

Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman was born around 1820 in Maryland in the United States. She was born into slavery, as her mother was already a slave. Harriet's father was also a slave, but was freed at the age of 45 due to his owner's wishes after his death.

Harriet's Early Life

Harriet's real name was Araminta Harriet Ross. She had a very hard life working as a field hand slave in the plantation fields every day in the burning sun. She was often whipped and beaten. Once, a lead weight was thrown at her and it hit her head. After this, she suffered terrible headaches and developed narcolepsy, which she had for the rest of her life.

Growing up

In 1844, Araminta married a free black man called John Tubman. It was around this time that Araminta changed her name to Harriet.

Harriet escaped slavery with two of her brothers. She decided to leave after her owner died. She left Maryland with her brothers on 17th September, 1849. Her husband would not leave with her.



Born

Around 1820

Died

10th March, 1913

Age

Approximately 93 years old

Narcolepsy

An illness where the sufferer falls asleep very suddenly at any time in the day, whatever they are doing.

However, once they had left her brothers had second thoughts, so Harriet made sure they got safely back to the plantation and she left again, heading for Pennsylvania, which was a free state.

Harriet Tubman

Escape

Harriet used the Underground Railroad to travel nearly 90 miles to Pennsylvania. She crossed to the free state with a great feeling of relief. She said,

“I found when I crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven.”

Harriet's Mission

Harriet made it her mission to rescue her family and friends from living in slavery. Over the following years, risking her own life, she returned to Maryland at night to guide her parents, siblings and others to safety.

A reward was set for anyone who captured her. By 1860, she had returned to the plantation 19 times and saved over 300 people from slavery. She earned the nickname 'Moses', as she was compared to the man in the Bible who led slaves to freedom.

Harriet would carry a gun with her for defence and she was not afraid to show it to enemies on her many trips. She was proud that she had never lost anyone or allowed them to turn back. She always had her faith in God.

Harriet's Achievements

Harriet saved over 1000 people. During the American Civil War, she became a nurse and spy. She passed information onto Colonel Montgomery and became a leader of corps of local black people. She had very little money, so earned her living through selling pies, gingerbread and root beer.

After the war, she returned to Auburn in New York and helped free black people begin their new lives. She turned her home into the Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes, where her parents and many others lived their last days.

She was a poor woman and contracted pneumonia. Unable to pay for medicine, she died in 1913, aged around 93.

Harriet had shown such courage and care for others, and not thought about the danger she was in herself. She had saved so many lives and changed people's minds about slavery. She made them see it was wrong, and helped slaves see themselves as people with self-worth.

Harriet Tubman Questions

Answer the questions in full sentences.

1. Where was Araminta born?

2. How did Araminta develop narcolepsy?

3. Why did Harriet want to escape from the plantation?

4. Who went with Harriet the first time she escaped from the plantation?

5. How did Harriet get to Pennsylvania?

6. What did she do the moment she crossed the line to Pennsylvania?

7. In your own words, explain what Harriet's mission was.

8. How many times did she return to Maryland?

9. Why do you think she carried a gun?

10. Name the two jobs she did during the Civil War.

11. How did she earn extra money?

12. Name two of Harriet's qualities.

Harriet Tubman Answers

1. Where was Araminta born?

Araminta was born in Maryland, United States.

2. How did Araminta develop narcolepsy?

Araminta developed narcolepsy when someone threw a lead weight at her and it hit her head.

3. Why did Harriet want to escape from the plantation?

Harriet wanted to escape from the plantation because she was whipped and beaten and had to work in the fields in the burning sun.

4. Who went with Harriet the first time she escaped from the plantation?

Harriet's two brothers went with her the first time she escaped from the plantation.

5. How did Harriet get to Pennsylvania?

Harriet got to Pennsylvania by using the Underground Railroad.

6. What did she do the moment she crossed the line to Pennsylvania?

The moment she crossed the line into Pennsylvania, she looked at her hands.

