Harriet Tubman
Abigail Goodwin
Underground Railroad Communities in New Jersey