

= Harriet Tubman =

Harriet Tubman ( born Araminta Ross ; c . 1822 ? March 10 , 1913 ) was an American abolitionist , humanitarian , and an armed scout and spy for the United States Army during the American Civil War . Born into slavery , Tubman escaped and subsequently made some thirteen missions to rescue approximately seventy enslaved families and friends , using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad . She later helped abolitionist John Brown recruit men for his raid on Harpers Ferry , and in the post @-@ war era was an active participant in the struggle for women 's suffrage .

Born a slave in Dorchester County , Maryland , Tubman was beaten and whipped by her various masters as a child . Early in life , she suffered a traumatic head wound when an irate slave owner threw a heavy metal weight intending to hit another slave and hit her instead . The injury caused dizziness , pain , and spells of hypersomnia , which occurred throughout her life . She was a devout Christian and experienced strange visions and vivid dreams , which she ascribed to premonitions from God .

In 1849 , Tubman escaped to Philadelphia , then immediately returned to Maryland to rescue her family . Slowly , one group at a time , she brought relatives with her out of the state , and eventually guided dozens of other slaves to freedom . Traveling by night and in extreme secrecy , Tubman ( or " Moses " , as she was called ) " never lost a passenger " . After the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was passed , she helped guide fugitives farther north into British North America , and helped newly freed slaves find work .

When the Civil War began , Tubman worked for the Union Army , first as a cook and nurse , and then as an armed scout and spy . The first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war , she guided the raid at Combahee Ferry , which liberated more than 700 slaves . After the war , she retired to the family home on property she had purchased in 1859 in Auburn , New York , where she cared for her aging parents . She was active in the women 's suffrage movement until illness overtook her and she had to be admitted to a home for elderly African Americans that she had helped to establish years earlier . After she died in 1913 , she became an icon of American courage and freedom . On April 20 , 2016 , the U.S. Treasury Department announced a plan for Tubman to replace Andrew Jackson as the portrait gracing the \$ 20 bill .

= = Early life and education = =

Tubman was born Araminta " Minty " Ross to slave parents , Harriet ( " Rit " ) Green and Ben Ross . Rit was owned by Mary Pattison Brodess ( and later her son Edward ) . Ben was held by Anthony Thompson , who became Mary 's second husband , and who ran a large plantation near Blackwater River in Madison , Maryland . As with many slaves in the United States , neither the exact year nor place of Araminta 's birth is known , and historians differ as to the best estimate . Kate Larson records the year as 1822 , based on a midwife payment and several other historical documents , including her runaway advertisement , while Jean Humez says " the best current evidence suggests that Tubman was born in 1820 , but it might have been a year or two later . " Catherine Clinton notes that Tubman reported the year of her birth as 1825 , while her death certificate lists 1815 and her gravestone lists 1820 . In her Civil War widow 's pension records , Tubman claimed she was born in 1820 , 1822 , and 1825 , an indication , perhaps , that she had only a general idea of when she was born .

Modesty , Tubman 's maternal grandmother , arrived in the United States on a slave ship from Africa ; no information is available about her other ancestors . As a child , Tubman was told that she was of Ashanti lineage ( from what is now Ghana ) , though no evidence exists to confirm or deny this assertion . Her mother Rit ( who may have had a white father ) was a cook for the Brodess family . Her father Ben was a skilled woodsman who managed the timber work on Thompson 's plantation . They married around 1808 and , according to court records , they had nine children together : Linah , Mariah Ritty , Soph , Robert , Minty ( Harriet ) , Ben , Rachel , Henry , and Moses .

Rit struggled to keep her family together as slavery threatened to tear it apart . Edward Brodess sold three of her daughters ( Linah , Mariah Ritty , and Soph ) , separating them from the family forever . When a trader from Georgia approached Brodess about buying Rit 's youngest son , Moses , she hid him for a month , aided by other slaves and free blacks in the community . At one point she confronted her owner about the sale . Finally , Brodess and " the Georgia man " came toward the slave quarters to seize the child , where Rit told them , " You are after my son ; but the first man that comes into my house , I will split his head open . " Brodess backed away and abandoned the sale . Tubman 's biographers agree that stories told about this event within the family influenced her belief in the possibilities of resistance .

= = Childhood = =

Tubman 's mother was assigned to " the big house " and had scarce time for her family ; consequently , as a child Tubman took care of a younger brother and baby , as was typical in large families . When she was five or six years old , Brodess hired her out as a nursemaid to a woman named " Miss Susan " . She was ordered to keep watch on the baby as it slept ; when it woke up and cried , she was whipped . She later recounted a particular day when she was lashed five times before breakfast . She carried the scars for the rest of her life . She found ways to resist , running away for five days , wearing layers of clothing as protection against beatings , and fighting back .

As a child , Tubman also worked at the home of a planter named James Cook . She had to check the muskrat traps in nearby marshes , even after contracting measles . She became so ill that Cook sent her back to Brodess , where her mother nursed her back to health . Brodess then hired her out again . She spoke later of her acute childhood homesickness , comparing herself to " the boy on the Swanee River " , an allusion to Stephen Foster 's song " Old Folks at Home " . As she grew older and stronger , she was assigned to field and forest work , driving oxen , plowing , and hauling logs .

