

The book 'harriet tubman: the road to freedom' by catherine clinton essay sample

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Abstract

The book ' Harriet Tubman: The road to freedom' is very well written and the writer Catherine Clinton is crystal clear in her words and it seems she tries to answer every question that a reader might ask while reading the book. The language that Clinton has used to write this book is quite simple and anyone right from students in high school or college or an adult will easily understand. It was a difficult task to gather information because Harriet Tubman was an illiterate and very little is available in written form. Usually it is seen that while writing a biography the writer also gives his opinion but in this book Clinton has never judged her subject. ' Harriet Tubman: The road to freedom' is scrupulously analyzed and thoroughly researched.

The book ' Harriet Tubman: The road to freedom' is a book that describes the life and significance of Harriet Tubman who was born a slave in Maryland in 1820s. She was a remarkable woman and escaped through the underground railroad when she was quite young and also tried to lead other slaves to freedom through this way just after an year of her escape.

Tubman served the Union forces as spy during the civil war and she was the only woman who led men into battle and tried to help thousands of slaves to benefit themselves from the transition period. Even after the war she helped those who needed her help in such matters and even launched a charity home for African Americans. The writer has treated Tubman as a human being with emotions and desires and never tried to portray her as a saint. This makes the biography completely close to everything that really had occurred. Clinton also describes the events that occurred in Tubman's

lifetime and how the slave rebellion that occurred just few miles away from Maryland affected her young thoughts and changed her way of thinking. Writer makes the reader aware of the network that brought slaves to Canada and to freedom and talks about the people that worked for the underground railroad. All information that Clinton gives her readers never appeared to be second hand rather everything is first hand and taken direct from the sources available to her.

She presents every fact clearly and sometimes elaborates some and analyzes them so that the fact is clearly understood by the readers. Tubman was born to Harriet Green and Benjamin Ross and was named Araminta and it is not known that how many siblings she had. Not much is known about her parents Harriet Tubman: The road to freedom 4 except that even they were slaves and owned by different individuals, they managed to live together. Slave children were sent to work at very early age and they knew very well that they could easily be separated from their parents anytime. Slave parents lived in abject terror of separation from their children. This fear, perhaps more than any other aspect of the institution, revealed the deeply dehumanizing horror of slavery. (Chapter 1, Pg. 10) Araminta was often whipped for even small mistakes and was sent to her owner very early. She became undernourished and sick there and was sent back but as soon as she was healthy, the owner took her back. This is the way she lived in her childhood.

Harriet wanted to run away far more early than she did and that was because she had not much resource and lacked a guide to show her the way.

It is also felt that she didn't want to leave her husband but finally when she was about to be sold to Deep South she made up her mind and escaped. The year 1849 became a turning point. To best fulfill her destiny, Tubman realized she must actively seek a role in God's plan, rather than letting others dictate her path. For Araminta, this was an important step forward, a significant leap of faith, especially faith in herself. (Chapter 2, Pg. 31) After fleeing Tubman arrived in Philadelphia with some other fugitives and felt happy as it was headquarter for the Pennsylvania Society for Promotion of the Abolition of Slavery. Harriet didn't have to wait for long to find some work for her living. Thomas Garrett, one of the famous stationmasters seem to have helped Tubman in her escape because he was arrested for helping slaves in freeing them and was fined too for that.

However he continued giving aids to fugitives and it is believed that both whites and blacks were involved in this work. In 1850 Harriet got the news from her niece and she herself went back to Maryland to help her out. Not much is known of the escape but this shows her determination and courage that she went back to a new place and helped her niece and at the same time keeping herself safe too. Later when the situation for blacks started to worsen in United States, she moved to Canada where they created Afro-Canadian communities. They were helped by some organizations in this connection. Harriet along with John Brown was on a campaign against slavery and committed to promote racial equality. Brown wanted to eradicate slavery at any cost even if he had to take up the path of violence

for that. Tubman now started to believe that she might see emancipation while she was alive.

When Lincoln became the President, the slaveholders became stronger and sought more punishments for those who helped fugitives. Rewards were set from \$12, 000 to \$40, 000 for Harriet's arrest and if she had been caught she must have been executed for her doings. During this time too she went to South and rescued a group of fugitives but was forced to remain in Canada by her family members for her own safety. In 1863 in Combahee River Raid she helped the three boats find their way through Combahee River and with 150 black soldiers they freed about 750 slaves. With the end of the war she settled down in Auburn and continued to help others. When she died she was buried with military honor.

References

Clinton Catherine, Harriet Tubman: The road to freedom, Study guide, from [http://www. bookrags. com/studyguide-harriet-tubman-clinton/](http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-harriet-tubman-clinton/)