

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE TOWN

The Natural Environment

A majestic valley is set between a mountain range to the east and a plateau to the west. The mountains bordering the valley are sheer rock with a few scraggly trees managing to claim footholds on the side of the mountains.

Winding through the valley like a fat snake is a river known for its beauty and treachery. Many have traveled the river over the centuries, aware of its shoals and reefs, gravel and sandbars, and snags and sawyers. As travelers journeyed down the river, they saw new vistas around each bend, mountains lush with hickory, pine, oak, and poplar, and wild flowers including dragonroot, hop clover, and yellow jasmine. Wild game abounds in this setting. Bears, deer, ducks, and wild turkeys are plentiful. Many trees line one side of the river and grow in the valley. The temperate climate and rich soil make this valley ideal for settlement.

The Town

Sitting in the valley on the edge of the river is a town of about 3,000 people. Some of the people are new to the town and others have been here for a long time. The town has a number of churches, a hotel, bank, newspaper, restaurant, school, jail, flourmill, tannery, sawmill, railroad station, furniture manufacturer, general store, and warehouses. There is one main street with other streets that really are more like cow paths than streets. Stumpy fields, ponds, and patches of forest timber often interrupt the streets. Old oaks and hickories provide shade in the summer heat. All in all, this is a bustling town because the railroad line runs north and south and east and west, intersecting on the edge of town. Most of the businesses were built with wood with the exception of the railroad station. It was made of brick; built to last. The railroad is important to the town, as the town has become a crossroads for shipping goods from one region to another—both on the river and the railroad.

Some of the homes throughout the town are owned by the more prosperous townspeople. These homes are two stories with front porches supported by large columns. Most of the homes are made of wood; the more well-to-do use brick. Many homes are wooden structures with peaked roofs and modest in size. Chimneys sit at both ends of the homes to provide heat from wood fireplaces. Behind many of the homes are barns, smokehouses, and other buildings. It is not uncommon to find cows, chickens, and turkeys in barnyards behind the houses.

There is a feeling of energy and well being in this town as the community is growing and there is money to be made for the person who is willing to put in a hard day's work.

Name _____ Date _____

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHY

1. Character's name: _____

2. Position in family: _____

3. Names of other family members: _____
_____4. Responsibilities/jobs at home: _____
_____5. Jobs in family business: _____
_____6. Personality characteristics: _____
_____7. Favorite leisure activities: _____
_____8. Interesting life experiences: _____

_____9. Relatives or close friends in other families: _____
_____10. Describe an activity that you and a relative or close friend have done together. Talk to your classmates to find out about other characters so that together you can create an activity for your two characters. _____

RESEARCH TOPICS

Categories	Student Names	Topics
Events	_____	Missouri Compromise 1820
	_____	Nullification Crisis, 1832
	_____	Wilmot Proviso, 1846
	_____	Women's Rights Convention, 1848
	_____	Compromise of 1850
	_____	Fugitive Slave Law, 1850
	_____	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , published 1852
	_____	Kansas Nebraska Act 1854
	_____	Dred Scott Decision, 1857
	_____	Lincoln-Douglas debates, 1858
	_____	Attack on Harper's Ferry, 1859
Transportation	_____	railroads
	_____	clipper ships
	_____	the Erie Canal
	_____	Pony Express
People	_____	Eli Whitney
	_____	Cyrus Hall McCormick
	_____	Samuel Morse
	_____	Isaac Merrit Singer
	_____	Frederick Douglass
	_____	Harriet Tubman
	_____	Elizabeth Cady Stanton
	_____	Commodore Matthew Perry
	_____	Lucretia Mott
	_____	Stephen Foster
Life at the time	_____	Underground Railroad
	_____	slavery
	_____	factory life
	_____	plantation life
	_____	immigration, 1840–1860
	_____	Abolition movement

READ FOR INFORMATION: CYRUS HALL MCCORMICK*

Cyrus Hall McCormick, son of Robert and Mary Ann Hall McCormick, was born on February 15, 1809, on a farm called Walnut Grove, in Virginia. Cyrus gained a sibling every couple of years or so. He was followed by Robert, Susan, William, Mary Caroline, Leander, John, and Amanda.