7. In your own words, explain what Harriet's mission was.

Pupil's own response based on saving people from a life of slavery.

8. How many times did she return to Maryland?

She returned to Maryland 19 times.

9. Why do you think she carried a gun?

Pupil's own response. Example answer: I think she carried a gun to show her enemies on her journeys to keep her safe.

10. Name the two jobs she did during the Civil War.

She was a nurse and a spy during the Civil War.

11. How did she earn extra money?

She earned extra money selling pies, gingerbread and root beer.

12. Name two of Harriet's qualities.

Pupil's own response based on her being caring, courageous, brave, selfless, etc.

Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman was born between 1820 and 1825 in Dorchester County, Maryland in the United States. She was born into slavery, as her mother was already a slave and owned by Mary Pattison Brodess. Harriet's father was also a slave, but was freed at the age of 45 due to his owner's wishes after his death.

Harriet's Early Life

Harriet's real name was Araminta Harriet Ross. Her early life was very hard. She was a field hand slave, so had to work out in the plantation fields every day in the burning sun. She was often whipped and beaten. Once, a lead weight was thrown at her and it hit her head. After this, she suffered terrible headaches and narcolepsy.

Growing up

In 1844, Araminta married a free black man called John Tubman. Not much is known about John. It was around this time that Araminta changed her name to Harriet.



Born

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Approximately 93 years old

Narcolepsy

An illness where the sufferer falls asleep very suddenly at any time in the day, whatever they are doing.

Five years later, Harriet escaped slavery with two of her brothers. She decided to leave after her owner died. She left Maryland with her brothers on 17th September, 1849 but her husband would not leave with her.

However, once they had left her brothers had second thoughts, so Harriet made sure they got safely back to the plantation and she left again, heading for Pennsylvania, which was a free state.

Harriet Tubman

Escape

Harriet used the Underground Railroad to travel nearly 90 miles to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. She crossed to the free state with a great feeling of relief and awe. She said,

“I found when I crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven.”

Harriet's Mission

Harriet made it her mission to rescue family and friends from living in slavery. Over the following years, she returned to Maryland at night to guide her parents, siblings and others to safety.

She was always risking her own life. A reward was set for anyone who captured her. By 1860, she had returned to the plantation 19 times and saved over 300 people from slavery. She earned the nickname 'Moses', as she was compared to the man in the Bible who led slaves to freedom.

Harriet would carry a gun with her for defence and she was not afraid to show it to enemies on her numerous trips. She was proud that she had never lost a fugitive or allowed one to turn back. She always had her faith in God too.

Harriet's Achievements

Harriet saved over 1000 people. She continued her good work during the American Civil War, when she became a nurse and spy. She passed information onto Colonel Montgomery, passing unnoticed through the enemy territory. She had very little money, so earned her living through selling pies, gingerbread and root beer.

After the war, she returned to Auburn in New York and helped free black people begin their new lives. She turned her home into the Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes, where her parents and many others lived their last days.

She was a poor woman and contracted pneumonia. Unable to pay for medicine, she died in 1913, aged around 93.

She had shown such courage and care for others, and not thought about the danger she was in herself. She had saved so many lives and changed people's thoughts about slavery. She made them see it was wrong and helped slaves see themselves as people with self-worth.

Harriet Tubman Questions

Answer the following questions in as much detail as you can and in full sentences.

1. How was Araminta's father freed from slavery?

2. Why was Araminta's early life hard?

3. What year did Araminta get married and what changed for her?

4. Why did Harriet take her brothers back to the plantation after they all escaped?

5. Why did Harriet head for Pennsylvania?

6. How did Harriet feel when she crossed the line to Pennsylvania?

7. Why did Harriet keep returning to Maryland?

8. What was the reward set up for?

9. Why was she given the nickname 'Moses'?

10. What two things helped her on her journeys?

11. Why do you think she turned her home into a Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes?

12. What do you think the most important thing was that Harriet achieved?

Harriet Tubman Answers

1. How was Araminta's father freed from slavery?

Araminta's father was freed from slavery when his owner died.

