

A role of harriet tubman in history



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Harriet Tubman was born into American slavery, a world that had been created by social, cultural, legal, and psychological effects for nearly 200 years. The revolutionary war opened new opportunities for African Americans, with growing support by the Quakers and others who were against slavery. Although slavery was becoming non-existent in the North, the elite of the south were against this new movement, and they feared this new ideology, as their economy depended on the supply and demand of cotton.

The south continued to defend their proslavery views, and Harriet Tubman could not escape the harsh circumstances of African American slaves during this period. At the time, no one could have ever imagined Harriet Tubman would become the woman she is known to be today, but the extreme circumstances that she had to overcome led to a legacy that will be remembered forever.

Harriet Tubman's adolescent years were full of neglect. Harriet Tubman lived most of her younger years with her family on a plantation owned by the Brodess family near the town of Bucktown, located near Dorchester County, Maryland. The relationships between Harriet and her family is not well known because she was split apart from her family at a very early age (History). Her mother worked as a cook for the Brodess family, and her father, Benjamin Ross, was owned by Anthony Thompson. Her mother was the property of Matty Pattinson who married Joseph Brodess in 1800, but later died in 1803. It was then that Marry Pattinson married a widower named Anthony Thompson. It was at this time that the Brodess and Thompson family were

united by marriage, and the mother of Harriett Tubman, Harriet Green, and her father, Benjamin Ross started a family (Jean McMahon 12).

Harriet Tubman witnessed the injustices of slavery, and the memories were ingrained in her mind from a very early age. It is said that Harriet Tubman believed her mother was slaved illegally, and she was right. She paid a lawyer \$5 dollars to look up the will of her mother's first master, and she found out that her mother was slaved even long after she was due to be emancipated (Jean McMahon 14). As a child, she witnessed her sisters being taken away with a group of chained prisoner slaves (Jean McMahon 14).

Having to deal with such discriminatory experiences at such an early age, Harriet Tubman developed a strong desire for liberation and freedom, not only for African American people, but the family that was taken away from her. Her difficult childhood did not stop there, her first job required her to take care of a new born. If the baby cried at night, she would be whipped by her master. Harriet Tubman was hired from house to house since she was 5 years old, working jobs that were mentally and physically taxing. At the age of 7, she contracted measles from a job that required her to be constantly wet, and she collapsed from exhaustion (Harriet-Tubman).

Throughout all the hardships Harriet Tubman faced in her childhood years, it seems she was born with a virtuous sense of character and fighting spirit, and her true character was unveiled when she stood up for a fellow slave. Her master demanded she help whip the slave for going to the store without permission, but she refused. The slave tried to run away, when the master picked up an iron weight and threw it. Harriet Tubman was struck in the head, with the weight crushing her skull. The attack left her permanently

scared, and she would have seizures for the rest of her life

(Americar'sLibrary). The extreme difficulties she faced as a child would be monumental, and the strength that she developed was necessary for the next chapter in her life.

Harriet Tubman's middle years would set the tone in her search for freedom for her and her people. At the age of about 24 years old, she married a free man by the name of John Tubman in 1844 (Jean McMahan 15). Little is known about her relationship with her husband and she is not known to have any children in her life. At the time, slaved woman married at a very early age, and they were often advised to have children early. Punishment was often a consequence of deciding not to have children early. Even so, Harriet Tubman married in her later years compared to her peers, and it is believed that her mother may have played a role in doing so. Mothers of slaved woman during this period attempted to slow the pace of courtship (Jean McMahan 15).

The relationship between Harriet Tubman and John Tubman is said to have been a complicated one because she was still a slave while he was free man, but this very fate would be her opportunity to focus on the task at hand and pursue her escape (Jean McMahan 15). On 1849, her master, Edward Brodess died, and he left a will that stated the Tubman's would be slaves for the purpose of raising his family (Jean McMahan 16). Harriet Tubman would have other plans, and she decided her escape in 1849, with two or three of her brothers (Jean McMahan 16). However, fearing the all the horrible things that might happen to them if they were caught, the brothers retreated, and Harriet Tubman was own her own.