

# Diary of a black slave

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March 10th, 1849 My name is Anita Ross. I am a thirteen-year-old slave, in the state of Virginia. I have just received this diary from my Master's son. He has been secretly teaching me to read and write, and in exchange, I would not tell his mother or father of what I witnessed him doing. I am very excited that he gave me this diary, for we just had our last teaching session. The purpose of writing in this, is to show others- when I get to freedom- how terrible life here, is.

Life, for me, is living Hell. I am whipped if I do not work fast enough. I am put through un-imaginable, physical pain every day, and I am determined to get free. You might be wondering how a slave would successfully escape. I have an answer; I have been hearing whispers of something called The Underground Railway.

It is supposed to be an organization of people, that helps runaway slaves get to freedom. However, I do not want to be in a free state, I want to leave this hate filled country. I am going to Canada. The whispers say that Canada is the only place where one can truly be free. I will get there.

I will not stay here and tolerate this. I am going to be free. March 12th, 1849 I have been thinking a lot of my escape. I am worried that somewhere along the way, I will be caught, and sent back to my Master. I do not want this. Going back would mean a severe beating, and my back would be even more marked up than it already is.

No, I need to have this planned out carefully before I leave. I will travel only at night, and hide during the day. I must make no mistakes. My future is at stake. March 15th, 1849 I have everything planned; there are new whispers

of when “ Moses” is coming. She is said to be the person to travel with, when going to your freedom.

I will sneak out and run for as long as I can, until I reach the graveyard, where Moses and her other “ passengers” will be meeting me. I am afraid. I do not want anyone to see me. This will be one of the riskiest parts of my trip. I do not know if I am prepared, but I must go. This is my only chance.

March 18th, 1849 I am now, officially, a fugitive slave. I am travelling with Moses (she has said her actual name is Harriet Tubman) and all the other passengers (runaway slaves) she has with her. Everything about this organization- The Underground Railroad- is secretive. Everything is spoken in code, and all the coded words have to do with a railroad. The fugitive slaves- like me- are called passengers, Moses is a “ conductor”, one who leads us to our freedom.

Those who make routes that we travel on, are called agents, safe houses where we are hidden and sheltered are known as stations. A terminal is a city or town where we can go for help, if needed, during our journey. One, who owns a station, is called a stationmaster. A brakeman helps runaways start new lives, whether in Canada or a free state. I am overjoyed to see all of the people who are risking being fined, and put in jail, just to help those who desperately need it. March 23rd, 1849 Although I am at a constant risk, I try to remain positive.

Things have been rough for us, these past few days. The weather is cold and foggy, which is good for our travels, but not for our body's. Many have fallen ill, because we do not have the proper clothing for this weather. Moses says <https://assignbuster.com/diary-of-a-black-slave/>

at our next station, we will be given warmer clothing, and that the illness will fade. Right now, we are wearing disguises. We have been told that these disguises will ensure that the slave catchers will not find us.

Our Master's have probably reported us missing, and has given a description and reward, for our capture. But since we are disguised, we will be practically invisible to the slave catchers. The journey has been hard so far, my bones are aching and my feet are sore from running. The only way we know which direction is the right one to walk, is to follow the drinking gourd. It points to the North Star, and north is where we are going.

This has not been easy, but it will be all worth it once I reach Canada. March 27th, 1849 I am now in a " free state". I am happier, now that there is a less chance of my capture. But the chance is too great for me to settle here. There are many free states that I could settle in: California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Main, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington.

But I only wish to settle in Canada. I am one of only three others in my group who are going to the free country, out of an original ten. We are all deciding where we are going to go, once we reach Canada. The cities that I am choosing from are Windsor, Chatham, Buxton, St. Catherine's and London, Ontario. I am not able to write for a while, but when I write again, I will share everything I learned on my journey.

May 6th, 1849 I am now a citizen of London, Ontario, Canada. I still can't believe that I am a free black. I will never again be forced to work, and have  
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no freedom. Now all I try to do is research. I am researching how this awful thing (slavery) came to be. I am trying to figure out how to free all of the slaves in the United States of America.

