

WALT: Write an account about travelling along the Underground Railroad

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Today was the day my old life of torture as a slave ended... and my new life of joy started.

In 1855, America is a place full of slaves who have been snatched from their homes in Africa and forced to work on the Cotton Plantations. My family are unfortunately one of them. From the age of four, I had to help the Master's son because he owned me. I would brush his hair, clean his shoes, choose what clothes he wore and make his breakfast. My mother and father worked in the cotton fields for twelve hours every day barely surviving off bread and water. It was a horrible place. My brother did the same job as me but with the Master's daughter; she owned him.

Not long after that, my mother and father both passed away from malnutrition; it was only me and my brother left in my family. I cried myself to sleep every night after that traumatising event. I was in a deep depression, it was the worst time of my life. I recalled how my mother and father told me about runaway slaves and how some of them escaped...but not all of them were so lucky. I love Harriet Tubman and how she has helped many slaves escape across the Underground Railroad. That's when I knew I had to go. I told my brother about my plan and he agreed.

The next night, we packed what little food we had and crept deep into the forest. Every step I made, my feet became scratched and bruised but I wasn't going to stop. As Harriet Tubman once said, "I wasn't scared of the forest, or the dark, or the creatures that lived in the night...but I was scared of the Patrollers."

The patrollers are terrifying humans who catch slaves and return them back to their owners for a lot of money. They make it their duty to capture them. If runaway slaves are caught, they are beaten badly. The wicked patrollers go out at night because most slaves use the cover of night to escape. Patrollers are horrible people.

Night soon turned into day and my brother and I stopped to rest. I was looking around for a river where we could drink fresh water and resupply our flasks when I saw a safe-house up the hill. I knew it was a safe house because it had one of the symbols my mother had told me about, a patchwork quilt hanging up outside.

On the outside of the quilt was a bow tie, which signalled that they had clean clothes for slaves. Another was the bears paw which signalled that there could be bears nearby and that we should follow the trail for food and water. The last symbol I recognised on the quilt was the drunkard's path that warned us we should walk in zig-zags so the patrollers wouldn't be able to follow our trail.

We crept carefully up to the house. Hesitating, I knocked on the door and was met by a well-dressed lady with a welcoming smile. She asked us if we were runaway slaves and we told her we were and that we needed shelter. Suddenly, I heard heavy, aggressive footsteps so we rushed inside because we knew it was the patrollers.

Gradually, the footsteps became louder and louder as we hid inside. I could feel the vibrations on the hard wooden floors. After that, all I heard was a mumbling of angry voices...then the door slammed shut. The conductor came back and told us to come out of our hiding place, eat some warm food and change into clean clothes. We thoroughly enjoyed a feast and slept comfortably all night long.

The next day, after saying thank you, we headed out on our way. The nights were cold and pitch-black but we had to walk knowing that if we were caught, we would never be able to escape again. The patrollers would do anything to catch slaves for money; they are totally ruthless.

Summer turned into winter and the warm tropical days changed into icy-cold freezing nights. The same menacing footsteps that I had heard in the house came marching back close behind us. My heart dropped immediately so I grabbed my brother and dashed into the shadows. I wouldn't stop for anything. I just kept sprinting, sprinting and sprinting. We only came to a stop when we saw an enormous body of water stretched out in front of us but the slave catcher was hot on our tails.

When all seemed lost, the Quaker from the conductor's cabin came running towards us...she had been following as well the whole time with a friend. She tackled the patroller as her friend told us to follow her. She led us to a boat at the side of the lake and we quickly set off for Canada. It took us a long while but we eventually made it.

I am grateful for all the help we were given by the conductors and now I am a free man living in 1860. I hope one day, slavery is abolished and everyone is free.