

Lesson Plan Format

Underground Railroad

7th grade

Developed for Teaching with Primary Sources from the Library of Congress:
“Not Just Flyover Country: Exploring Kansas History through Primary Sources”, 2016

By: Julie Nemecek
Olathe School District

Overview

Standards

Kansas History, Government and Social Studies

Standard 1: Choices have consequences

Benchmark 1.2: The students will analyze the context under which choices are made and draw conclusions about the motivations and goals of the decision-makers.

Kansas College and Career Ready Standards

Reading Standards for Literacy

RH.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Writing Standards for Literacy

WHST.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis reflection, and research

Speaking and Listening Standards

S.L1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched materials or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

Objectives

Content

- The student analyzes the risks and benefits associated with being involved in the underground railroad.
- The student will explain how abolitionists supported runaway slaves to meet their political and social goals.

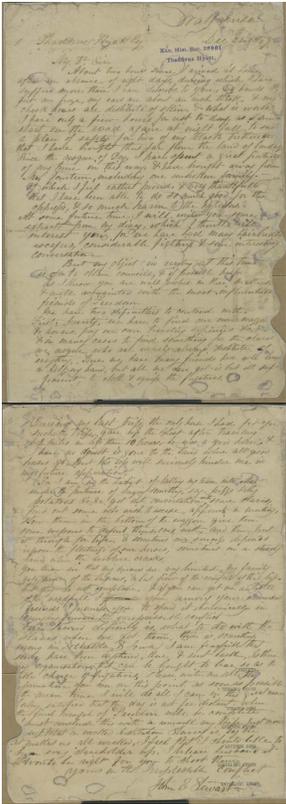
Skills

- The student determines motivating factors for involvement on the underground railroad.
- Students will analyze photographs and a letter as primary sources.

Compelling Questions

1. How was the Underground Railroad used to reach the abolitionist's goal of the immediate freedom of slaves?
2. How can the actions of a group of people working towards a common goal bring about change?
3. What benefits/risks would there be for people who were involved in the underground railroad?

Resource Chart

Image	Description	Citation	URL
<p>1.</p> 	<p>John E. Stewart wrote from Wakarusa, Kansas to Thaddeus Hyatt, president of the National Kansas Committee, describing his work on the underground railroad. This letter detailed the inclement weather and difficulties he encountered as he helped slaves to escape from Missouri, as well as his procedure for locating the slaves and hiding them in his wagon. Stewart sought to gain assistance from Hyatt, mainly in the form of provisions and horses. He also needed advice about what to do with the escaped slaves to ensure that they were not captured and sold again into slavery.</p>	<p>Creator: Stewart, John E Date: December 20, 1859 Callnumber: Thaddeus Hyatt Coll. #401 Box 1 Folder 7 KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 2540 Item Identifier: 2540</p>	<p>http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/2540</p>
<p>2.</p> 	<p>Wanted poster offering a reward of \$200 for the capture of two slaves from Saline County, Missouri. It includes the names and descriptions of the two slaves.</p>	<p>Creator: Williams, G.D Date: June 7, 1860 Callnumber: Port Vault K 326 W672t 1860 KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 90399 Item Identifier: 90399</p>	<p>http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/90399</p>
<p>3.</p> 	<p>Reverend Samuel Adair and his wife, Florella came to Kansas and settled near Osawatomie, an abolitionist community and a center of conflict during the Kansas Territory. The Adair cabin was a station on the Underground Railroad and Florella's half brother, John Brown, used this cabin as his headquarters. The cabin survived the Battle of Osawatomie where John Brown and 30 free-state defenders fought 250 proslavery militia in 1856, and stands on the battle site today. The cabin was later designated the John Brown Museum, State Historic Site.</p>	<p>Date: 1896 Callnumber: FK2.M5 O.75 .A *2a KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 212912 Item Identifier: 212912</p>	<p>http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/212912</p>

Lesson Procedure

Prior to class make copies of

- a. "John E. Stewart to Thaddeus Hyatt" document
- b. "Analyzing Underground Railroad Historical Letter" graphic organizer.
- c. "Reward Poster"
- d. "Rev. Samuel Adair's Underground Railroad Safe-House"

Part 1: Setting the Stage

1. Begin by giving students time to view the "Reward Poster."
2. Ask the following questions to students...
 - a. What year did these slaves run away?
 - b. Who ran away?
 - c. How is Jim described?
 - d. Does the \$100 reward apply everywhere?
 - e. Who made this?
 - f. Who is the target audience?
 - g. How could people react to this? Would everyone react in the same way?
 - h. Have you seen something like this today?
 - i. What does this tell you about slavery in the United States during this time period?
 - j. Why would a slave run away?
 - k. How could a slave escape?
 - l. Why would a slaveholder be willing to offer a reward and try so hard to get a slave back?