= = = Religion = = =

As an illiterate child , she had been told Bible stories by her mother . The particular variety of her early Christian belief remains unclear , but she acquired a passionate faith in God . She rejected the teachings of the New Testament that urged slaves to be obedient and found guidance in the Old Testament tales of deliverance . Tubman was devout , and when she began experiencing visions and vivid dreams , she interpreted them as revelations from God . This religious perspective informed her actions throughout her life .

= = = Head injury = = =

As a child in Dorchester County , Maryland , Tubman was beaten by masters to whom she was hired out . Early in her life , she suffered a severe head wound when hit by a heavy metal weight . The injury caused disabling epileptic seizures , headaches , powerful visions , and dream experiences , which occurred throughout her life .

One day , the adolescent Tubman was sent to a dry @-@ goods store for supplies . There , she encountered a slave owned by another family , who had left the fields without permission . His overseer , furious , demanded that she help restrain him . She refused , and as he ran away , the overseer threw a two @-@ pound weight at him . He struck her instead , which she said " broke my skull " . She later explained her belief that her hair ? which " had never been combed and ... stood out like a bushel basket " ? might have saved her life . Bleeding and unconscious , she was returned to her owner 's house and laid on the seat of a loom , where she remained without medical care for two days . She was sent back into the fields , " with blood and sweat rolling down my face until I couldn 't see " . Her boss said she was " not worth a sixpence " and returned her to Brodess , who tried unsuccessfully to sell her . She began having seizures and would seemingly fall unconscious , although she claimed to be aware of her surroundings while appearing to be asleep . These episodes were alarming to her family , who were unable to wake her when she fell asleep suddenly

and without warning . This condition remained with her for the rest of her life ; Larson suggests she may have suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy as a result of the injury .

= = Family and marriage = =

By 1840 , Tubman 's father , Ben , was manumitted from slavery at the age of 45 , as stipulated in a former owner 's will , though his actual age was closer to 55 . He continued working as a timber estimator and foreman for the Thompson family , who had held him as a slave . Several years later , Tubman contacted a white attorney and paid him five dollars to investigate her mother 's legal status . The lawyer discovered that a former owner had issued instructions that Rit , like her husband , would be manumitted at the age of 45 . The record showed that a similar provision would apply to Rit 's children , and that any children born after she reached 45 years of age were legally free , but the Pattison and Brodess families had ignored this stipulation when they inherited the slaves . Challenging it legally was an impossible task for Tubman .

Around 1844 , she married a free black man named John Tubman . Although little is known about him or their time together , the union was complicated because of her slave status . Since the mother 's status dictated that of children , any children born to Harriet and John would be enslaved . Such blended marriages ? free people of color marrying enslaved people ? were not uncommon on the Eastern Shore of Maryland , where by this time , half the black population was free . Most African @-@ American families had both free and enslaved members . Larson suggests that they might have planned to buy Tubman 's freedom .

Tubman changed her name from Araminta to Harriet soon after her marriage , though the exact timing is unclear . Larson suggests this happened right after the wedding , and Clinton suggests that it coincided with Tubman 's plans to escape from slavery . She adopted her mother 's name , possibly as part of a religious conversion , or to honor another relative .

= = Escape from slavery = =

In 1849 , Tubman became ill again , which diminished her value as a slave . Edward Brodess tried to sell her , but could not find a buyer . Angry at him for trying to sell her and for continuing to enslave her relatives , Tubman began to pray for her owner , asking God to make him change his ways . She said later : " I prayed all night long for my master till the first of March ; and all the time he was bringing people to look at me , and trying to sell me . " When it appeared as though a sale was being concluded , " I changed my prayer , " she said . " First of March I began to pray , ' Oh Lord , if you ain 't never going to change that man 's heart , kill him , Lord , and take him out of the way . ' " A week later , Brodess died , and Tubman expressed regret for her earlier sentiments .

As in many estate settlements , Brodess 's death increased the likelihood that Tubman would be sold and her family broken apart . His widow , Eliza , began working to sell the family 's slaves . Tubman refused to wait for the Brodess family to decide her fate , despite her husband 's efforts to dissuade her . " [ T ] here was one of two things I had a right to , " she explained later , " liberty or death ; if I could not have one , I would have the other . "

Tubman and her brothers , Ben and Henry , escaped from slavery on September 17 , 1849 . Tubman had been hired out to Dr. Anthony Thompson , who owned a large plantation in an area called Poplar Neck in neighboring Caroline County ; it is likely her brothers labored for Thompson as well . Because the slaves were hired out to another household , Eliza Brodess probably did not recognize their absence as an escape attempt for some time . Two weeks later , she posted a runaway notice in the Cambridge Democrat , offering a reward of up to 100 dollars for each slave returned . Once they had left , Tubman 's brothers had second thoughts . Ben may have just become a father . The two men went back , forcing Tubman to return with them .

