

African American History 400+ years of Resistance, Resilience, Power, and Pride

Today you are going to become smarter about the history of Resistance, Revolt, and Abolition in the United States during the 1800s (Civil War Era) by analyzing the Crosswhite affair and the Underground Railroad.

Standards/SJ Standards

History Social Science Standards CA

5.4 Students understand the political, religious, social, and economic institutions that evolved in the colonial era.

6. Describe the introduction of slavery into America, the responses of slave families to their condition, the ongoing struggle between proponents and opponents of slavery, and the gradual institutionalization of slavery in the South.

Teaching Hard History Standards

Essential Knowledge 15

In every place and time, enslaved people sought freedom.

15.E Escape was difficult and rare, but some people managed to flee. Enslaved people who escaped were known as "fugitive slaves," and people chased after them, since there was often a cash reward for returning enslaved people who ran away.

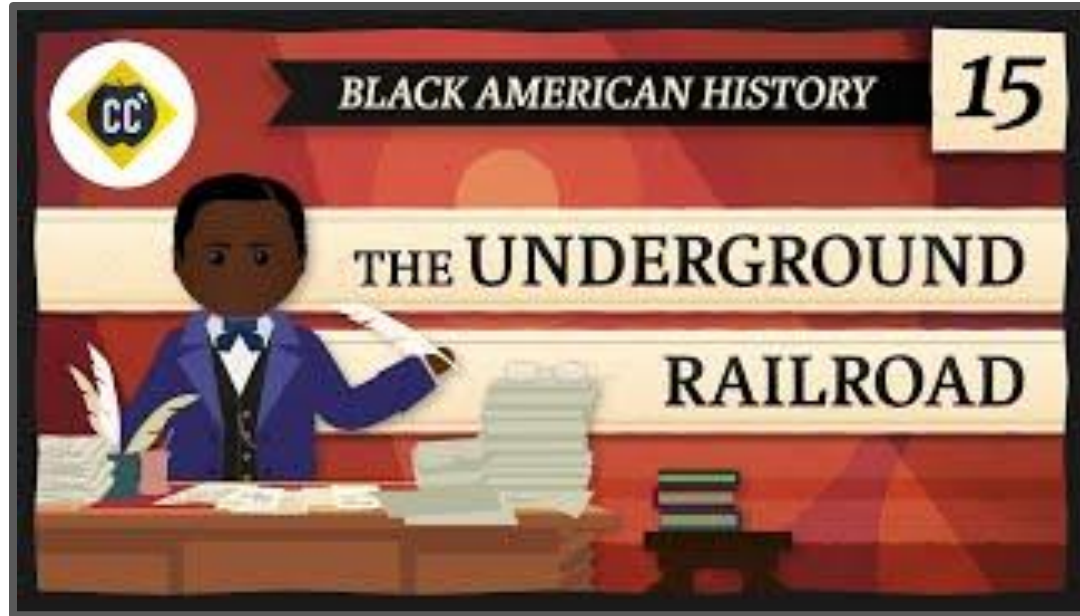
15.F Enslaved people pursued freedom in many ways other than escape, including saving money to buy their freedom and their relatives' freedom, and turning to the courts to seek freedom.

Social Justice Standards

13. Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
14. Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
15. Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.

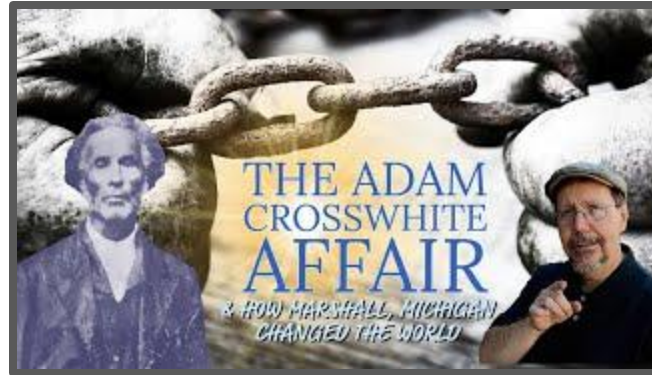
15.B Some enslaved people tried to rebel, but these actions were difficult and mostly unsuccessful because people in power wanted slavery to continue and had many more resources (including weapons) to put down rebellions.

The Underground Railroad: A Means of Resistance.



[Kiddle Article for student research](#)

Remember the Crosswhite Family?



[Article about the Cross Whites](#)

[Student Research-Kiddle Article on Adam Cross White](#)

A, E, I, O, U, 1, 2 Use this approach to help read words with multiple syllables.

- 1.
2. Place an X under each A, E, I, O, U
3. Count the letters between the X's
4. Split between:
(X and X) example: jo/vi/al
(X and 1) example: te/na/cious
(1 and 2) example: bal/lad

Do not separate blends or word groupings that need each other.
ous, qu, bi, cl, dr, pr, cial, tion

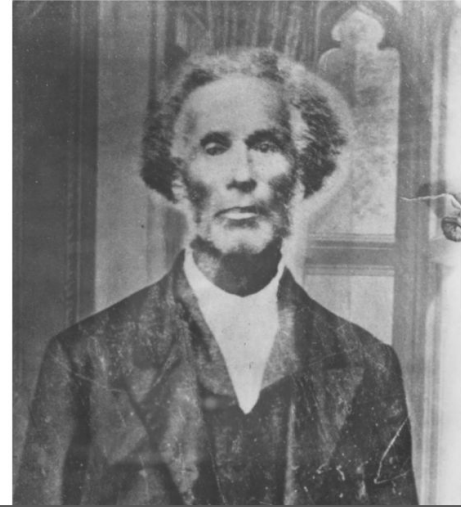
Network
Route
Conductor
Disguises

Adam Crosswhite

Adam Crosswhite and his family escaped from **slavery, a system by which a person is forced to work without pay and doesn't have freedom**, in Kentucky. They traveled north and settled near Marshall, Michigan. Adam feared that slave catchers from Kentucky might come to Michigan and take him and his family back. He asked his neighbors to help in case his family was in danger. He would signal to them by firing a single shot from a gun.

