



Clues from Our Past
Re-Created Underground Railroad Historical Scene

Submitted by: Christy Gorman



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Re-created Underground Railroad Historical Scene

SUBJECT: American History
TOPIC: Underground Railroad/
Real-life Application

GRADE: Fifth
LENGTH: (4) 50 minute lessons

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will visit a re-created Underground Railroad historical scene to enhance further learning of the Underground Railroad unit.
2. Students will incorporate writing initiative strategies in responding to local Underground Railroad stories, sites, and events.
3. Students will learn about John Parker, Rev. Rankin, as well as other local conductors in order to bring the Underground Railroad to real-life application.

MATERIALS:

1. His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad. Edited by Stuart Seely Sprague.
2. Glasscock, Sarah. Scholastic: 10 Easy-to-Read American History. USA: Scholastic, 2001.
3. Underground Railroad. The History Channel. A+E Television Networks, 1998.
4. Several different collections of re-created historical items as deemed appropriate by the teacher.

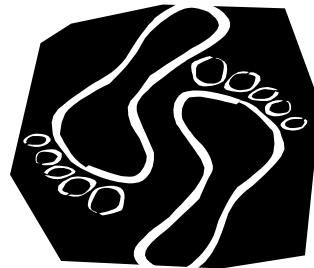
Kentucky Learner Goals and Standards: 2.20 Students will

- **explore the interpretive nature (how perceptions of people and passing of time influence accounts of historical events) of the history of the United States using a variety of tools (artifacts, primary and secondary sources.)**
- **examine the historical contributions of individuals and groups.**



2.17 Students will

- **examine social interactions among diverse groups in the history of the United States.**



2.41 Students will

- **examine as cultures emerge and develop, conflict and competition (e.g., disagreements, arguments, stereotypes, prejudice) may occur.**



PROCEDURE:

DAY 1

- 1. Allow students to examine a “Re-created Underground Railroad Historical Scene” that contains items that represent the historical event. The following suggested items can be placed behind a re-created historical crime scene tape (available at Holcomb’s): lantern, slave ads, star, pictures of conductors, Underground Railroad secret terms (conductor, passenger, River Jordan), and pictures of John Rankin and John Parker’s homes. View the items and then ask students questions to prompt their investigation of the crime scene.**
- 2. Ask students to complete split notes (writing initiative activity) listing the crime scene items and then the purpose of the clue in the scene.**
- 3. Allow the students to complete a K-W-L chart worksheet (writing initiative activity) about the Underground Railroad.**



DAY 2

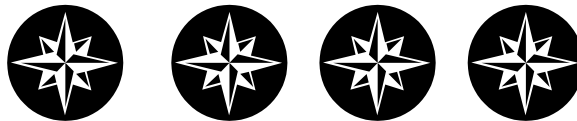
- 1. Allow students to complete an anticipation guide (writing initiative activity) of the Underground Railroad.**
- 2. Read the Underground Railroad information for them to check over their answers then ask if any students have any prior knowledge of John P. Parker.**
- 3. Read to the students chapter 10 of His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad. Edited by Stuart Seely Sprague.**

4. Allow students to participate in a higher level learning activity by reading out loud the play of John Parker, “Riding to Freedom”.
5. Allow students to write a reflective entry (writing initiative activity) about the bravery of John Parker. If they were a former slave, would they have risked their freedom to help other slaves gain their freedom? Why or why not?



DAY 3

1. View, “The Band of Angels” segment from the Underground Railroad History Channel video by A + E Television Networks.
2. Allow students to take split notes (writing initiative activity) of the video and give responses to the material introduced.
3. Allow students to complete a reflective writing (writing initiative activity) about the great successes of former slave, John P. Parker.



DAY 4

1. Allow students to view “The Great Escapes” segment as well as the “Moses of Her People” segment of the Underground Railroad History Channel video by A + E Television Networks. While viewing, allow the students to complete a

“Four Square Model” (writing initiative activity) about each conductor mentioned~Harriet Tubman, William and Ellen Craft and Box Brown.

2. Share with the students the secret language of the Underground Railroad.

Assessment:

Allow students to create a story about their “Great Escape” as a former slave who crosses the Ohio River from Kentucky to Ohio. Have them incorporate 10 facts acquired from the Underground Railroad lessons as well as the “secret language”. They may meet any of the famous conductors discussed or travel through the homes of John P. Parker and Rev. John Rankin. Their writing must be written as a real-life application event.

