



## MINI UNIT INTRODUCTION: LESSON 4

*"Liberty in Our Grasp" lesson plans were developed through a partnership between the Delaware Historical Society and the Hard History Project with financial support from the State of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs and M&T Bank.*

*Developed by: Kirsten Campbell*

This mini unit is meant to be taught over 3–5 days and incorporates several resources from a range of sites and organizations.

Each lesson begins with a framework outlining essential knowledge and materials needed to carry out the lesson. The essential knowledge is taken from *Learning for Justice: Teaching Hard History* standards. Clicking the essential knowledge links on the slide deck will give the teacher a deeper understanding of the standard. The framework is followed by the information teachers will convey, including a slide deck, Student Activity Sheet(s), and resources. In addition, each lesson ends with a culminating activity for teachers to gauge each student's level of understanding.

This mini unit is by no means a cumulative unit on American enslavement, rather, it is meant to be used within a larger history unit. As experts in their field, teachers may choose to extend or compact this mini unit depending on the age group, state standards, and level of discussion in their class. While the information in this mini unit is essential to student learning, it is sensitive information and is not meant to be rushed through or taken lightly. As you deliver content to students, please keep the focus on the humans behind these stories and their lived experiences.

### Lesson 4: Underground Railroad

#### [Essential Knowledge:](#)

Learning for Justice Standards

Key Understandings for Students

Background Knowledge for

**Essential Knowledge 2:** Students should know that slavery is when a person owns another person as property.

**Essential Knowledge 5:** Students should know that enslaved people hated being enslaved, and resisted bondage in many ways.

**Essential Knowledge 11:** Students will know that the main purpose of American slavery was to make money for enslavers.

**Essential Knowledge 14:** Enslavers adopted and spread false beliefs about racial inferiority, including many that still impact us today.

Educators	<p><b>Essential Knowledge 15:</b> In every place and time, enslaved people sought freedom.</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slide deck</li> <li>• Emeline’s Story Website: <a href="#">Flight to Freedom: Emeline’s Story</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">An Incident in the Corbit Mansion in the Days of Slavery Before the War of 1861-4</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Other Important Facts About the Underground Railroad Worksheet</a>, <a href="#">An Incident in the Corbit Mansion Reflection Worksheet</a>, and <a href="#">Exit Ticket</a></li> </ul>
Introduction (15 minutes)	<p><b>Slide 32</b> Review Emeline’s Story <u>Tell students:</u> <i>Yesterday, we read an account of Emeline Hawkins’ journey on the Underground Railroad. Let’s review what happened at each stop. You were to summarize what happened in one sentence.</i> Website: <a href="#">Flight to Freedom: Emeline’s Story</a></p> <p>Emeline’s travels will pop up on the map to the right of the chart on each click.</p> <p><b>Slide 33</b> <u>Remind students of their discussion questions:</u> <i>At the end of Emeline’s journey, were she and her family truly free? Why or why not?</i></p> <p><u>Possible answers:</u> Yes, she escaped her enslaver and is living on her own. No, she is probably still living in fear; will always have to watch her back in case someone tries to capture her and her family; laws are still enslaving African Americans at this time in history; what if Robert Purvis turns on her?</p>
<p><b>Activity:</b> <b>Underground Railroad - Firsthand Account</b>  (30 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Slide 34</b> <u>Tell students:</u> <i>A firsthand account is when the person there is telling about the experience/event. We are about to read a speech given by a woman named Mary Corbit whose mother and father worked on the Underground Railroad. As we read, think about the story unfolding.</i></p> <p>Pass out and read <a href="#">An Incident in the Corbit Mansion in the Days of Slavery Before the War of 1861–4</a> as a class.</p> <p><b>Slide 35</b> Finish reading. Give students two minutes to jot reflections at the end about the following questions, then discuss them as a class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What happened in this firsthand account?</i></li> <li>• <i>What is the story that unfolded?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Knowing what we have learned about the Underground Railroad, what can we assume about Mary’s house?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>What are each character’s thoughts and feelings?</i></li> </ul>

- Be sure to address the feelings/thoughts of Mary, her mother, Sam, and the Sheriff's posse.
- Highlight the risk that Mary's family was taking by being white landowners helping people escape enslavement.
- Highlight the risk Sam was taking by trying to escape enslavement, knocking on a white landowner's door, leaving his whole family behind, etc.
- Highlight the behavior of the Sheriff and his posse before and after searching the house.
- Other thought-provoking questions: What would have happened if Mary's mother wasn't home? What if Sam knocked on the wrong door? What if the Sheriff and his posse found Sam? How do you think witnessing this event impacted Mary's future? Do you think Sam got his family up to freedom? (We don't know, due to the secrecy of those who escaped and a lack of documentation.)
- *What are your thoughts or feelings?*

### Slide 36

Read to Students: The Corbit-Sharp house still stands in Delaware today. Point out on map (just outside of Middletown). Visit Corbit-Sharp house. [Click here to visit virtually](#) (show a few photos).

At the bottom of the website, click on [Sanctuary for Sam](#). Show the photo of where Sam was hiding. Give time for student conversation/discussion/questions/etc.

### Slide 37

Read to students: Other Important Facts About the Underground Railroad Slides 37, 38, and 39 correspond with the ***Other Important Facts About the Underground Railroad*** worksheet.