Walnut Grove was among a community of farms that was almost 20 miles from the nearest town. Cyrus's first house was made of logs, although larger than the cabin Abraham Lincoln was born in three days earlier in the neighboring state of Kentucky. Like other local farm children, Cyrus obtained only a grade-school education at the Old Field School.

Along with his farm chores, Cyrus played with his seven younger brothers and sisters and enjoyed riding horses. He gained a reputation as a skillful rider. Cyrus led his church in song for several years and also enjoyed playing the fiddle. There was one other significant skill he acquired, and that was inventing. He learned about inventing from his father.

Besides being a farmer, Robert McCormick was an accomplished inventor. He created a grain threshing machine as well as several other types of farming equipment.

Cyrus made the first of his own inventions when he was a teenager. He constructed a smaller, lighter-weight cradle to make the work easier in the fields. He also invented a hillside plow, patented in 1831, and a "self-sharpening" plow, patented in 1833. On the farm, Cyrus was surrounded by his father's two sawmills, two gristmills, smelting furnace, and blacksmith workshop. This workshop is where Cyrus built his harvesting machine.

Cyrus's father thought of the idea first. In 1816, Robert McCormick constructed a machine of a vastly different design than Cyrus would eventually develop. Revolving rods that turned with the forward motion of the ground wheels would catch the grain and whirl it across a row of short sickles. The grain nearly always tangled. He continued to try for 15 years before he gave up. Then Cyrus took his turn at the project ...

* Noonan, J. (1992) *Nineteenth Century Inventors*. New York: Facts on File, pp. 41–42

SAMPLE REPORT: CYRUS HALL MCCORMICK

Cyrus Hall McCormick was born in 1809, on a farm in Virginia. He was the oldest of eight children. His father was an inventor, and Cyrus learned from him. Robert McCormick, Cyrus' father, invented a grain threshing machine and other farm equipment.

Cyrus's father had the idea first about inventing a machine for cutting grain. Cyrus improved on his father's idea and built his own machine. A machine that cuts grain is called a reaper. Before the invention of the reaper, grain was cut by hand with sickles or scythes and then bound together in bundles. The bundles were then collected and threshed. Threshing is the process whereby the kernels of grain are separated from the stalks, usually by hitting the stalks with a stick to shake the grain loose. As you can imagine, this process takes a long time and many people. When the grain is ready to be harvested, the work needs to be done before the grain spoils. If the work could be done faster, more grain could be grown.

Cyrus invented a reaper in 1831, that could be pulled by a horse. A farmer could harvest more than 10 acres a day with a reaper. When the same job was done by hand, a farmer could only harvest one acre a day. Cyrus' machine had a wheel that moved blades back and forth along the front of the machine as the horse pulled it. The blades cut the stalks of grain as the horse pulled the machine forward, making the process go much faster than cutting the stalks by hand.

Cyrus knew his invention would be used if he could build many reapers. He moved to Chicago to set up a factory to build the reapers. He kept improving on his idea and made his company the leader in manufacturing reapers. The farmers were happy because they could now produce more grain with fewer workers to do the job.

References

Cyrus McCormick. Ohio History Central. Retrieved from <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=260>

"McCormick, Cyrus Hall," *World Book Encyclopedia*, Volume M, (2012). Chicago: World Book, Inc. p. 332f.

"Reaper," *World Book Encyclopedia*, Volume R, (2012). Chicago: World Book, Inc. p. 173.

Noonan, J. (1992) *Nineteenth Century Inventors*. New York: Facts on File, pp. 41–42.