Part 2: Building Background Knowledge

1. Ask the class if they can predict what this lesson will be about.
2. Begin by showing students this [interactive map](#) of the underground railroad.
3. Explain that the underground railroad was not a railroad and it did not go underground! The "tracks" were routes fixed by abolitionist sympathizers. The ultimate purpose of the Underground Railroad was to reach the "terminal," "heaven," or "Promised Land" which was Canada and the northern free states.
4. Talk with students about the analogy of the railroad and present them with relevant vocabulary and background information.
 - a. Station: safe-house.
 - i. Have students look at the "Rev. Samuel Adair's Underground Railroad Safe-House" image and read the background information.
 - ii. These safe-houses provided runaway slaves with food and shelter on their way to freedom.
 - iii. The houses belonged to abolitionist sympathizers.
 - b. Agent: abolitionist sympathizers who helped the slaves connect to the Railroad
 - c. Conductor: guide
 - i. What risks would conductors face?
 - ii. With so many risks, why would anyone volunteer to be a conductor at all?
 - iii. Many conductors returned to help more slaves
 - iv. Some were even runaway slaves who could be returned to slavery if they were caught, such as Harriet Tubman.
 - d. Passengers: slaves
5. Explain to students that the success of the Underground Railroad was dependent on complete secrecy. Participants used symbols in the form of secret codes, words, signals and signs to pass hidden messages to other members of the underground railroad.
6. Gather prior knowledge by asking students what symbols were used along the underground railroad.

7. Discuss some of the symbols used along the underground railroad to ensure secrecy.
 - a. Passwords were used to ensure the fugitives were genuine
 - b. Messages were sent by drumming stones together
 - c. The hoot of an owl was used to convey messages
 - d. Certain Songs were sung as symbols of Underground Railway members
 - e. "All Clear" was conveyed in safe houses using a lighted lantern in a certain place as this symbol
 - f. Knocks on doors used a coded series of taps as symbols of identity
 - g. Certain items, such as a quilt, were hung on a clothesline
8. Ask students the following questions...
 - a. What benefits would safe-house symbols provide for those associated with the underground railroad?
 - b. What risks would safe-house symbols provide for those associated with the underground railroad?
9. Explain that those involved had to beware who they trusted as some stations would be compromised and slave catchers would promise protection, but instead turn them in for reward money that was often offered in advertisements like the image we viewed earlier.

Assessment

Analyzing a Historical Letter

1. Distribute the "John E. Stewart to Thaddeus Hyatt" document and "Analyzing Underground Railroad Historical Letter" graphic organizer.
2. Allow students time to read the letter and complete their graphic organizer.

For the Teacher

Name: _____

Analyzing Underground Railroad Historical Letter

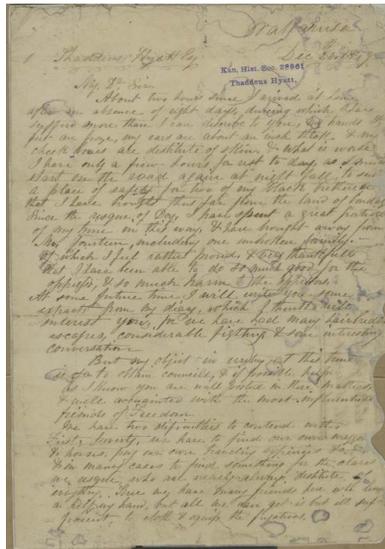
Date of the Document	Who is the author or creator of the document?	Who is this document written to?
<p>List three things the author said that you think are important.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.		
<p>What was the author's purpose for writing this document? Choose quotes from the document that provide evidence as to why it was written.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Quote:2. Quote:3. Quote:		
<p>List two things this document tells you about what life was like on the Underground Railroad.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.		
<p>What benefit does this historical letter provide for us today?</p>		
<p>How was the Underground Railroad used to reach the abolitionist goal of the immediate freedom of slaves?</p>		

JOHN E. STEWART TO THADDEUS HYATT

John E. Stewart wrote from Wakarusa, Kansas to Thaddeus Hyatt, president of the National Kansas Committee, describing his work on the underground railroad. This letter detailed the inclement weather and difficulties he encountered as he helped slaves to escape from Missouri, as well as his procedure for locating the slaves and hiding them in his wagon. Stewart sought to gain assistance from Hyatt, mainly in the form of provisions and horses. He also needed advice about what to do with the escaped slaves to ensure that they were not captured and sold again into slavery.