- The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 made capturing people who escaped enslavement a lucrative business.
  - The federal law allowed anyone to capture and return escaped enslaved people within the United States.
  - Enslavers and their "agents" had the right to search free states for freedom seekers.
  - Even if enslaved people made it to a "free state", they could not be granted their freedom.
  - Those who helped someone escape enslavement faced legal penalties ([see Fugitive Slave Acts](#)).

You may also have students read the slides for greater engagement.

### Slide 38

- VERY FEW people who were enslaved escaped successfully.
  - According to one estimate, about 100,000 people who were enslaved escaped successfully between 1810 and 1850 (see the Underground Railroad).
  - Millions of people were enslaved during this time.

You may also have students read the slides for greater engagement.

### Slide 39

Read to students: Other Important Facts About the Underground Railroad

- The Underground Railroad went through several states, not just Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.
  - The red arrows on the chart show the avenues of escape.
  - A thicker line means the route was taken more frequently (see Underground Railroad: Routes to Freedom).

You may also have students read the slides for greater engagement.

Go over map with students. Ask questions about the map; ask students what they notice about the directions of the arrows. Where were the areas that seemed to be “free” or “safe”?

### Closing

### Slide 40

Choose your own Exit Ticket:

Option 1: Pretend you are Sam writing a letter to his wife. What would you say to her?

*Your letter must include:*

- *A description of Sam’s journey on the Underground Railroad*
- *Sam’s experience at the Corbit Mansion*
- *Sam’s feelings during his journey*
- *Other relevant information*

Option 2: Pretend you are Emeline writing a letter to a friend she had to leave behind.

*Your letter must include:*

- *A description of Emeline’s journey on the Underground Railroad*
- *Emeline’s experience at one of the stops*
- *Emeline’s feelings during her journey*
- *Other relevant information*

Option 3: Write a letter to Minus, the boy who escaped enslavement in Seaford, Delaware.

*Your letter must include:*

- *A description of what happened after he left*
- *Your own feelings about what happened to Minus*
- *Questions to Minus about his experiences during enslavement or escaping*
- *Other relevant information*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## An Incident in the Corbit Mansion Reflection

Reflect on the following questions:

- *What happened in this firsthand account?*
- *What is the story that unfolded?*
  - *Knowing what we have learned about the Underground Railroad, what can we assume about Mary's house?*
- *What are each character's thoughts and feelings?*
  - Be sure to address the feelings/thoughts of Mary, her mother, Sam, and the Sheriff's posse.
  - Highlight the risk that Mary's family was taking by being white landowners helping people escape enslavement.
  - Highlight the risk Sam was taking by trying to escape enslavement, knocking on a white landowner's door, leaving his whole family behind, etc.
  - Highlight the behavior of the Sheriff and his posse before and after searching the house.
  - Other thought-provoking questions: What would have happened if Mary's mother wasn't home? What if Sam knocked on the wrong door? What if the Sheriff and his posse found Sam? How do you think witnessing this event impacted Mary's future? Do you think Sam got his family up to freedom? (We don't know, due to the secrecy of those who escaped and a lack of documentation.)
- *What are your thoughts or feelings?*

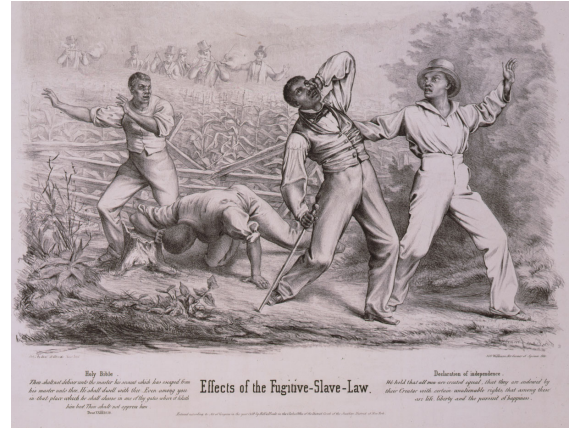


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Other Important Facts About the Underground Railroad

- The \_\_\_\_\_ made capturing people who escaped enslavement a lucrative business.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ allowed anyone to capture and return escaped enslaved people within the United States.
- Enslavers and their “agents” had the right to \_\_\_\_\_ for freedom-seekers.
- Even if enslaved people made it to a “free state”, they \_\_\_\_\_ be granted their freedom.
- Those who helped someone escape enslavement faced \_\_\_\_\_ ([see Fugitive Slave Acts](#))



Effects of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-1286).

- \_\_\_\_\_ people who were enslaved escaped successfully.
- According to one estimate, about \_\_\_\_\_ people who were enslaved escaped successfully between 1810 and 1850. ([see the Underground Railroad](#))
- \_\_\_\_\_ of people were enslaved during this time.



April 24, 1851 “CAUTION!! Colored People of Boston” broadside warning of



watchmen and police acting as kidnappers and slave catchers, Photo: [Public Domain](#)



Map by the National Geographic Society

- The Underground Railroad went through \_\_\_\_\_ not just Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.
- The red arrows on the chart show the avenues of escape.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ means the route was taken more frequently. ([see Underground Railroad: Routes to Freedom](#))



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read through each option below. Circle the exit ticket you would like to complete. Use the space below to write your letter. Be sure you include all required parts!

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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