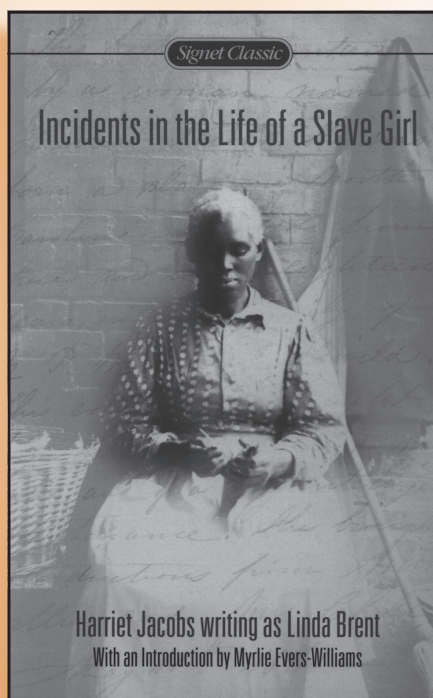




A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSICS EDITION OF

HARRIET JACOBS'S

# INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
List of Characters.....	5
Synopsis / Chapter Summaries.....	5
Teaching <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> .....	8
Pre-reading Activities .....	8
I. Building Background Knowledge .....	8
II. Genre Study.....	15
III. Initial Exploration of Themes.....	16
During Reading Activities.....	21
I. Noting Initial Reactions .....	21
II. Reader Response .....	21
III. Tracing Events and Character Development in the Narrative .....	23
IV. Discussion Questions .....	24
After Reading Activities .....	25
I. Deepening Understanding.....	25
II. Discussion Questions.....	26
III. Group and Individual Projects.....	28
IV. Extended Reading.....	30
Key Websites.....	35
References .....	35
Professional Resources.....	35
About the Author of this Guide .....	36
About the Editors of this Guide.....	36
Free Teacher's Guides .....	38
Click on a Classic.....	39

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## INTRODUCTION

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, written by Harriet Jacobs (1813-1897) using the pseudonym Linda Brent, is the most widely read female slave narrative in American history. In her account Jacobs appeals to readers as a woman and mother by detailing the sexual harassment and abuse she suffered as a female slave in Edenton, NC and her eventual escape. Ultimately her story is one of triumph and a testament to her spirit.

Overall, this is an important literary and primary source for young readers to better grasp the many facets of slavery, in particular the female slave experience. It contains many contradictions to the commonly held assumptions about slavery. Unlike many of her counterparts, Harriet was not beaten or physically abused. She learned to read and write and spent the first six years of her life unaware that she was a slave. Her family was very important to her and she maintained contact throughout her life with her maternal grandmother and other family members. What makes Jacobs's story even more extraordinary were the seven years she spent in hiding (1835 until 1842) and her successful escape to New York City. After escaping to New York City, Harriet experienced the anxiety of many escaped slaves living after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law as she is continually pursued by her former owner.

Jacobs's narrative is also an excellent resource for teachers in both language arts and social studies classrooms. Her text captures in vivid detail the experiences of slaves living in the antebellum South. She uncovers the cruelty of the institution of slavery and the manner in which it disrupted both black and white lives. Jacobs also points to the victimization female slaves frequently experienced at the hands of white masters. Her narrative can be used to teach students a greater understanding of the antebellum period, the experiences of slavery, and the struggles facing fugitive slaves in the North.

Jacobs's narrative involves complicated and adult themes about sexuality and gender that might be inappropriate for younger audiences. Although sexual encounters are alluded to rather than explicitly described, it is highly recommended that teachers pre-read the autobiography and perhaps select specific excerpts for students. This guide aims to assist teachers in planning to teach the narrative for both its literary elements and historical information. There are suggestions for preparing students to understand the historical context of the narrative as well as activities to introduce them to the main themes. During Reading activities are provided to facilitate critical reading of the text. Post-reading activities encourage students to explore the themes more fully and to engage in projects which will extend the ideas in the text. Teachers can select from among these activities to meet curriculum goals and to address the different learning styles of their students.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

Pseudonyms are used throughout the narrative. This List of Characters provides the names and a brief history of the real persons Harriet Jacobs describes in her narrative.

**Linda Brent**—Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897), born a slave in Edenton, NC, she eventually escaped to the North and gained her freedom. She wrote her autobiography using the pseudonym of Linda Brent in 1861; later she worked as a reformer and activist.

**Aunt Martha**—Molly Horniblow, Harriet's grandmother, made a living selling baked goods to black and white townspeople. She purchased the freedom of her son Phillip and eventually became free at the age of 50 due to the kindness of an elderly white woman.