SLAVE CATCHER

Background

Students have been studying the events that led to the Civil War. They have created a visual representation of Chattanooga, Tennessee in about 1860, and imagined the families that live there, with each student being responsible for one adult member of the community. Students role-play the character they have created and try to imagine how their character viewed the world in that place and time.

Students have considered the range of views on the slavery issue, particularly as it relates to supporting the Underground Railroad. Each family group was asked to take a position. The teacher has identified one family as being a “station” for the Underground Railroad—there may be others if students secretly have made that decision. It’s not clear who in the community knows which family was involved in the Underground Railroad, but there are rumors.

The role-play

Your role is to find the family that has been part of the Underground Railroad. You know that they have hidden runaway slaves and you want to make an example of them so others will not want to help in the Underground Railroad. You will threaten and cajole the families into revealing who might have assisted in the Underground Railroad.

At that time, slave catchers would use a variety of ways to catch slaves and intimidate members of the Underground Railroad. You decide how you want to play the role. Below are some possible approaches:

- Offer a reward to a family who tells which family was part of the Underground Railroad. Suggest how the reward will help the family that provides the information.
- Threaten a suspected family with going to jail and paying fines, thus losing their home and business for harboring runaway slaves.
- Threaten violence—breaking a leg, for example.
- Explain that you have a hound dog that has the scent of the runaway slaves and the dog could smell any evidence of having hid runaway slaves in their home or wagon.
- If there are African American families in the community, threaten them with being taken as slaves—who will know the difference!

SLAVE CATCHER page 2**Bring props**

- a warrant for an arrest
- chains, toy handcuffs
- dress the part

Responding to the role play

Clearly, this is a very emotional topic, and students will probably have strong feelings about the event. While we want students to have a sense of the risks involved in being part of the Underground Railroad and a community where these kinds of events happened, we also want to be attuned to their feelings and reactions throughout the role-play. The role-play can stop at any time, and the students can move out of role and debrief the experience. Be especially attuned to those who may have personal connections to such events.

It is important for you to participate in the debriefing so that students clearly understand that you were in role, likening the experience to acting and actors. Please share your feelings about playing this role and your perceptions of the students' reactions to your role.

A STATION ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Your family is a station in the Underground Railroad but you have stopped assisting because you fear that you would soon be discovered. Not long ago a family of runaway slaves arrived. Family members included a mother, a father, a 14-year-old boy, a 10-year-old girl, and a baby girl about 6 months old. Hiding five people in the root cellar was not easy. The cellar was small and cramped. Further, the baby was sick and cried a lot. You were afraid that the baby's crying was heard by neighbors, and that they were planning to report you to the sheriff.

You know that a slave catcher has been searching for this slave family. He arrived at your home just after the family escaped to the next station. The family was hidden in a false bottom of a wagon loaded with potatoes. The wagon left just before the slave catcher arrived at your home. The family had to crowd together in the false bottom of the wagon. The sick baby was crying making everyone tense and irritable. The dirt from the potatoes fell between the boards of the wagon, covering everyone with dust and grit.

You could smell the fear of being caught. When the slave catcher came to your house, his dogs were leaping about, barking, growling, and sniffing everything. The dogs raced to the door of the root cellar and started to bark. All of you were shaking with fear. The slave catcher looked in the cellar, swore, and then took off down the road riding his horse at a gallop. He shouted to you, "I'll be back and you will pay for helping slaves escape." You immediately cleaned the cellar and tried to air it out. You told neighbors that one of your children was sick, and you had gone searching for the doctor in the middle of the night. You are not so sure that your neighbors believed you as they started asking questions about why you went in a wagon and not on horseback. You are trying to keep your Underground Railroad involvement a secret, but you are scared townspeople have found out about your involvement.

FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

Fugitive Slave Law

**WANTED:
CITIZENS HELPING
RUNAWAY SLAVES**

Reward!