Soon afterward , Tubman escaped again , this time without her brothers . Beforehand , she tried to send word to her mother of her plans . She sang a coded song to Mary , a trusted fellow slave , that was a farewell . " I 'll meet you in the morning , " she intoned , " I 'm bound for the promised land . " While her exact route is unknown , Tubman made use of the network known as the Underground

Railroad . This informal but well @-@ organized system was composed of free and enslaved blacks , white abolitionists , and other activists . Most prominent among the latter in Maryland at the time were members of the Religious Society of Friends , often called Quakers . The Preston area near Poplar Neck in Caroline County contained a substantial Quaker community , and was probably an important first stop during Tubman 's escape . From there , she probably took a common route for fleeing slaves ? northeast along the Choptank River , through Delaware and then north into Pennsylvania . A journey of nearly 90 miles ( 145 kilometers ) , her traveling by foot would have taken between five days and three weeks .

Tubman had to travel by night , guided by the North Star , and trying to avoid slave catchers eager to collect rewards for fugitive slaves . The " conductors " in the Underground Railroad used deceptions for protection . At an early stop , the lady of the house ordered Tubman to sweep the yard so as to seem to be working for the family . When night fell , the family hid her in a cart and took her to the next friendly house . Given her familiarity with the woods and marshes of the region , Tubman during the day likely hid in these locales . Tubman only later described her routes because other fugitive slaves used them .

Particulars of her first journey remain shrouded in secrecy . She crossed into Pennsylvania with a feeling of relief and awe , and recalled the experience years later :

When I found I had crossed that line , I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person . There was such a glory over everything ; the sun came like gold through the trees , and over the fields , and I felt like I was in Heaven .

= = Nicknamed " Moses " = =

In honor of her courageous efforts to rescue family and friends from slavery , abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison named her " Moses " , alluding to the prophet in the Book of Exodus who led the Hebrews to freedom from Egypt . Though nicknamed " Moses " , Tubman 's daring missions to Maryland remained virtually unknown , and her identity was a carefully guarded secret . She did sing a version of " Go Down Moses " to signal to her refugees along the path to freedom ? she changed the tempo to indicate that it was either safe or too dangerous to proceed . Like other Underground Railroad conductors , Tubman used various methods of communication specific to her own needs . Contrary to current popular belief , there were no common " codes " used by conductors . In the north , however , the song " Go Down Moses " was openly sung by Black regiments during the Civil War . After the war , various black @-@ faced minstrels included the song in their acts which helped popularize it . During the 20th century , people of all races sang it as a spiritual to pay tribute to Tubman or to various struggles for freedom .

After reaching Philadelphia , Tubman thought of her family . " I was a stranger in a strange land , " she said later . " [ M ] y father , my mother , my brothers , and sisters , and friends were [ in Maryland ] . But I was free , and they should be free . " She worked odd jobs and saved money . The U.S. Congress meanwhile passed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 , which heavily punished abetting escape and forced law enforcement officials ? even in states that had outlawed slavery ? to assist in their capture . The law increased risks for escaped slaves , more of whom therefore sought refuge in Southern Ontario ( then called the United Province of Canada ) , which , as part of the British Empire , had abolished slavery . Racial tensions were also increasing in Philadelphia as waves of poor Irish immigrants competed with free blacks for work .

In December 1850 , Tubman was warned that her niece Kessiah and her two children , six @-@ year @-@ old James Alfred , and baby Araminta , soon would be sold in Cambridge . Tubman went to Baltimore , where her brother @-@ in @-@ law Tom Tubman hid her until the sale . Kessiah 's husband , a free black man named John Bowley , made the winning bid for his wife . Then , while the auctioneer stepped away to have lunch , John , Kessiah and their children escaped to a nearby safe house . When night fell , Bowley sailed the family on a log canoe 60 miles ( 97 kilometres ) to Baltimore , where they met with Tubman , who brought the family to Philadelphia .

The next spring she returned to Maryland to help guide away other family members . During her second trip , she recovered her brother Moses and two unidentified men . Tubman likely worked with

abolitionist Thomas Garrett , a Quaker working in Wilmington , Delaware . Word of her exploits had encouraged her family , and biographers agree that with each trip to Maryland , she became more confident .

While being interviewed by author Wilbur Siebert in 1897 , Tubman named some of the people who helped her and places that she stayed along the Underground Railroad . She stayed with Sam Green , a free black minister living in East New Market , Maryland ; she also hid near her parents ' home at Poplar Neck in Caroline County , Maryland . She would travel from there northeast to Sandtown and Willow Grove , Delaware , and to the Camden area where free black agents , William and Nat Brinkley and Abraham Gibbs , guided her north past Dover , Smyrna , and Blackbird , where other agents would take her across the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal to New Castle and Wilmington . In Wilmington , Quaker Thomas Garrett would secure transportation to William Still 's office or the homes of other Underground Railroad operators in the greater Philadelphia area . Still , a famous black agent , is credited with aiding hundreds of freedom seekers escape to safer places farther north in New York , New England , and present @-@ day Southern Ontario .

In the fall of 1851 , Tubman returned to Dorchester County for the first time since her escape , this time to find her husband , John . She once again saved money from various jobs , purchased a suit for him , and made her way south . John , meanwhile , had married another woman named Caroline . Tubman sent word that he should join her , but he insisted that he was happy where he was . Tubman at first prepared to storm their house and make a scene , but then decided he was not worth the trouble . Suppressing her anger , she found some slaves who wanted to escape and led them to Philadelphia . John and Caroline raised a family together , until he was killed 16 years later in a roadside argument with a white man named Robert Vincent .

Because the Fugitive Slave Law had made the northern United States a more dangerous place for escaped slaves to remain , many escaped slaves began migrating to Southern Ontario . In December 1851 , Tubman guided an unidentified group of 11 fugitives , possibly including the Bowleys and several others she had helped rescue earlier , northward . There is evidence to suggest that Tubman and her group stopped at the home of abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass . In his third autobiography , Douglass wrote : " On one occasion I had eleven fugitives at the same time under my roof , and it was necessary for them to remain with me until I could collect sufficient money to get them on to Canada . It was the largest number I ever had at any one time , and I had some difficulty in providing so many with food and shelter .... " The number of travelers and the time of the visit make it likely that this was Tubman 's group .

Douglass and Tubman admired one another greatly as they both struggled against slavery . When an early biography of Tubman was being prepared in 1868 , Douglass wrote a letter to honor her . It read in part :

You ask for what you do not need when you call upon me for a word of commendation . I need such words from you far more than you can need them from me , especially where your superior labors and devotion to the cause of the lately enslaved of our land are known as I know them . The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public , and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way . You , on the other hand , have labored in a private way . I have wrought in the day ? you in the night . ... The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism . Excepting John Brown ? of sacred memory ? I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have .

= = = Journeys and methods = = =

Over eleven years , Tubman returned repeatedly to the Eastern Shore of Maryland , rescuing some 70 slaves in about thirteen expeditions , including her three other brothers , Henry , Ben , and Robert , their wives and some of their children . She also provided specific instructions to 50 to 60 additional fugitives who escaped to the north . Tubman 's dangerous work required tremendous ingenuity ; she usually worked during winter months , to minimize the likelihood that the group would be seen . One admirer of Tubman said : " She always came in the winter , when the nights are long

and dark , and people who have homes stay in them . " Once she had made contact with escaping slaves , they left town on Saturday evenings , since newspapers would not print runaway notices until Monday morning .

Her journeys into the land of slavery put her at tremendous risk , and she used a variety of subterfuges to avoid detection . Tubman once disguised herself with a bonnet and carried two live chickens to give the appearance of running errands . Suddenly finding herself walking toward a former owner in Dorchester County , she yanked the strings holding the birds ' legs , and their agitation allowed her to avoid eye contact . Later she recognized a fellow train passenger as another former master ; she snatched a nearby newspaper and pretended to read . Since Tubman was known to be illiterate , the man ignored her .

Tubman 's religious faith was another important resource as she ventured repeatedly into Maryland . The visions from her childhood head injury continued , and she saw them as divine premonitions . She spoke of " consulting with God " , and trusted that He would keep her safe . Thomas Garrett once said of her , " I never met with any person of any color who had more confidence in the voice of God , as spoken direct to her soul . " Her faith in the divine also provided immediate assistance . She used spirituals as coded messages , warning fellow travelers of danger or to signal a clear path .

Tubman also carried a revolver , and was not afraid to use it . The gun afforded some protection from the ever @-@ present slave catchers and their dogs ; however , she also purportedly threatened to shoot any escaped slave who tried to turn back on the journey since that would threaten the safety of the remaining group . Tubman told the tale of one man who insisted he was going to go back to the plantation when morale got low among a group of fugitive slaves . She pointed the gun at his head and said , " You go on or die . " Several days later , he was with the group as they entered the United Province of Canada .

Slaveholders in the region , meanwhile , never knew that " Minty " , the petite , five @-@ foot @-@ tall , disabled slave who had run away years before and never come back , was behind so many slave escapes in their community . By the late 1850s , they began to suspect a northern white abolitionist was secretly enticing their slaves away . They considered that John Brown himself had come to the Eastern Shore to lure slaves away before his ill @-@ fated raid on Harper 's Ferry in October 1859 .

While a popular legend persists about a reward of US \$ 40 @,@ 000 for Tubman 's capture , this is a manufactured figure . In 1868 , in an effort to drum up support for Tubman 's claim for a Civil War military pension , a former abolitionist named Salley Holley wrote an article claiming US \$ 40 @,@ 000 " was not too great a reward for Maryland slaveholders to offer for her " . Such a high reward would have garnered national attention , especially at a time when a small farm could be purchased for a mere US \$ 400 . No such reward has been found in period newspapers . ( The federal government offered \$ 25 @,@ 000 for the capture of each of John Wilkes Booth 's co @-@ conspirators in Lincoln 's assassination . ) A reward offering of US \$ 12 @,@ 000 has also been claimed , though no documentation exists for that figure either . Catherine Clinton suggests that the US \$ 40 @,@ 000 figure may have been a combined total of the various bounties offered around the region .

Despite the best efforts of the slaveholders , Tubman was never captured , and neither were the fugitives she guided . Years later , she told an audience : " I was conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years , and I can say what most conductors can 't say ? I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger . " One of her last missions into Maryland was to retrieve her aging parents . Her father , Ben , had purchased Rit , her mother , in 1855 from Eliza Brodess for 20 dollars . But even when they were both free , the area became hostile to their presence . Two years later , Tubman received word that her father had harbored a group of eight escaped slaves , and was at risk of arrest . She traveled to the Eastern Shore and led them north to St. Catharines , Ontario , where a community of former slaves ( including Tubman 's brothers , other relatives , and many friends ) had gathered .

= = John Brown and Harpers Ferry = =

In April 1858, Tubman was introduced to the abolitionist John Brown, an insurgent who advocated the use of violence to destroy slavery in the United States. Although she never advocated violence against whites, she agreed with his course of direct action and supported his goals. Like Tubman, he spoke of being called by God, and trusted the divine to protect him from the wrath of slaveholders. She, meanwhile, claimed to have had a prophetic vision of meeting Brown before their encounter.

Thus, as he began recruiting supporters for an attack on slaveholders, Brown was joined by "General Tubman", as he called her. Her knowledge of support networks and resources in the border states of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware was invaluable to Brown and his planners. Although other abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison did not endorse his tactics, Brown dreamed of fighting to create a new state for freed slaves, and made preparations for military action. After he began the first battle, he believed, slaves would rise up and carry out a rebellion across the south. He asked Tubman to gather former slaves then living in present @-@ day Southern Ontario who might be willing to join his fighting force, which she did.

On May 8, 1858, Brown held a meeting in Chatham @-@ Kent, Ontario, where he unveiled his plan for a raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. When word of the plan was leaked to the government, Brown put the scheme on hold and began raising funds for its eventual resumption. Tubman aided him in this effort, and with more detailed plans for the assault.

Tubman was busy during this time, giving talks to abolitionist audiences and tending to her relatives. In the autumn of 1859, as Brown and his men prepared to launch the attack, Tubman could not be contacted. When the raid on Harpers Ferry took place on October 16, Tubman was not present. Some historians believe she was in New York at the time, ill with fever related to her childhood head injury. Others propose she may have been recruiting more escaped slaves in Ontario, and Kate Clifford Larson suggests she may have been in Maryland, recruiting for Brown's raid or attempting to rescue more family members. Larson also notes that Tubman may have begun sharing Frederick Douglass's doubts about the viability of the plan.

The raid failed; Brown was convicted of treason and hanged in December. His actions were seen by abolitionists as a symbol of proud resistance, carried out by a noble martyr. Tubman herself was effusive with praise. She later told a friend: "[H]e done more in dying, than 100 men would in living."

= = Auburn and Margaret = =

In early 1859, abolitionist Republican U.S. Senator William H. Seward sold Tubman a small piece of land on the outskirts of Auburn, New York, for US \$ 1 @, @ 200. The city was a hotbed of antislavery activism, and Tubman seized the opportunity to deliver her parents from the harsh Canadian winters. Returning to the U.S. meant that escaped slaves were at risk of being returned to the south under the Fugitive Slave Law, and Tubman's siblings expressed reservations. Catherine Clinton suggests that anger over the 1857 Dred Scott decision may have prompted Tubman to return to the U.S. Her land in Auburn became a haven for Tubman's family and friends. For years, she took in relatives and boarders, offering a safe place for black Americans seeking a better life in the north.

Shortly after acquiring the Auburn property, Tubman went back to Maryland and returned with her "niece", an eight @-@ year @-@ old light @-@ skinned black girl named Margaret. The circumstances of this expedition remain clouded in mystery. There is great confusion about the identity of Margaret's parents, although Tubman indicated they were free blacks. The girl had left behind a twin brother and a loving home in Maryland. Years later, Margaret's daughter Alice called Tubman's actions selfish, saying, "she had taken the child from a sheltered good home to a place where there was nobody to care for her." Indeed, Alice described it as a "kidnapping".

However, both Clinton and Larson present the possibility that Margaret was in fact Tubman's daughter. Larson points out that the two shared an unusually strong bond, and argues that Tubman, knowing the pain of a child separated from her mother, would never have intentionally

caused a free family to be split apart . Clinton presents evidence of strong physical similarities , which Alice herself acknowledged . Both historians agree that no concrete evidence exists for such a possibility , and the mystery of Tubman 's relationship with young Margaret remains to this day .

In November 1860 , Tubman conducted her last rescue mission . Throughout the 1850s , Tubman had been unable to effect the escape of her sister , Rachel , and Rachel 's two children , Ben and Angerine . Upon returning to Dorchester County , Tubman discovered that Rachel had died , and the children could be rescued only if she could pay a US \$ 30 bribe . She had no money , so the children remained enslaved . Their fates remain unknown . Never one to waste a trip , Tubman gathered another group , including the Ennalls family , ready and willing to take the risks of the journey north . It took them weeks to safely get away because of slave catchers , forcing them to hide out longer than expected . The weather was unseasonably cold and they had little food . The children were drugged with paregoric to keep them quiet while slave patrols rode by . They safely reached the home of David and Martha Wright in Auburn , New York , on December 28 , 1860 .

= = American Civil War = =

When the American Civil War broke out in 1861 , Tubman saw a Union victory as a key step toward the abolition of slavery . General Benjamin Butler , for instance , aided escaped slaves flooding into Fort Monroe . Butler had declared these fugitives to be " contraband " ? property seized by northern forces ? and put them to work , initially without pay , in the fort . Tubman hoped to offer her own expertise and skills to the Union cause , too , and soon she joined a group of Boston and Philadelphia abolitionists heading to the Hilton Head District in South Carolina . She became a fixture in the camps , particularly in Port Royal , South Carolina , assisting fugitives .

Tubman met with General David Hunter , a strong supporter of abolition . He declared all of the " contrabands " in the Port Royal district free , and began gathering former slaves for a regiment of black soldiers . U.S. President Abraham Lincoln , however , was not prepared to enforce emancipation on the southern states , and reprimanded Hunter for his actions . Tubman condemned Lincoln 's response and his general unwillingness to consider ending slavery in the U.S. , for both moral and practical reasons . " God won 't let master Lincoln beat the South till he does the right thing , " she said .

Master Lincoln , he 's a great man , and I am a poor negro ; but the negro can tell master Lincoln how to save the money and the young men . He can do it by setting the negro free . Suppose that was an awful big snake down there , on the floor . He bite you . Folks all scared , because you die . You send for a doctor to cut the bite ; but the snake , he rolled up there , and while the doctor doing it , he bite you again . The doctor dug out that bite ; but while the doctor doing it , the snake , he spring up and bite you again ; so he keep doing it , till you kill him . That 's what master Lincoln ought to know .

Tubman served as a nurse in Port Royal , preparing remedies from local plants and aiding soldiers suffering from dysentery . She rendered assistance to men with smallpox ; that she did not contract the disease herself started more rumors that she was blessed by God . At first , she received government rations for her work , but newly freed blacks thought she was getting special treatment . To ease the tension , she gave up her right to these supplies and made money selling pies and root beer , which she made in the evenings .

= = = Scouting and the Combahee River Raid = = =

When President Lincoln finally issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 , Tubman considered it an important step toward the goal of liberating all black men , women , and children from slavery . She renewed her support for a defeat of the Confederacy , and before long she was leading a band of scouts through the land around Port Royal . The marshes and rivers in South Carolina were similar to those of the Eastern Shore of Maryland ; thus her knowledge of covert travel and subterfuge among potential enemies were put to good use . Her group , working under the orders of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton , mapped the unfamiliar terrain and reconnoitered



its inhabitants . She later worked alongside Colonel James Montgomery , and provided him with key intelligence that aided the capture of Jacksonville , Florida .

Later that year , Tubman became the first woman to lead an armed assault during the Civil War . When Montgomery and his troops conducted an assault on a collection of plantations along the Combahee River , Tubman served as a key adviser and accompanied the raid . On the morning of June 2 , 1863 , Tubman guided three steamboats around Confederate mines in the waters leading to the shore . Once ashore , the Union troops set fire to the plantations , destroying infrastructure and seizing thousands of dollars worth of food and supplies . When the steamboats sounded their whistles , slaves throughout the area understood that it was being liberated . Tubman watched as slaves stampeded toward the boats . " I never saw such a sight , " she said later , describing a scene of chaos with women carrying still @-@ steaming pots of rice , pigs squealing in bags slung over shoulders , and babies hanging around their parents ' necks . Although their owners , armed with handguns and whips , tried to stop the mass escape , their efforts were nearly useless in the tumult . As Confederate troops raced to the scene , steamboats packed full of slaves took off toward Beaufort .

More than 750 slaves were rescued in the Combahee River Raid . Newspapers heralded Tubman 's " patriotism , sagacity , energy , [ and ] ability " , and she was praised for her recruiting efforts ? most of the newly liberated men went on to join the Union army . Tubman later worked with Colonel Robert Gould Shaw at the assault on Fort Wagner , reportedly serving him his last meal . She described the battle by saying : " And then we saw the lightning , and that was the guns ; and then we heard the thunder , and that was the big guns ; and then we heard the rain falling , and that was the drops of blood falling ; and when we came to get the crops , it was dead men that we reaped . "

For two more years , Tubman worked for the Union forces , tending to newly liberated slaves , scouting into Confederate territory , and nursing wounded soldiers in Virginia . She also made periodic trips back to Auburn , to visit her family and care for her parents . The Confederacy surrendered in April 1865 ; after donating several more months of service , Tubman headed home to Auburn , New York .

During a train ride to New York , the conductor told her to move into the smoking car . She refused , explaining her government service . He cursed at her and grabbed her , but she resisted and he summoned two other passengers for help . While she clutched at the railing , they muscled her away , breaking her arm in the process . They threw her into the smoking car , causing more injuries . As these events transpired , other white passengers cursed Tubman and shouted for the conductor to kick her off the train .

Despite her years of service , she had never received a regular salary and was for years denied compensation . Her unofficial status and the unequal payments offered to black soldiers caused great difficulty in documenting her service , and the U.S. government was slow in recognizing its debt to her . Tubman did not receive a pension for her service in the Civil War until 1899 . Her constant humanitarian work for her family and former slaves , meanwhile , kept her in a state of constant poverty , and her difficulties in obtaining a government pension were especially taxing for her .

= = Later life = =

Tubman spent her remaining years in Auburn , tending to her family and other people in need . She worked various jobs to support her elderly parents , and took in boarders to help pay the bills . One of the people Tubman took in was a Civil War veteran named Nelson Davis . He began working in Auburn as a bricklayer , and they soon fell in love . Though he was 22 years younger than she was , on March 18 , 1869 , they were married at the Central Presbyterian Church . They spent the next 20 years together , and in 1874 they adopted a baby girl named Gertie .

Tubman 's friends and supporters from the days of abolition , meanwhile , raised funds to support her . One admirer , Sarah Hopkins Bradford , wrote an authorized biography entitled Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman . The 132 @-@ page volume was published in 1869 , and brought Tubman some US \$ 1 @, @ 200 in revenue . Criticized by modern biographers for its artistic license and

highly subjective point of view , the book nevertheless remains an important source of information and perspective on Tubman 's life . Bradford released another volume in 1886 called Harriet , the Moses of her People , which presented a less caustic view of slavery and the South . It , too , was published as a way to help alleviate Tubman 's poverty .

Facing accumulated debts ( including payments for her property in Auburn ) , Tubman fell prey in 1873 to a swindle involving gold transfer . Two men , one named Stevenson and the other John Thomas , claimed to have in their possession a cache of gold smuggled out of South Carolina . They offered this treasure ? worth about US \$ 5 @ , @ 000 , they claimed ? for US \$ 2 @ , @ 000 in cash . They insisted that they knew a relative of Tubman 's , and she took them into her home , where they stayed for several days . She knew that white people in the South had buried valuables when Union forces threatened the region , and also that black men were frequently assigned to digging duties . Thus the situation seemed plausible , and a combination of her financial woes and her good nature led her to go along with the plan . She borrowed the money from a wealthy friend named Anthony Shimer , and arranged to receive the gold late one night . Once the men had lured her into the woods , however , they attacked her and knocked her out with chloroform , then stole her purse and bound and gagged her . When she was found by her family , she was dazed and injured , and the money was gone .

New York responded with outrage to the incident , and while some criticized Tubman for her naïveté , most sympathized with her economic hardship and lambasted the con men . The incident refreshed the public 's memory of her past service and her economic woes . Representatives Clinton D. MacDougall of New York and Gerry W. Hazelton of Wisconsin introduced a bill ( H.R. 2711 / 3786 ) providing that Tubman be paid " the sum of \$ 2 @ , @ 000 for services rendered by her to the Union Army as scout , nurse , and spy " . It was defeated .

= = = Suffragist activism = = =

In her later years , Tubman worked to promote the cause of women 's suffrage . A white woman once asked Tubman whether she believed women ought to have the vote , and received the reply : " I suffered enough to believe it . " Tubman began attending meetings of suffragist organizations , and was soon working alongside women such as Susan B. Anthony and Emily Howland .

Tubman traveled to New York , Boston , and Washington , D.C. , to speak out in favor of women 's voting rights . She described her actions during and after the Civil War , and used the sacrifices of countless women throughout modern history as evidence of women 's equality to men . When the National Federation of Afro @ - @ American Women was founded in 1896 , Tubman was the keynote speaker at its first meeting .

This wave of activism kindled a new wave of admiration for Tubman among the press in the United States . A publication called The Woman 's Era launched a series of articles on " Eminent Women " with a profile of Tubman . An 1897 suffragist newspaper reported a series of receptions in Boston honoring Tubman and her lifetime of service to the nation . However , her endless contributions to others had left her in poverty , and she had to sell a cow to buy a train ticket to these celebrations .

= = = AME Zion Church , illness , and death = = =

At the turn of the 20th century , Tubman became heavily involved with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Auburn . In 1903 , she donated a parcel of real estate she owned to the church , under the instruction that it be made into a home for " aged and indigent colored people " . The home did not open for another five years , and Tubman was dismayed when the church ordered residents to pay a \$ 100 entrance fee . She said : " [ T ] hey make a rule that nobody should come in without they have a hundred dollars . Now I wanted to make a rule that nobody should come in unless they didn 't have no money at all . " She was frustrated by the new rule but was the guest of honor nonetheless when the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged celebrated its opening on June 23 , 1908 .

As Tubman aged , the seizures , headaches , and suffering from her childhood head trauma

continued to plague her . At some point in the late 1890s , she underwent brain surgery at Boston 's Massachusetts General Hospital . Unable to sleep because of pains and " buzzing " in her head , she asked a doctor if he could operate . He agreed and , in her words , " sawed open my skull , and raised it up , and now it feels more comfortable " . She had received no anesthesia for the procedure and reportedly chose instead to bite down on a bullet , as she had seen Civil War soldiers do when their limbs were amputated .

By 1911 , her body was so frail that she had to be admitted into the rest home named in her honor . A New York newspaper described her as " ill and penniless " , prompting supporters to offer a new round of donations . Surrounded by friends and family members , Harriet Tubman died of pneumonia in 1913 . Just before she died , she told those in the room : " I go to prepare a place for you . "

When she died , Tubman was buried with semi @-@ military honors at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn .

= = Legacy = =

Harriet Tubman , widely known and well @-@ respected while she was alive , became an American icon in the years after she died . A survey at the end of the 20th century named her as one of the most famous civilians in American history before the Civil War , third only to Betsy Ross and Paul Revere . She inspired generations of African Americans struggling for equality and civil rights ; she was praised by leaders across the political spectrum .

When she died , Tubman was buried with semi @-@ military honors at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn . The city commemorated her life with a plaque on the courthouse . Although it showed pride for her many achievements , its use of dialect ( " I nebber run my train off de track " ) , apparently chosen for its authenticity , has been criticized for undermining her stature as an American patriot and dedicated humanitarian . Still , the dedication ceremony was a powerful tribute to her memory , and Booker T. Washington delivered the keynote address . The Harriet Tubman home was abandoned after 1920 , but was later renovated by the AME Zion Church . Today , it welcomes visitors as a museum and education center .

Tubman was celebrated in many other ways throughout the nation in the 20th century . Dozens of schools were named in her honor , and both the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn and the Harriet Tubman Museum in Cambridge serve as monuments to her life . In 1937 the gravestone for Harriet Tubman Davis was erected by the Empire State Federation of Women 's Clubs ; it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 . In 1944 , the United States Maritime Commission launched the SS Harriet Tubman , its first Liberty ship ever named for a black woman . In 1978 , the United States Postal Service issued a stamp in honor of Tubman which made her the first African @-@ American woman to be honored on a US Postage stamp . In March 2013 , President Barack Obama signed a proclamation creating Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument on the Eastern Shore .

Tubman is commemorated together with Elizabeth Cady Stanton , Amelia Bloomer , and Sojourner Truth in the calendar of saints of the Episcopal Church on July 20 . The calendar of saints of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America remembers Tubman and Sojourner Truth on March 10 .

In 1999 , the Canadian government designated the Salem Chapel , British Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Catharines a National Historic Site because of its association with Tubman . In the same year , the city of Boston , Massachusetts , erected a statue to Tubman ; it was the first memorial to a woman on city @-@ owned land .

In 2002 , scholar Molefi Kete Asante included Harriet Tubman on his list of the 100 Greatest African Americans . In 2008 , Towson University named a new residence hall after Tubman . A statue of Tubman was unveiled in Manhattan in 2008 , and another on the campus of Salisbury University in 2009 .

In 2014 the asteroid ( 241528 ) Tubman was named after Harriet Tubman .

= = = Historiography = = =

Bradford 's biographies were followed by Earl Conrad 's Harriet Tubman : Negro Soldier and Abolitionist . Conrad had experienced great difficulty in finding a publisher ? the search took four years ? and endured disdain and contempt for his efforts to construct a more objective , detailed account of Tubman 's life for adults . Several highly dramatized versions of Tubman 's life had been written for children , and many more came later , but Conrad wrote in an academic style to document the historical importance of her work for scholars and the nation 's memory . The book was finally published by Carter G. Woodson 's Associated Publishers in 1942 . Despite her popularity and significance , another Tubman biography for adults did not appear for 60 years , until Jean Humez published a close reading of Tubman 's life stories in 2003 , and Larson and Clinton both published their biographies in 2004 .

= = = National Historic Site and Person of Canada = = =

In southern Ontario , the Salem Chapel BME Church was designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1999 , on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada . The chapel , in St. Catharines , Ontario , was a focus of Harriet Tubman 's years in the city , when she lived nearby , in what was a major terminus of the Underground Railroad and center of abolitionist work . In Tubman 's time , the chapel was known as Bethel Chapel , and was initially part of the African Methodist Episcopal ( AME ) Church , prior to a change in 1856 .

Tubman , herself , was designated a National Historic Person of Canada after the Historic Sites and Monuments Board recommended it , in 2005 . Several historical markers ? two federal , one provincial , and one civic ? surround the active chapel , as well as a bust of Tubman .

= = = National Park designations = = =

As early as 2008 , advocacy groups in Maryland and New York , and their federal representatives , pushed for legislation to establish two national historical parks honoring Harriet Tubman : one to include her place of birth on Maryland 's eastern shore , and sites along the route of the Underground Railroad in Caroline , Dorchester , and Talbot Counties in Maryland ; and a second to include her home in Auburn , NY . For the next six years , bills to do so were introduced , but were never advanced or enacted . Meantime , in 2013 , President Barack Obama used his executive authority to create the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument , consisting of federal lands on Maryland 's Eastern Shore at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge .

Subsequently , in December 2014 , authorization for a national historical park designation was incorporated in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act . Despite opposition from some legislators , the bill passed with bipartisan support , and was signed into law by the President on December 19 , 2014 .

As enacted , the legislation authorized establishment of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Cayuga County , New York , pending the acquisition of lands , and created the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Maryland . The latter was created from within the authorized boundary of the national monument , while permitting later additional acquisitions .

The Harriet Tubman House in Boston 's South End is a site on the Boston Women 's Heritage Trail .

= = = Twenty @-@ dollar bill = = =

On April 20 , 2016 , U.S. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew announced plans to add Tubman to the front of the twenty @-@ dollar bill , moving President Andrew Jackson , a slave owner , to the rear of the bill . Lew instructed the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to expedite the redesign process , though the new bill will not enter circulation until after 2020 .