**Uncle Phillip**—Mark Ramsey was Molly Horniblow's older son.

**Aunt Nancy**—Betty was Molly Horniblow's daughter.

**Uncle Benjamin**—Joseph was Molly Horniblow's younger son who escaped to Baltimore after one unsuccessful attempt.

**William**—John Jacobs, Harriet's brother, escaped from slavery when his master brought him North. He worked as a whaler in Boston, lectured for the abolitionist cause in Rochester, NY, and traveled to California to pan for gold.

**Elijah**—Daniel Jacobs, Harriet's father, was the slave of Andrew Knox and a skilled craftsman, who tried unsuccessfully to buy his family's freedom. He died in Harriet's youth.

**Delilah**—Harriet's mother and Molly Horniblow's daughter, was the slave of Margaret Horniblow. Upon Margaret's death, Harriet and her brother Phillip were moved into the household of the Norcoms, and the semblance of normal family life was destroyed.

**Miss Fanny**—Hannah Pritchard purchased Molly Horniblow's freedom for \$50. Later, Miss Fanny looked out for Harriet when she lived on James Norcom, Jr.'s plantation.

**Dr Flint**—Dr. James Norcom was Harriet's slave master. She entered his household when Harriet was willed to his step-daughter. According to Harriet he owned a residence in town, in addition to several farms, and about 50 slaves. He pursued Harriet, after she escaped, until his death.

**Mrs. Flint**—Mary Matilda Horniblow Norcom and wife of Dr. James Norcom, was unable to control her husband. Humiliated by his advances towards Harriet, she directed abuse at Harriet.

**Young Mr. Flint**—James Norcom, Jr.

**Miss Emily Flint, later Mrs. Dodge**—Dr. Norcom's daughter Mary Matilda Norcom, later Mrs. Daniel Messmore, traveled to New York with her husband, Messmore, to seize Harriet and her daughter, after her father's death.

**Mr. Sands**—Samuel Treadwell Sawyer was a white, unmarried lawyer and the father of Harriet's two children. He was later elected to the United States House of Representatives.

**Benny**—Joseph Jacobs (b. 1829) was Harriet's son with Sawyer.

**Ellen**—Louisa Matilda Jacobs (c.1833-1913) was Harriet's daughter with Sawyer.

**Mr. & Mrs. Hobbs**—James Iredell Tredwell and Mary Bonner Blount Tredwell are Sawyer's cousins.

**Mr. Thorne**—Joseph Blount was Mrs. Tredwell's brother.

**Mr. Bruce**—Nathaniel Parker Willis was the head of the family in which Harriet worked as a nursemaid.

**Mrs. Bruce**—Mary Stace Willis, Nathaniel Parker Willis's first wife, helped Harriet flee to Boston when Dr. Norcom arrived in New York; she died in 1845.

**Baby Mary**—Imogen Willis was Mary Stace Willis' daughter. Harriet worked as her nursemaid and later escorted her on a trip to England.

**The second Mrs. Bruce**—Cornelia Grinnell Willis was Nathaniel Parker Willis's second wife and employer and friend of Harriet. She arranged for the American Colonization Society to act as an intermediary and in early 1852 bought Jacobs from the Messmores (Dr. Norcom's daughter and her husband).

**Lydia Maria Child**—Child was the white abolitionist editor who helped Harriet publish her narrative in 1861.

## SYNOPSIS / CHAPTER SUMMARIES

### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY ADOLESCENCE: FACING HER SLAVE IDENTITY CHAPTERS 1-9

Upon her mother's death, when Harriet was only six years old, she was forced to begin her service as a slave. Her first mistress treated her kindly; however, the mistress's "one great wrong" occurred when, upon her death, she bequeathed Harriet to her five-year-old niece rather than freeing her. Harriet and her brother William are placed in the Flint household, along with their "Aunt Nancy."

Harriet describes the realities of life for slaves including "Hiring day" and the escape of her Uncle Benjamin from slavery. She suffers mental abuse and sexual harassment from Dr. Flint, and his wife directs her anger and frustration towards Harriet. Harriet's grandmother repeatedly tries to buy her freedom to rescue her from the situation.

Harriet meets and falls in love with a young black free man, who wishes to marry her. Dr. Flint refuses to consent to the marriage, and Harriet convinces her lover to leave the area and give up the dream of marriage.

Harriet describes the cruel punishment slaves endure at the hands of their owners or their owners' neighbors, showing that slavery ruins the lives of both slaves and also slave owners, their wives, and their children.