2. Why was Araminta's early life hard?

Araminta's early life was hard because she was a field hand slave working out in the fields in the burning sun / whipped and beaten / had a lead weight thrown at her head which caused her to have terrible headaches and narcolepsy.

3. What year did Araminta get married and what changed for her?

Araminta married in 1845 and she changed her name to Harriet.

4. Why did Harriet take her brothers back to the plantation after they all escaped?

Harriet took her brothers back to the plantation after they all escaped because her brothers had second thoughts about leaving and she wanted to see them safely back to the plantation.

5. Why did Harriet head for Pennsylvania?

Harriet headed for Pennsylvania because it was a free state.

6. How did Harriet feel when she crossed the line to Pennsylvania?

When Harriet crossed the line to Pennsylvania, she felt relieved and in awe / She felt like a different person / felt like she was in Heaven.

7. Why did Harriet keep returning to Maryland?

Harriet kept returning to Maryland to rescue people from slavery.

8. What was the reward set up for?

The reward was set up for her capture.

9. Why was she given the nickname 'Moses'?

Harriet was given the name 'Moses' because a man in the Bible called Moses had led slaves to freedom.

10. What two things helped her on her journeys?

Two things that helped her on her journey included a gun and her faith in God.

11. Why do you think she turned her home into a Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes?

Pupil's own response based on her character, being caring, looking after others.

12. What do you think the most important thing was that Harriet achieved?

Pupil's own response based on saving people's lives, helping slaves see that they were slaves and had more self-worth, changed people's opinions about slavery.

Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman was born between 1820 and 1825 in Dorchester County, Maryland in the United States. She was born into slavery as her mother was already a slave and owned by Mary Pattison Brodess. Harriet's father was also a slave, but was freed at the age of 45 due to his owner's wishes after his death. However, her father Ben had to continue to work for his owner's family as he could not afford to leave.

Harriet's Early Life

Harriet's real name was Araminta Harriet Ross. Her early life was always hard. She was a field hand slave, so had to work out in the plantation fields every day, in the burning sun. She was often whipped and beaten. Once, a lead weight was thrown at her and it hit her head. As a result, she suffered terrible headaches and narcolepsy.

Her owner's son, Edward, sold three of her sisters to another plantation, which broke up the family. A trader from Georgia wanted to buy her brother Moses, but her mother, Rit, did not agree to the sale and set a powerful example to her daughter, Araminta.



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An illness where the sufferer falls asleep very suddenly at any time in the day, whatever they are doing.

Growing up

In 1844, Araminta married a free black man called John Tubman. Not much is known about John. It was around this time that Araminta changed her name to Harriet, possibly in honour of her mother.

Five years later, Harriet escaped slavery with two of her brothers. She decided to leave after her owner died. She feared for her own safety and left Maryland with her brothers on 17th September, 1849. Her husband would not leave with her.

Harriet Tubman

However, once they had left her brothers had second thoughts, so Harriet made sure they got safely back to the plantation and then she left again, heading for Pennsylvania.

Escape

Harriet used the network known as the Underground Railroad to travel nearly 90 miles to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. She crossed to the free state of Pennsylvania, with a great feeling of relief and awe. She said,

“I found when I crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven.”

Harriet's Mission

Harriet made it her mission to rescue family and friends from living in slavery. Over the following years, she returned to Maryland at night to guide her parents, siblings and others to safety.

She was constantly risking her own life. By 1860, she had returned to the plantation 19 times and saved 300 people from slavery. She earned the nickname 'Moses', as she was compared to the man in the Bible who led slaves to freedom. John Brown was a leading slave abolitionist, which meant he worked to end slavery, and he described Harriet as “one of the bravest persons on this continent”.