The Signal

One morning in 1847, the neighbors heard the signal and ran to his house. Four men from Kentucky were at the door. They had come to take the Crosswhite family back into slavery. A group of 100 community members, both black and white, gathered at the house. They distracted the Kentuckians while Adam, his wife and their four children escaped by train to Detroit and then to Canada.



Taken to Court

The men from Kentucky were angry. They took the people of Marshall to court. The Kentuckians said that the Crosswhites were their property, and that the people of Marshall stole their property from them. At the end of the the court case, the people from Marshall had to pay money to the **enslavers, people who enslave another person**, to make up for the lost property. The people of Marshall thought that the price was worth getting the Crosswhites safely into Canada.

In 1850, the United States passed the Fugitive Slave Act. It also allowed slave catchers to go to free states to kidnap people who had escaped from slavery. Many people in Michigan disagreed with this law, but they had to obey it. In 1855, Michigan made it harder for slave catchers to find people who escaped slavery in the state by passing a law that said state and local officials could not help slave catchers.

This story is adapted from an article in the Spring 2001 issue of The Mitten, a publication of the Michigan History Center.

The Underground Railroad

CATEGORIES

Defining Michigan

MICHIGAN HISTORY CENTER STAFF

Grades: 3-5

The Underground Railroad was not a real railroad. It was a network of people, both black and white, who helped **enslaved people, people forced to perform labor and services against their will**, escape from their **enslavers, people who enslave another person**. This network was called "Underground" because it was top secret, and "Railroad" because terms like "conductor" and "depot" were used as codes for helpers and safe places.

People who escape slavery were considered **fugitives**, because it was against the law to escape. Many fugitives went to the northern United States and Canada where they could be free. Many of the fugitives that came to Michigan were enslaved in Kentucky.

Escaping was dangerous. Fugitives were determined, cautious, and courageous. They knew that the punishment was harsh if they were caught. Many fugitives that were caught were whipped, beaten or even made to wear chains.

Traveling north was also very dangerous. Fugitives had to be careful not to be noticed, so many wore disguises. They traveled mostly by foot, but sometimes by horse, train or even fancy carriages.

Conductors on the Underground Railroad **helped them find routes and ways to escape to the north.**

The Underground Railroad

The **Underground Railroad** was a network of clandestine routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early- to the mid-19th century. It was used by [enslaved African Americans](#) primarily to escape into [free states](#) and Canada. The network was assisted by [abolitionists](#) and others sympathetic to the cause of the [escapees](#). The enslaved persons who risked escape and those who aided them are also collectively referred to as the "Underground Railroad". Various other routes led to Mexico, where slavery had been abolished, and to islands in the [Caribbean](#) that were not part of the slave trade. An earlier escape route running south toward [Florida](#), then a [Spanish](#) possession (except 1763–1783), existed from the late 17th century until approximately 1790. However, the network now generally known as the Underground Railroad began in the late 18th century. It ran north and grew steadily until the [Emancipation Proclamation](#) was signed by President [Abraham Lincoln](#). One estimate suggests that by 1850, approximately 100,000 enslaved people had escaped to freedom via the network.



Map of Underground Railroad routes to modern day Canada

Cloze Passage to Build Comprehension

Abolitionist/s Enslaved Fugitive

The U.S. Constitution of 1789 stated that freedom seekers had to be returned to their owners. Congress passed the _____ Slave Act of 1793 to enforce this part of the Constitution. The act allowed any slaveholder to capture a suspected freedom seeker and bring that person before a judge. They did not get a trial by jury. The judge decided whether the person was escaping slavery or not.

The act angered people who opposed slavery. Northern states voted to give some legal rights to freedom seekers _____ (people against slavery) formed a secret network called the Underground Railroad to help enslaved people escape to freedom.

Southern states soon demanded stronger laws to protect slavery. In 1850 Congress passed the second Fugitive Slave Act. The new act set severe penalties for anyone who helped an _____ person escape from slavery. It also gave people called special commissioners the power to order the return of freedom seekers to their owners. Freedom seekers had no voice in their own cases.

The main effect of this act was to strengthen the _____ movement. Eventually the disagreement over slavery led to the American Civil War. During the war, the government sometimes enforced the _____ Slave acts. In 1864 Congress finally did away with the acts.

1. Why is the Crosswhite's resistance historically important?
2. Why do you think they were successful?
3. If you could ask the Crosswhite family a question what would it be?
4. How did the Fugitive Slave Act connect to this event?

Fluency Practice Practice reading the text below with a partner. The goal is to read the text with 100% accuracy. The words in red are from the A, E, I, O, U, 1, 2 List.

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Writing Tips

Use the following tips to complete your writing using the texts and the videos. Remember to **include what you learned** about the topic. Also, **share your thinking about what you learned**.

Using the texts and videos, write about the Crosswhite family, and/or the Underground Railroad

- Write what you learned about (topic) from the examples, the reading and the videos.
- Write what you will do with what you have learned.
- What thoughts or questions do you have after today's lesson?

Writing Structure- summary sentences

Sentence starters-

Today I learned about...


One thing I connected with was ...

This helped me understand

An example of resistance was



Faith Ringgold



[Possible art lesson plan](#)

[Teaching resources](#)