### EARLY ADULTHOOD: TAKING CONTROL OF HER DESTINY CHAPTERS 10-16

Harriet decides to give herself willingly to Mr. Sands, a wealthy white man, rather than unwillingly to her master. Dr. Flint is infuriated when he learns she is pregnant and Harriet's grandmother calls her a "disgrace." Harriet returns to her grandmother's house although Dr.

Flint vows that Harriet will always be his slave. Harriet gives birth to her son, Benny.

Harriet describes the effects of Nat Turner's rebellion on the lives of blacks (free and slave) living in Edenton. (Note: Nat Turner's rebellion occurred nearby in Southampton County, VA—about 60 miles north of Edenton). She also explains how the church is an important part of life for slaves. She tells of a minister who, shortly after Nat Turner's rebellion, preaches to slaves about their Christian ethical obligation to be obedient, hardworking, servants to their masters. Harriet remarks, "There is a great difference between Christianity and religion at the south." (p. 82)

At nineteen, Harriet has not returned to her Master's home since the birth of her first child. Still Dr. Flint continues to visit her and repeatedly renews his promise to never sell her or her children. Harriet has a daughter, Louisa, by Mr. Sands and has both of her children baptized.

Harriet goes to live at Dr. Flint's son's plantation where she works long hours and her daughter suffers from neglect. During this time, Harriet makes plans to escape.

## **ESCAPE & HIDING**

### **CHAPTERS 17-30**

Jacobs waits until late in the night, then she sneaks from the plantation house and flees into town. Dr. Flint flies into a rage and has her grandmother's house searched from top to bottom. A constable is set to watch at all times of day and a reward of \$300 is set for Harriet's return to Dr. Flint.

After a week, the search for Jacobs continues. Harriet's family members are afraid that she will be caught until a white neighbor offers to hide Harriet. Harriet spends the next several months locked in a small chamber above the woman's own bed chamber. To bring Harriet back, Dr. Flint has her brother William, her aunt, and her children thrown in jail. Eventually the family members are freed, and Dr. Flint takes a trip to New York to look for Harriet.

Upon Dr. Flint's return, Mr. Sands hires a slave trader to buy Harriet's children. Due to his weak finances, Dr. Flint can't refuse the offer and ultimately decides to sell Harriet's brother, William, and her two children to the trader for Mr. Sands.

The search for Harriet intensifies. Finally, she is taken from her hiding place and hidden in the swamp. Her next hiding place is the small open space hidden between the ceiling and roof of her grandmother's shed where she suffers from pest infestation, illness, and extreme heat.

At Christmas, Harriet is able to make some small gifts for her children. No good opportunity to escape presents itself, so Harriet is forced to remain hidden in her little room for another entire year. Harriet becomes very ill during the winter and her grandmother also takes sick, but eventually both women recover.

Dr. Flint tries unsuccessfully to disrupt Mr. Sands' election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Harriet risks everything by slipping into the storage room and calling out to Mr. Sands as he passes the house to beg him to free her children in case anything should happen to him during his travels.

Mr. Sands brings William along with him on a trip to Canada and is disappointed when

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the boy escapes. Mr. Sands returns from the North with a new wife. After meeting Benny and Ellen, Mrs. Sands and her sister wish to adopt them. Harriet's grandmother entreats Mr. Sands to free the children, but he replies that they are free. Ellen is sent to live with relatives of Mr. Sands in New York. Before Ellen leaves, Harriet insists that she spend at least a little time with her daughter.

Harriet's Aunt Nancy passes away, worn down from years of service to Mrs. Flint. Nancy's brother, Phillip, pays for the funeral—a privilege he had to request from Dr. Flint—and Nancy is buried with the rest of her family.

Jacobs spends seven years hidden in her tiny crawl space. By the end of this time the building is falling apart and she is often soaked by rain storms. Finally, her friend Peter plans for her to escape by ship. Harriet bids farewell to her family and endures a long journey by sea to Philadelphia. She is joined by another slave, Fanny. The ship's captain and crew turn out to be allies on the journey.

## **FREEDOM AND LIFE AS A FUGITIVE**

### **CHAPTERS 31-41**

Upon her arrival in Philadelphia, the Reverend Jeremiah Durham, an African American, shelters her. Some of the abolitionists in the city offer to pay Jacobs's way to New York, but she refuses, saying that she will rely on the money her grandmother gave her rather than charity.

Once in New York, Harriet finds her daughter, Ellen, who looks older and “neglected.” Mr. Sands has not emancipated Ellen as promised. Harriet writes to Dr. Flint offering to finally buy her freedom but is rejected.

Harriet secures employment as a nursemaid in the house of Mrs. Bruce, an English expatriate. Mrs. Bruce is very kind to Harriet and she begins to feel “more energetic and cheerful.” Harriet frequently visits her daughter, and her brother William visits Harriet and Ellen in New York City.