I heard lots of stories of how slavery started, but now I know the truth. It all started because some Portuguese sailors traveled to Africa, searching for gold, but instead finding buyable people. They could not resist the idea of free labour, so they transported millions of Africans to the Americas. They had a two month boat ride to get to North America, and one in five slaves would die during the trip. When the Africans arrived in North America they were auctioned off to the highest bidder.

This started in 1619. More often than not, families were split up for the rest of their lives. In 1808, it was declared illegal to import slaves to the United States, but there were already 1. 2 million slaves in America. This is what I discovered about how slavery came to be.

I still need to decide how I am going to stop it. My new home - Canada - has been a free country since 1793. It is now 1849. America needs to join in on the Anti- Slavery movement, which has been in Canada for so long. America is still enslaving people.

This has to change. May 8th, 1849 Happy Birthday to me! ? I am told that though I am only 14 (now), I am acting like an adult. Those people would be referring to the fact that I am serious about joining the Underground Railroad. I decided that if America is not listening when Canada tells them to stop slavery, they certainly will not listen when a black girl in her fourteenth

year, tells them to. So the best way I can get slaves free is to be a part of the very thing that brought me to my freedom. The Underground Railroad.

November 18th, 1850 I know I have not written in a long while, but things have been very busy. I am a part of the Underground Railroad. I have been helping slaves by acting as a brakeman. I help the former slaves get their lives started, and my job has become increasingly busy, lately. This is because exactly one month ago, a new law was issued in America. It is called The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

This law gives slave catchers the right to enter any Free State, capture a former slave and return them to their former Master and their former life. This law also gives worse punishments for those helping fugitives. Now thousands of blacks- free or not- are fleeing to Canada, because this is the only place where a black person can truly be free. Now, the Underground Railroad is busier than ever. The northern states are easier to smuggle slaves out of, because they are closer to the border, but if you were a slave in the Deep South, there is a much greater challenge to get you out of the country. In some southern states, it is legal for any citizen to shoot a runaway.

It is harder because it is a longer journey to Canada. Therefore, there is a much greater risk of being caught. There are not many conductors willing to travel to the Deep South to pick up passengers, because of the great risk. Fortunately, we have a lot of brave conductors with the organization, and they are willing to risk the consequences, and save those helpless people.

November 21st, 1850 I am shocked. The United States of America has asked

Canada if they can have permission for their slave catchers to enter Canada and take back all of the slaves that have escaped here.

Canada, of course, refused. They made it quite clear that once a slave reaches Canadian soil, they are free. Although it is illegal for any slave catcher to cross the border and enter Canada to kidnap now-free blacks, some break the law because of very large rewards. This needs to be stopped. November 23rd, 1850 I have been able to get many new free blacks jobs that involve physical labour, like working on a farm.

It seems that slavery has done us one favour; it gave us skills to work harder. And the now-free blacks are happy doing the work, because it is of their own free will, and they are earning a profit. Even though the Free Blacks are content with their new lives here, some of them just want slavery to become illegal in the U. S. so that they can return to the land that they grew up in. It has been estimated that there is anywhere between 20, 000 and 40, 000 escaped blacks living in Canada.

December 6th, 1850 There are so many escaped slaves pouring into the country. They are all desperate for freedom, and exhausted from their journey. More and more conductors are refusing to make trips into the Deep South. The only one that always says yes is Harriet Tubman, a. k.

a. Moses. She is truly fearless. She continues to risk it all, even when she knows that in America there is a \$40, 000 reward for her capture; dead or alive. She has made close to ten trips already! Let us hope that the dreadful thing known as slavery ends very, very soon. December 6th, 1865 I know I have not written in such a long time, and I apologize.

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Life has been very busy. I am in my thirtieth year. And for some more good news... Slavery has come to an end!!! Something called the 13th amendment was passed in America today. It has brought the end of slavery, and all of the slaves will be set free. We are so glad that this has all ended. In 1861, a civil war broke out in the United States of America, and a lot of slaves took advantage of the war, and escaped.

This has all been such a big mess, and I am very happy that it is over. I will sleep well tonight, knowing that justice has finally been served, and peace is brought to thousands of black souls. References. Websites: [www. innercity. org/holt/slavechron.](http://www.innercity.org/holt/slavechron.html)

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