Resources:

1. Glasscock, Sarah. Scholastic: 10 Easy-to-Read American History. USA: Scholastic, 2001.
2. His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad. Edited by Stuart Seely Sprague.
3. Underground Railroad. The History Channel. A+E Television Networks, 1998.
4. <http://geocities.com/boone.history> (Slave articles)



Big Bone Baptist Church

Big Bone, Kentucky

*Text of Minutes relating to an Attempted Poisoning by a Slave,
1848*

*At a church Meeting at Big Bone Church on the 4th Saturday in
May 1848 after complying with the rules of the church the
following Business was transacted*

To Wit

*Brother Robert Huey laid in a charge against Sister Sealy a Slave
of Brother Samuel Huey who aptemted to Poising the sd. Brother
and his family we therefore consider her guilty of Sin and for that
act for we do exclude her from this Church.*

*The Church Reports that there was Contributed Forty two dollars
for the aid of the Ministry.*

Adjnd. Till meeting in course

Atest

M. McHatton C.L.K. & Geo. H. Scott, Mod.

Negro Killed-----A Negro man belonging to Mr. Price, of Boone county, killed a Negro man, a few days since, with a fence rail. He was arrested, but we learn has since escaped.

Licking Valley Register 9 May 1846 p. 2,c.3

Suit by John Norris of Petersburg, 1850

SLAVE SUIT.-----John Norris, of Boone County, Ky., recovered a judgment of \$2,800 last week in the U.S. Circuit Court at Indianapolis against NEWLAN, CROCKER, and others, for slaves which it was alleged they had abducted from NORRIS at South Bend, Ky. NORRIS had followed his Negroes to that place, and had them again in possession, when they were taken from him by force. The costs of the suit are about \$2,000, which added to the \$2,800 damages, make \$4,800.

Covington Journal 22 Jun 1850 p. 2, col. 2

Stampede of Slaves.---Arrest of the Fugitives.

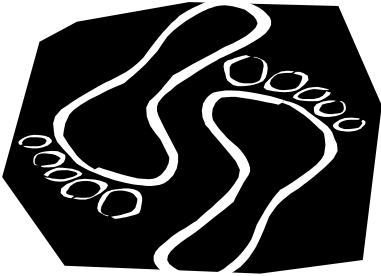
Covington Journal

Saturday 17 June 1854

p.2. col.3

On Sunday night nine slaves escaped from their owners in Boone county. They were Lewis, about 24 years of age; Susan, 39 years of age; Wesley, 6 years of age; John, 7 years of age; Almeda, 26 years of age, and Sarah Jane, 3 years of age; belonging to Mr. Wm. Walton. Shadrach, 60 years of age, to Mr. Jonas Christler; Anderson, to Mr. John P. Scott; and Lee, to the heirs of Wm. H. Blankenbeker. They crossed the river in a skiff and landed in Indiana, they proceeded to within five miles of Cincinnati, where they concealed themselves, awaiting to go to Canada. Information of their whereabouts reaching the owners, pursuit was made, and with the assistance of deputy marshals Lee Worley, of Cincinnati, and deputy sheriff Ward, of Covington, all were arrested Wednesday night. On Thursday they were taken before JOHN SPENDERY, U.S. Commissioner, at his office in Court street, where the investigation is now going on. Messrs. KETCHUM and PUGH, of Cincinnati, and DUDLEY, of Covington, are attorneys for the claimants, and Messrs. GITCHELL and JOLIFFE for the Negroes. There seems to be no doubt that the fugitives will be returned to their owners. The Columbian says:

'The general impression is, that the whole party will be returned to their alleged owners. It is reported that twenty-seven slaves in all escaped from Grant and Boone counties, Ky., on last Sunday, but no trace has been discovered of eighteen of them. There is no excitement in relation to the return of those caught, as the owners seem very unassuming, plain Kentucky farmers, who have treated their slaves with general kindness and propriety.'



Secret Language

- **Agent ~Someone who arranges the passages for the fugitives.**
- **Canaan Land~Canada**
- **Moses~Harriet Tubman**
- **Conductor~Someone who brings them along the path.**
- **Depot~Safehouse**
- **Grand Central Station~ Cincinnati and Covington**
- **Jordan River ~Ohio River**
- **Midnight~Detroit**
- **Package of Hardware~Male freedom seeker**
- **Package of Dry Goods~Female freedom seeker**

- **Passenger~Fugitive**