

Underground Railroad through Ohio – Lesson Plans

Objective:

- The student will be able to identify various cultural groups involved in the Ohio section of the Underground Railroad and describe their interactions.
- The student will be able to locate segments of the Underground Railroad on a map through the use of a grid system and a direction finder.
- The student will be able to use a timeline to draw inferences about cause and effect.

Procedure:

1. Present the story of the Underground Railroad in Ohio through selected literature.
2. Discuss the various cultural groups who interacted in the Underground Railroad. (Quakers, African Americans-free and slave, Presbyterians, etc.)
3. Students locate various “stations” on the map of Ohio using the grid system. Then plot various options for escape routes. Remind the students to use the direction finder and always move north to freedom.
4. Introduce the concept of slavery, the regional controversy between North and South, the fugitive slave law, and the Civil War. Have students plot these events on a timeline.
5. Shade the timeline to show the most active period of the Underground Railroad – 1830-1860
6. Using the timeline, the students will respond to the following: Why was the Underground Railroad most active from 1830 – 1860?
7. Display a US map from the mid-1800’s. Ask students to explain the significance of the location of Ohio and its importance as the “trunk” of the Underground Railroad.

Evaluation: Students will exhibit understanding through a written first-person narrative describing a slave’s travels to freedom. This narrative should include people who helped, stations, and an accompanying map.

Ohio Underground Railroad Fact Sheet

Terms

Underground Railroad – the name given to the network of assistance given to slaves to help them escape from Southern Slave states to Canada. It was neither underground nor a railroad.

conductor – a person who guided fugitives from place to place.

station – a stopping place where fugitives were hidden during the day, usually a house or barn. These buildings had hidden closets and secret rooms, and some had secret tunnels.

Abolitionist – a person who believed slavery should be abolished at any cost

fugitive – a runaway slave

Famous Ohioans

1. Levi Coffin - A Quaker merchant from Cincinnati who was a well-known conductor who moved thousands of fugitives to freedom
2. Reverend John Rankin – a Presbyterian minister from Ripley, Ohio who kept a lantern shining in the window of his house on the Ohio River to guide slaves crossing the river.
3. Oberlin Congregationalist – Oberlin was a center for abolitionists in Ohio and Oberlin College was the first to admit African Americans.
4. Harriet Beecher Stowe – Author from Cincinnati who wrote Uncle Tom’s Cabin, a book which influenced many people in the direction of anti-slavery sentiments
5. John Malvin – A free Negro who owned a boat that was used to get many slaves across Lake Erie

