

“Myths Obscure Historic Role of Underground Railroad”

Materials

- Article: “Myths Obscure Historic Role of Underground Railroad,” *The Pantagraph*, July 26, 2009
- Primary Documents
 - Document A: “Kidnapper in Town,” *The Pantagraph*, March 24, 1862
 - Document B: “Republican Consistency,” *Illinois Statesman*, March 9, 1859
 - Document C: Photograph of a “token” from a postcard”
- Document D: Article: “History’s Tangled Threads,” *New York Times*, February 2, 2007
- Document E: Article: “Colony played anti-slavery role: Mt. Hope was a stop on the Underground Railroad,” *The Pantagraph*, February 24, 2002.
- Document F: Map of Illinois Underground Railroad (Historic Illinois)
- Student Handouts
 - Support/Refute Organizer
 - Proving statements as true/false using evidence
 - Myth/Fact Organizer

Procedure (1 class period, depending on use of extension activities)

- Students should read the article “Myths Obscure Historic Role of Underground Railroad” in preparation for the class.
 - Ask students to complete a myth vs. fact T-chart based on the text of the article.
- Distribute the documents as a combined packet and split the class into small groups of 4-5.
 - Assign each person to read his or her text thoroughly and reconvene as a small group.
 - After the documents have been read, complete the “Support/Refute” graphic organizer as a small group.
 - Students use evidence to support or refute the argumentative statement given in the middle column. Based on the evidence that they have found, then students expand and explain the significance of that evidence in the “so what?” column.
- Extension: After students have completed the “Support/Refute” organizer, have them answer the following writing prompt using their evidence.
 - Why was the Underground Railroad necessary in McLean County?

Standards

Illinois State Standards

- 16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.
- 18.C.3b Explain how diverse groups have contributed to U.S. social systems over time

NCSS (National Council for Social Studies)

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (Thematic Standard)

- Help learners analyze groups and evaluate the influences of institutions, people, events, and cultures in both historical and contemporary settings

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 – Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.9 – Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

NCHE Vital Themes & Narratives

- Values, beliefs, political ideas, and institutions
- Patterns of social and political interaction

Bibliography

- “Lincoln’s Springfield: The Underground Railroad” parts 1 and 2, by Richard E. Hart in *For the People: A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Spring 2006 and Summer 2006).

Additional Materials

- “Friends of Liberty on the Mackinaw” by Erastus Mahan in *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society*, vol. 1 1899, pp. 396-403.
- History of Mt. Hope
- “The Anti-Slavery Movement,” section in *The History of Livingston County*. (1878; reprint 1982)

Glossary

Marred - impair the appearance of; disfigure

Congeries – a collection of items or parts in one mass

Demonstrable - clearly evident; obvious

Explicating - to make plain or clear; explain; interpret.

Circuitous - roundabout; not direct

Extradition - the procedure by which a state or nation, upon receipt of a formal request by another state or nation, turns over to that second jurisdiction an individual charged with or convicted of a crime in that jurisdiction.

Excoriated - to scold, denounce or berate severely