- **Anyone assisting runaway slaves has broken the law.**
- **You must return slaves to their Southern owners.**
- **Those assisting runaway slaves will be jailed and heavily fined.**
- **If you know of anyone assisting runaway slaves, report him to the sheriff.**

CHATTANOOGA TIMES

Chattanooga Times

300,000 VOLUMES SOLD!

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*The Greatest Book of the Age*

New York City

The anti-slavery movement has found a voice in a novel titled *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The 39-year-old novelist, Harriet Beecher Stowe, has created a storm with this new publication. In her book she creates the characters of Uncle Tom, Little Eva, Topsy, and Simon Legree. Her story tells the tragic tale of a devout and selfless slave who rescues a white child. After the rescue, a ruthless slave owner, Simon Legree, sells Uncle Tom. Simon Legree is so angry with Uncle Tom and his Christian virtue that he has the slave flogged to death.

This heartfelt tale has made Mrs. Stowe a voice for the abolitionist movement. Her story first appeared in the journal *National Era* and was then published as a novel. The book has sold 300,000 copies; this is a record number for a novel. Supporters of slavery are upset by the popularity of the book and have written a number of essays in defense of slavery. These essays have been published as a collection titled *The Pro-Slavery Argument*.*

* Daniel, C. ed. (1995) *Chronicle of America*. New York: Dorling Kindersley, p. 359.

** Ibid.

**JOHN BROWN HANGS
FOR HARPERS FERRY**

Charleston, [West] Virginia

Dec 2, 1859

John Brown was hanged today for treason, murder, and conspiring with slaves to rebel against slavery. His attack on the United States arsenal at Harpers Ferry on October 17, 1859, caused several people's deaths including two of his sons. Brown planned to take over the arsenal and then turn the town into a base for a slave uprising.

John Brown was born in Connecticut 59 years ago and became obsessed with freeing the slaves. In an attempt to save his life, some of Brown's supporters stated that he was insane and not responsible for his actions. Nevertheless, he was convicted of his crime and sentenced to death. On the way to the gallows, he handed his jailers a note that stated, "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood. I had, as I now think, vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "They are leading old John Brown to execution. This is sowing the wind to reap the whirl-wind, which will soon come."**

BALLOTS

Ballot

President of the United States

Vote for one

- ☐ John Bell, The Constitutional Union Party
- ☐ John C. Breckinridge, Southern Democratic Party
- ☐ Stephen A. Douglas, Northern Democratic Party

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NATIONAL VOTING RESULTS

CANDIDATE	POPULAR VOTE ¹	ELECTORAL VOTE* ²
LINCOLN**	1,865,908	180
BRECKINRIDGE	848,019	72
BELL***	590,901	39
DOUGLAS	1,380,202	12

Electoral Votes

*** The Electoral College system was created by the framers of the Constitution because they did not believe the common man was educated enough to elect the President. During this time, electors who were considered educated were white male landowners, who voted based on personal preference. Each state is allotted a number of electors equal to the number of its senators and representatives. The number of representatives per state is based upon the state's population. The candidate who wins the most votes in a state receives all the state's electoral votes. This is known as the "winner takes all" rule. A candidate must win a majority of electoral votes in order to become president.**

**** All of Lincoln's electoral votes came from northern states; most of the popular votes came from the northern states.**

***** Bell won the most votes in Tennessee.**

¹ Daniel, C. ed. (1995). *Chronicle of America*. New York: Darling Kindersley, p. 363

² Ibid. p. 364

READ FOR INFORMATION: CHATTANOOGA TIMES

Chattanooga Times

*South Carolina
Secedes from Union***UNION DISSOLVED!**

Charleston, SC, December 20, 1860

As crowds milled about outside, South Carolina political leaders met in St. Andrew's Hall on Meeting Street today and in just 22 minutes, voted to secede from the Union....

Word rapidly spread that the state, which became part of the Union in 1788, had now voted to leave it, the first state in the pro-slavery Cotton Belt to do so. Cannons roared at the Citadel. Bells chimed in the church steeples. The crowds cheered in approval and marched through the city.

