

The Underground Railroad, 1860 Student Worksheet

Historical Context

During the 19th century, prior to the Civil War, an informal network created by opponents of slavery helped slaves escape from Southern states. This network became known as the **“Underground Railroad.”** People would use their homes to provide shelter, food, and money for runaway slaves. Those who helped the slaves along this network were called **“conductors,”** and their houses were referred to as **“stations.”** Conductors also helped transport runaways from station to station. The whole system was called “underground” because it was secret, and a “railroad” because it was similar to a railroad in that it transported escapees from one location to another, much like a train.

Vocabulary

Underground Railroad
conductors
stations

Map Activity

To do this activity, you will need a blank outline map and access to the “Underground Railroad, 1860” digital map. First turn on all layers except “Free States,” “Slave States,” “Decision Left to Territory,” and “Escape routes.” Turn on the layers of the digital map as indicated in the following instructions, and answer the questions in the space provided:

1. Turn on the “Free States” layer. How many free states and territories were there?
2. On your outline map, use one color to outline the free states.
3. Turn on the “Slave States” layer. How many slave states were there?
4. On your outline map, use another color to outline the slave states.
5. Turn on the “Decision Left to Territory” layer. In what part of the country was the decision of whether to allow slavery left to the territories? Why do you think the territories in this part of the country had this choice?

6. Turn on the “Escape routes” layer. Give short answers to the following question: If you were a slave, where would you try to escape to and what route would you take if you lived in:
 - a. Missouri
 - b. South Carolina
 - c. Texas
 - d. Georgia
 - e. Louisiana
7. Draw these escape routes on your outline map.
8. What bodies of water were used to help slaves escape?
9. Did slaves always escape northward? Why or why not?
10. Describe two specific examples of routes by which slaves escaped to other countries.

Assessment

Write a paragraph on the following question: What options did slaves in the different Southern states have for escape routes?