Harriet would carry a gun with her for defence and she was not afraid to show it to enemies on her numerous trips. She was proud that she had never lost a fugitive or allowed one to turn back.

Her biggest problem was making the black people believe that they did not have to be slaves.

Harriet's Achievements

Harriet saved over 1000 people. During the American Civil War, she was a nurse and spy. She passed information onto Colonel Montgomery, passing unnoticed through the enemy territory. She became a leader of corps of local black people. She had very little money, so earned her living through selling pies, gingerbread and root beer.

After the war, she returned to Auburn in New York and helped freed black people begin new lives in freedom. She turned her home into the Home for Indigent and

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Aged Negroes, where her parents and many others lived their last days.

She was a poor woman and contracted pneumonia. Unable to pay for medicine, she died in 1913, aged around 93.

She had shown such courage and care for others, and not thought for the danger she was in herself. She had saved so many lives and changed people's opinions about slavery. She made them see it was wrong, and helped slaves see themselves as people with self-worth.

Harriet Tubman Questions

Answer the following questions in as much detail as you can and in full sentences.

1. Why was Araminta born a slave?

2. Explain why Araminta's father did not leave his owner's land even though he was free after his owner died.

3. Name two things that made Araminta's early life so hard.

4. What do you think some of the dangers of having narcolepsy might be?

5. Araminta's mother was a strong woman. What incident demonstrates this strength?

6. After escaping from slavery the first time, why did Harriet return?

7. What words does the author use to tell us the emotions Harriet experienced when reaching Pennsylvania?

8. Explain in your own words, why you think Harriet checked whether she was a different person on being free?

9. Why was Harriet nicknamed 'Moses'.

10. Explain what the author means in this sentence: *"She had never lost a fugitive or allowed one to turn back."*

11. What stopped Harriet saving more people from slavery?

12. How did Harriet continue to help people after the war?

13. Describe Harriet Tubman's character.

Harriet Tubman Answers

1. Why was Araminta born a slave?

Araminta was born a slave because her mother was a slave.

2. Explain why Araminta's father did not leave his owner's land even though he was free after his owner died.

Araminta's father did not leave his owner's land even though he was free after his owner died because he could not afford to leave.

3. Name two things that made Araminta's early life so hard.

Two things which made Araminta's early life so hard was that she had to work in the fields all day in the burning sun, and she was often whipped and beaten.

4. What do you think some of the dangers of having narcolepsy might be?

Pupil's own response based on falling asleep suddenly whatever the person is doing.

5. Araminta's mother was a strong woman. What incident demonstrates this strength?

The incident which demonstrates Araminta's mother's strength was that she refused to let a trader to buy her brother.

6. After escaping from slavery the first time, why did Harriet return?

After escaping from slavery the first time, Harriet returned because her brothers had second thoughts and wanted to return to the plantation. She made sure they returned safely.

7. What words does the author use to tell us the emotions Harriet experienced when reaching Pennsylvania?

The author uses the words 'relief and awe' to tell us the emotions Harriet experienced when reaching Pennsylvania.

8. Explain in your own words, why you think Harriet checked whether she was a different person on being free?

Pupil's own response based on Harriet now being free and feeling different, so she thought maybe she looked different.

9. Why was Harriet nicknamed 'Moses'?

Harriet was nicknamed 'Moses' because Moses was a man in the Bible who had led slaves to freedom.

10. Explain what the author means in this sentence: "She had never lost a fugitive or allowed one to turn back."

The sentence means that no slave died or returned to slavery after Harriet had freed them.

11. What stopped Harriet saving more people from slavery?

The thing that stopped Harriet saving more people from slavery was the fact that many did not realise they were slaves.

12. How did Harriet continue to help people after the war?

Harriet continued to help people after the war by turning her home into a Home for Indigent and Aged Negroes.

13. Describe Harriet Tubman's character.

Pupil's own response based on her care, courage, lack of thought for her own safety, etc.