South Carolina's move was not unexpected, although the outgoing President Buchanan had sought through much of his term to heal the breach that had been developing over the slavery issue. Just a few weeks ago, the President declared that the states have no legal right to secede. However, in an attempt to appease the angry Southerners, he had refused to reinforce federal troops at nearby Fort Moultrie. Buchanan's stand had resulted in the resignation of his Secretary of State, Lewis Cass.

Fanning the flames of a potential secession by the Cotton Belt states was the election last month of Abraham Lincoln, an Illinois Republican and an outspoken foe of slavery. A split aided his victory over the slavery issue in the Democratic Party.*

**ONE BY ONE,
STATES JOIN
CONFEDERACY**

Tennessee, June 8, 1861

Voters endorsed Tennessee's secession from the Union today, making it the 11th state to join the Confederacy, though the state remains sharply divided. Sentiment in eastern Tennessee counties is strongly pro-Union. Jefferson Davis, the acting president of the Confederacy, now heads a government of four border states and seven Deep South states. Fiery South Carolina led the way last December 20, shortly after Abraham Lincoln was elected President. Mississippi followed this January 9. Twelve days later, Davis resigned from the United States Senate, predicting a war "the likes of which men have not seen." By early March, five other Deep South states had seceded: Florida on January 10, Alabama on January 11, Georgia on January 19, Louisiana on January 26, and Texas on March 2. There was opposition in every state, but it was silenced by those called "fire-eaters" who were bent on secession. Virginia, the mother commonwealth, reluctantly seceded on April 17. It was joined by Arkansas on May 6 and North Carolina on May 20. Tennessee made the Confederacy complete with its vote today.

Davis, a native of Mississippi... was elected acting president of the Confederacy.... The Confederate capital was moved from Montgomery [Alabama] to Richmond, Virginia, last month.**

* Daniel, C. ed. (1995) *Chronicle of America*. New York: Dorling Kindersley, p. 359.

** Ibid., p. 364.

REV. MCCALLIE'S ACCOUNT OF EVENTS*

*During the winter of 1860 and 1861 was a time of great **political ferment**. In December 1860, South Carolina had seceded from the Union and as the winter rolled away one state after another went out till seven states had separated themselves from the old Federal Union. It was a time when men thought fast, and rapid changes were taking place in the minds of the people....*

*In April 1861, the Civil War began....I could not approve of **secession**. I did not believe in the **doctrine**. I did not believe that any state when **aggrieved** had the right to secede....My judgment was that the whole movement for a separate and independent government here in the South was a blunder and a mistake. My sympathies were with the South. They were my people. This was my home. I loved my state and Southern people. I felt that their leader had made a most woeful mistake; that they never should have seceded but should have stayed in the Union and depended on the justice of their cause in the courts of the country for the **adjudication** of every case and for relief from all oppression. I felt also that our true policy would have been to give up slavery and take away the **bone of contention**, rather than by holding on to it and seceding to have brought our country to a stupendous war.*

political ferment:	excitement related to government issues
secession:	a formal withdrawal from something
doctrine:	what is taught as a belief
aggrieve:	to cause grief or trouble; to treat unjustly
subversive:	to cause destruction
adjudication:	passing judgment
bone of contention:	an expression meaning the subject of disagreement

* Rev. T. H. McCallie, *An Early Family Record: The McCallie Family in Tennessee*. Unpublished manuscript, pp. 25–27.

MARTIAL LAW BROADSIDE

*By order of Colonel Wood
of the Seventh Alabama Regiment,
Confederate Army*

**As of this day,
November 16, 1861,
Chattanooga is under martial law;
all orders given by the military must
be obeyed by the townspeople.**

**No one is allowed to
leave the town;
the railroads and roads
in and out of town are guarded.**

No one can leave.

**Those supporting
the Union will be arrested.**