Creator: [Stewart, John E](#)

Date: December 20, 1859



Wakarusa Dec 20, 1859

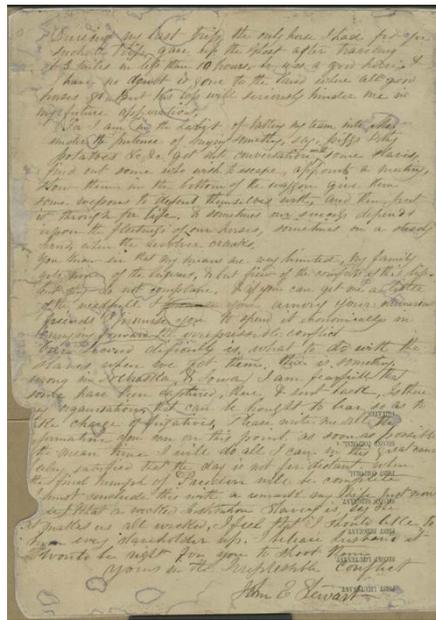
Thaddeus Hyatt Esq

My Dr Sir.

About two hours since I arrived at home after an absence of eight days, during which I have suffered more than I can describe to you, my hands & feet are froze, my ears are about an inch thick & my cheek bones are destitute of skin & what is worse I have only a few hours for rest to day, as I must start on the road again at night fall to seek a place of safety for two of my black bretheren that I have brought this far from the land of bondage. Since the resque of Doy, I have spent a great portion of my time on this way, & have brought away from Mo. fourteen, including one unbroken family of which I feel rather proud & very thankfull that I have been able to do so much good for the oppressed, & so much harm to the oppressors. At some future time I will write you some extract, from my diary, which I think will interest you for we have had many hairbreth escapes, considerable fighting & some interesting conversation.

But my object in writing at this time is to obtain councill, & if possible help as I know you are well posted in these matters & well accuainted with the most influential friends of Freedom

We have two dificulties to contend with. First, poverty, we have to find our own waggon & horses, pay our own traveling expences etc, etc & in many cases to find something for the slaves we resque, who are nearly always destitute of everything. True we have many friends here who lend a helping hand, but all we can get is but ill sufficient to cloth & equip the fugatives.



During my last trip the only horse I had fit for such a trip gave up the ghost after traveling 63 miles in less than 10 hours, he was a good horse & have no doubt is gone to the land where all good horses go. But his loss will seriously hinder me in my future operations.

For I am in the habit of taking my team into Mo. under the pretence of buying something, say, piggs [xxx] potatoes etc, etc. get into conversation with some slaves, find out some who wish to escape, appoint a meeting, stow them in the bottom of the waggon give them some wepons to defend themselves with, and then, [xxx] is through for life & sometimes our success depends upon the fleetness of our horses, sometimes on a steady hand, when the revolver cracks.

You know sir that my means are very limited, my family gets none of the luxuries, & but fiew of the comforts of this life but they do not complane, & if you can get me a little of the needfull among your numerous friends I promise you to spend it economically in carrying forward the irrepressible conflict.

Our second difficulty is what to do with the slaves when we get them. There is something wrong in Nebraska & Iowa I am fearfull that some have been captured, there & sent back. Is there any organizations that can be brought to bear so as to take charge of fugatives, Please write me all the information you can on this point as soon as possible the mean time I will do all I can in this great cause feeling satisfied that the day is not far distant when the final triumph of Freedom will be complete I must conclude this with a remark my wife just now made What a wicked Institution Slavery is, say she it makes us all wicked, I feel that I should like to burn every slaveholder up. I beleave husband it would be right for you to shoot them

Yours in the Irrepressible Conflict John E Stewart

336
W 672

\$200 Reward!

Ranaway from the subscriber, living in Saline county, on the 4th inst., two Negromen, named Jim and Jack--each aged about 25 years.

Jim

is dish-faced; has sore eyes and bad teeth; is of a light black or brown color; speaks quick, is about 5 feet 7 inches high; had on when last seen, blue cotton pants, white shirt, white full'd coat and new custom-made boots.



Jack

had on the same kind of clothing with shoes, has a very small foot, wears perhaps a No. 6 shoe, and has heavy tacks in the heels; is about the same height and color of Jim. They are doubtless aiming for K. T.

A reward of \$100 each will be given if taken outside of the State, or \$50 each if taken in the State, outside of Saline county.

C. D. WILLIAMS,

Spring Garden, P. O., Pettis county, Missouri.
Harrisonville, Mo., June 7th, 1860.