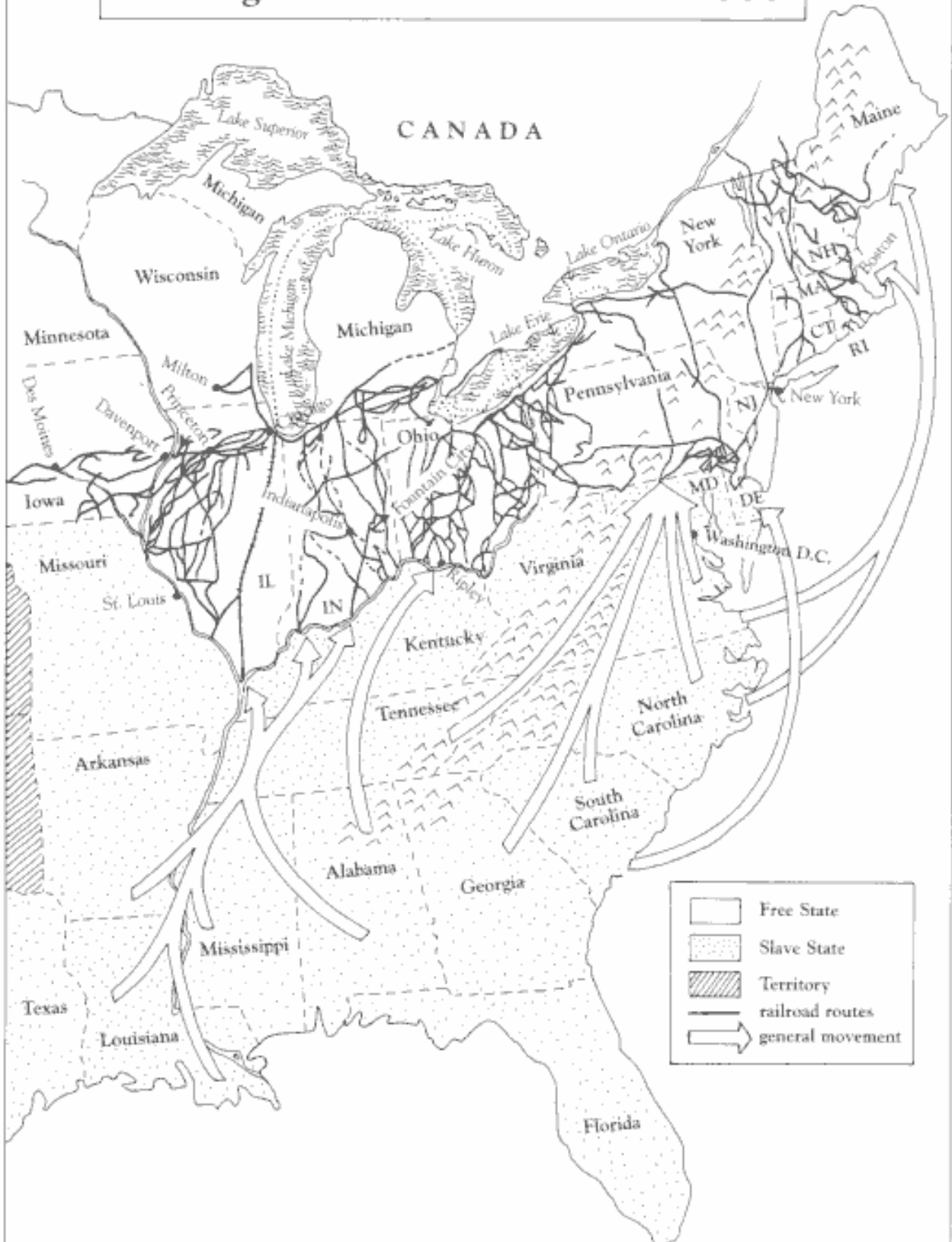
Stations

1. Nearly every town had someone who helped the slaves on their way to freedom
2. Oberlin – a stronghold of Congregationalist Abolitionists
3. Cincinnati, Ripley, Marietta – some of the important towns along the Ohio River
4. Cleveland (named “hope”), Sandusky – towns on Lake Erie that assisted slaves
5. Ontario, Canada – the final destination

Laws

1. United States Constitution – 1787 – allowed slavery to continue
2. Northwest Ordinance of 1787 – prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory which included Ohio
3. Ohio Constitution 1803 – Prohibited slavery in Ohio
4. Missouri Compromise 1820 – This compromise established a line between North and South/Free and Slave states. The Northern states were bitterly opposed to slavery.
5. Fugitive Slave Law 1850 – Required people in free states to return slaves to their owners – most Ohioans thought this law was morally wrong and refused to obey
6. Civil War 1861- 1865 – Resulted in an amendment to the US Constitution that ended slavery

Underground Railroad Routes 1860



Underground Railroad

“Follow the drinking gourd” was an important phrase that helped slaves escape to freedom. Find the words listed below. When you have located all the words, use the first 30 remaining letters to find the secret phrase that will give you a clue about the drinking gourd and getting North to freedom.

E	T	T	H	E	D	R	I	S	N	K	I	U	R	N
V	S	R	A	T	S	H	T	R	O	N	N	E	A	G
I	I	O	G	O	U	A	R	D	I	D	W	S	N	T
T	N	H	H	E	T	D	B	I	E	O	G	D	K	I
I	O	P	P	I	E	A	R	R	T	N	A	I	I	N
G	I	G	O	W	O	O	G	S	Z	I	T	U	N	Y
U	T	N	Y	D	K	R	O	T	C	U	D	N	O	C
F	I	B	S	A	O	L	I	S	J	K	L	Z	S	I
C	L	Y	T	U	W	I	L	V	Z	Y	Z	R	S	V
W	O	I	N	A	U	A	K	O	E	A	Z	M	R	I
Z	B	D	K	M	V	R	N	L	Y	R	K	R	M	L
X	A	B	K	E	H	L	P	U	M	R	G	K	O	W
J	R	F	I	V	C	I	T	I	R	D	N	T	U	A
P	V	C	K	H	R	O	N	C	J	C	T	G	S	R
S	J	E	P	E	R	O	A	O	Z	M	T	E	Z	N

ABOLITIONIST
 CIVIL WAR
 CONDUCTOR
 FUGITIVE
 NORTH STAR
 OHIO RIVER
 RAILROAD

RANKIN
 RIPLEY
 RUNAWAY
 SLAVE
 STATION
 STOWE
 UNDERGROUND

Secret Phrase:

