

The Real Story

The Underground Railroad led many slaves to freedom. They would run away from their owners. Then they would join a group of other slaves.

The groups were small. The bigger the group, the bigger the chance they would be caught. Most groups only had a few people in them.

If a slave was lucky, he would find someone to help them on the Underground Railroad. These helpers were called conductors. They would lead people from one safe house to the next.

Harriet Tubman was born a slave. She escaped to the north when she was 27 years old. But she didn't stay there.

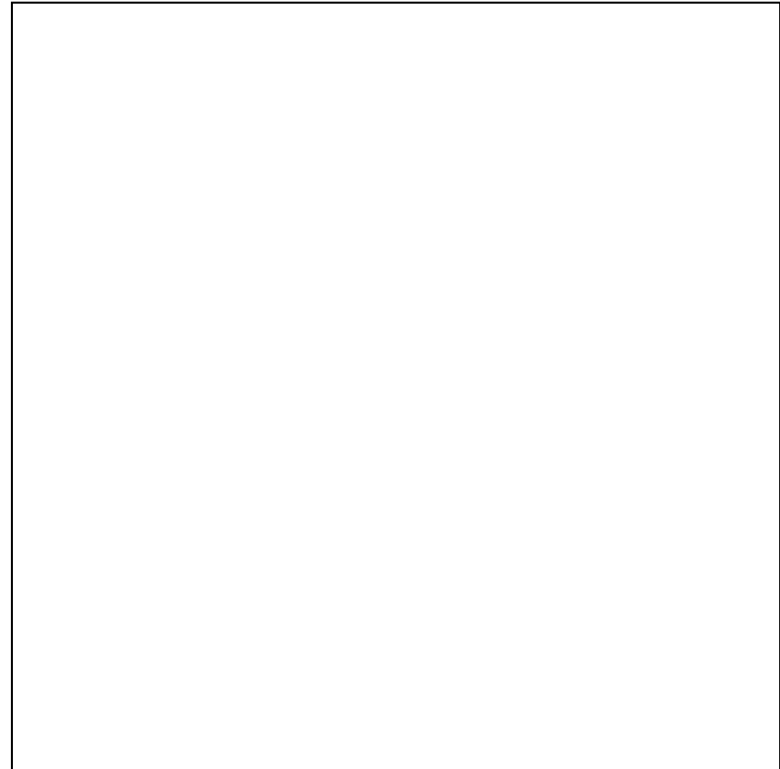
Harriet made about thirteen trips back to the south. She led over 70 people to freedom. She also told many other slaves how to reach freedom. She led many members of her family to freedom.

As a teenager, Harriet was hit in the head with a weight. It happened when she worked at a store. The weight would be put on one side of a scale. The food that was being bought would be put on the other side of the scale. That was how the store owner weighed the food.

After this, Harriet would sometimes fall asleep. It would happen very fast.

Harriet lived to be 91 years old. She died in 1913 in New York.

Miss Jones and the Runaway Slaves



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Miss Jones and the Runaway Slaves/Caitlind L. Alexander

Summary: Miss Jones helps a group of runaway slaves to escape to freedom.

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Miss Jones reached toward the picture. Her hand went right into it.

Then her arm.

Then her shoulder.

Then her head.

Miss Jones felt dizzy. She closed her eyes.

When she opened them she was standing in her own living room.

She looked down. There were leaves around her feet. Beside her feet stood her slippers.

She looked at the book on the couch. The back half of the book was there. Harriet Tubman hadn't been caught. She had many more years of leading slaves to freedom.

With a sigh of happiness, Miss Jones sat down to read the end of her book. She knew she would have an exciting story to tell the kids in her class the next day.

Miss Jones hurried back into the woods. No one would see her here.

Just then she heard the dogs of the slave catchers. They were very close.

“Look,” she heard someone yell. “There’s a lamp in that window over there.”

Miss Jones peeked out of the woods. There was no lamp in the window of the second house. But the lamp was still in the window of the first house.

The men raced out of the woods. They ran up to the door of the house and pounded on it. When the door opened the slave catchers rushed inside.

Suddenly Miss Jones heard glass breaking. She heard the crack of wood snapping in two. The slave catchers were tearing up the house. They were trying to find the slaves.

Miss Jones turned away. She knew that house would not put a lamp in the window ever again. At least the slaves would be safe from them.

Miss Jones took a picture out of her pocket. It looked like her couch. Then she turned her watch to the inside of her wrist and opened it up.

Miss Jones held the watch over the picture.

“My, my, make time fly,” she said.

The edges of the picture moved. The wind swirled through the trees.

Miss Jones and the Runaway Slaves

Miss Jones sat back on her couch. She hadn’t finished her homework!

She picked up a book off the table.

“The Life of Harriet Tubman,” she read.

She was halfway finished. She opened the book and started to read.

Suddenly the back half of the book was gone.

Miss Jones turned to the last page. It said that Harriet had been caught! The slave catchers had caught her. They sent her back to be a slave again.

“My, my,” said Miss Jones. “This can’t be right.” She turned back a page. There was a picture. It showed

Harriet Tubman hiding in the woods. It was night and there were other slaves with her.

Miss Jones looked at her watch. She turned her watch to the inside of her wrist. Then she opened it up.

Inside it wasn't a watch at all. It was a time machine.

Miss Jones held the watch over the book.

“My, my, make time fly,” she said.

The edges of the paper moved. A wind swirled in the room.

Miss Jones looked at the picture. Then she reached toward it. But she didn't touch it. Instead her hand went right into the picture.

Then her arm.

Then her shoulder.

Then her head.

Suddenly nothing was left. Nothing except her shoes sitting beside the couch.

Miss Jones felt dizzy. She closed her eyes.

When she opened them, she was standing in the woods. It was dark all around her. The wind was still blowing. But this wind was blowing through the woods.

Miss Jones looked down. She wore a long dark skirt that touched the ground. She also wore a dark shirt. A black shawl was wrapped around her shoulders.

Miss Jones heard the leaves rustle. There was someone walking ahead of her.

“Where is Harriet Tubman?” Miss Jones asked.

“We can’t wake her up,” one of the boys answered.

“We don’t know what to do.”

“Wait here,” Miss Jones said.

She went into the woods. She knew she had to hurry. The slave catchers could come at any time.

Miss Jones found Harriet. She shook her very hard. At last the woman woke up.

Harriet looked around. She didn’t see the slaves.

“It’s OK,” Miss Jones said quickly. “They’re over here. But we have to hurry.”

Miss Jones helped Harriet up. She led her through the woods and back to the other slaves.

Then Harriet saw the houses. “Oh,” she said. “There are two lights.”

“It’s OK,” said Miss Jones. “I know the way. Follow me.”

Miss Jones quickly led them to the second house. The woman and the girl were ready. They led the slaves into the secret room.

“There is food and water inside,” they told the tired people. “And blankets for you to rest on.”

Then they closed the secret door. They turned around to thank Miss Jones, but she was already gone.

“Put out the light, quick,” said the woman to the girl. “We can’t let anyone else see it.”

The girl raced off to the other room.

Miss Jones snuck through the woods. She came up behind the people.

They wore dark clothes. And they had dark skin. They were runaway slaves.

There was one woman in the front of them. She was leading them through the woods. It was Harriet Tubman.

Miss Jones was thrilled. Harriet was one of the bravest women she had ever heard of. She was once a slave. She had escaped, but had gone back many times to rescue other slaves.

“It’s only a little farther,” Harriet said softly.

Just then they heard the sound of dogs barking.

“The slave catchers are getting closer,” one of the women cried. “They’ll catch us.”

“Hush,” said Harriet. “We’re almost there. I’ve never lost anyone on my train and I never will.”

Miss Jones knew what Harriet was talking about. The group of people was called a train. They were travelling on the Underground Railroad.

It wasn’t a real railroad. That was what people called it when they made the trip to the states in the north. If they could make it to the North, they could be free.

“When we get closer we’ll look for a light in the window,” Harriet said. “The light will tell us that it’s safe to stop there. We can rest there through the day. Then we can...”

The woman and the girl knew they could be killed for helping slaves. But they did it anyway.

Miss Jones tapped on the window again. Then she smiled.

The woman stepped over to the window and lifted it up.

“I’m here to help,” Miss Jones said. “The light went out in the window. I was trying to find the right house.”

The girl quickly ran out the door. A moment later she came back.

“The lamp was out,” she said. “I lit it again. But there’s also a light in the window next door!”

“Next door!” the woman said. “They hate slaves.”

“My, my,” said Miss Jones. “They must have found another lamp. I’ll lead the slaves to the right house. Be ready,” she said to the woman and the girl.

“We will,” they answered.

Miss Jones turned away from the window. She hurried off into the night.

When she reached the woods, she found the slaves going toward the first house. When they saw her they were afraid.

“Don’t be afraid,” she told them. “I’m here to help. One of the lights is a trap. Follow me and I’ll show you where to go.”

Then Miss Jones looked at them. Someone was missing.

Now was her chance. Miss Jones reached in the window. She pushed on the lamp. It fell off the window and smashed on the floor.

Miss Jones dropped back down under the window. Then she snuck to the second house.

She looked over the edge of the window. There was a lamp in this window, but it wasn't lit.

"My, my," said Miss Jones to herself. "How do I know if this is the right house?"

She looked in the window. No one was there. Then she snuck over to the second window. Slowly she looked over the edge.

This window was in the kitchen. There was a fire in the big fireplace. But there were no people.

Just then a part of the wall started to move! There was a secret door in the wall!

A woman and a girl stepped out of the door.

"Why are they so late?" the woman asked. "They should have been here hours ago. I hope nothing has gone wrong."

Miss Jones knew this was the right house. She tapped on the window.

The woman and the girl looked up. They quickly closed the secret door. Then they stood and stared at Miss Jones. They didn't know what to do. This stranger had found out their secret.

Just then Harriet stopped. She put her hand up to her head. Then she dropped to the ground.

"She's gone to sleep again!" one of the women said.

This happened to Harriet sometimes. Her owner had hit her in the head when she was younger. Now her head would hurt sometimes. And sometimes she would just fall asleep. It happened fast and there was nothing she could do.

But now was not the time to sleep. The slave catchers were coming. They had to find the light!

No one knew what to do. Miss Jones knew that it was up to her.

She snuck away from the group. When she stepped out of the woods there were three houses in front of her. But there was no light in a window.

Miss Jones quickly hurried up beside the first house. Maybe this house would keep them safe.

She went to a spot under the window. Slowly she raised her head and looked in. There was no light. But there were people.

A man and a woman sat at a table. A boy and girl were next to them. The man was talking to his son.

"The paper said that more slaves have run away," he said. "They think Harriet Tubman is leading them. They might be coming this way."

The man got angry. "They need to catch that woman and teach her a lesson," he said. Everyone else at the table agreed.

“I’ve heard that a light in the window tells them a house is safe to go to,” said the woman.

“Maybe we should put a light in our window,” said the boy. “Then we could catch them.”

“Is there a reward?” the woman asked.

“The slave owners will pay 5,000 dollars to the man who catches Harriet Tubman,” he said. “We could buy a house with that much money!”

“Let’s do it,” the boy said.

Miss Jones watched as the man got a lamp from the shelf. The lamp had oil in it. There was a string with one end in the oil. The other end was in the top of the lamp.

The man lit a match and then lit the top of the string. The oil would keep it burning a long time.

The man came over to the window. Miss Jones ducked down. She couldn’t let him see her.

The man put the light in the window. Miss Jones hoped the slaves didn’t see it. She hoped they wouldn’t come.

Suddenly the wind blew. The man looked out the window. Then he went back to the table.

Miss Jones had an idea. She pushed her fingers under the window. Then she lifted the window a little bit.

Just then the wind blew hard. It blew out the flame in the lamp.