Warned that Dr. Flint is again heading north to find her, Harriet has her son Benny sent to her and they travel together to Boston. When Harriet knows that Flint has arrived back home, she returns to New York and Mrs. Bruce's employ leaving Benny in the care of William in Boston.

Harriet travels with the Bruce family to Albany and experiences severe prejudice from southern tourists and hotel staff. Harriet manages to win the ensuing battle of wills with resentful white servers and black servants.

Back in New York, Ellen warns Harriet that Dr. Flint knows of her whereabouts. Ellen travels with her mother to Boston where they are reunited with her brother. Harriet spends the winter with her children, sharing a house with an old friend.

In the spring, Harriet learns that Mrs. Bruce has passed away, and Mr. Bruce requests that Harriet accompany his daughter Mary to England to visit relatives. Harriet spends 10 months with Mary in England where for the first time she does not experience racial discrimination. She notes the “oppression of the poor” in England, but when she compares this oppression to the state of affairs for slave families, she judges the poor in England to be much better off.

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Upon her return from England, Jacobs learns that Benny is no longer apprenticed to a tradesman—his master and his fellow apprentices had discovered he was black. Harriet is saddened that Benny has decided to become a whaler like her brother.

William offers to send Ellen to boarding school. Before Ellen leaves, Harriet wants to tell her the truth about her father, but it turns out that Ellen already knows her history. While Ellen is away at school, Harriet and William attempt to run an anti-slavery reading room in Rochester, NY.

After the failure of their anti-slavery reading room, William decides to go west to California, and Benny goes with him. Ellen continues to do well at her school, and Harriet returns to New York as a nursemaid for the Bruce family. However, times are tense in the city as the Fugitive Slave Law goes into effect. Harriet learns that Dr. Flint has found out her whereabouts and plans to recapture her. Harriet flees to New England until she feels safe enough to return to New York.

At last, Harriet learns that Dr. Flint is dead and she is being pursued by his daughter and her new husband. Again, the second Mrs. Bruce protects her and finds Harriet a safe place to live. Ultimately, Mrs. Bruce purchases Harriet's freedom for \$300.

## TEACHING *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL*

### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

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These activities are designed to build students' background knowledge about slavery and its impact on blacks and whites as well as to introduce students to themes in Harriet Jacobs's autobiography and the impact of this genre. Choose the activities that best fit the themes you plan to teach or match your goals for students as they read the narrative. (Note: Consult other Teachers' Guides to Signet Classics; they contain pre-reading ideas that can be adapted to this text).

### I. BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

#### THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Students' reading of the novel will be enhanced if they review and build upon what they know about slavery and its impact in 19th century America. One way to prepare students to seek additional information about these topics is to begin by building a graphic organizer of what students already know. Here is a list of topics with key information that you might wish to explore with your students. Begin by putting the main topic in the center of a circle on the board. Brainstorm with your students what they know about the topic. List their ideas on lines coming out from the main circle. Then using available resources in your classroom or media center, ask the students to seek additional information on specific topics which they can then add to the graphic organizer. You may wish to transfer this information to a sheet of large newsprint to display throughout the reading of the text so students can add information to the chart. Throughout this guide is a list of web resources which you can provide to your students to focus their searches on the web.

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## Slavery

It is hard to underestimate the impact of slavery on American culture. Only twenty African slaves were brought to Jamestown colony in 1618 and by the eve of the Civil War in 1860 almost 4 million slaves lived in the southern United States. Harriet Jacobs's narrative is situated within the context of the steady expansion of slavery in the U.S. and its eventual abolition.

Although slavery grew slowly at first, slavery eventually expanded throughout all of the American colonies. Its presence was most obvious in the southern colonies, including Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, where cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, rice, and indigo became the major commodities.

For various reasons, slavery did not gain such a footing in the northern colonies. This was due in part to the economic and geographic differences of the northern colonies—the region was not suitable for the cultivation of labor intensive crops. Also, the predominance of religious groups such as the Quakers in Pennsylvania and Puritans in New England, may have contributed to the relative lack of slavery. By the start of the American Revolution 400,000 slaves were located in southern colonies, compared to 50,000 in northern colonies.

At the Constitutional Convention, slavery was hotly debated. Rather than settle the issue by abolishing slavery, the Founding Fathers agreed to the 3/5ths Compromise, allowing slave states to count a portion of their slave population for representation. Slavery continued to steadily expand in the southern United States after the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793. The value of cotton exports made up an increasingly larger share of the value of all U.S. exports throughout the 19th century.

## Slave Trade

Slaves brought to the Americas from Africa endured a harrowing journey referred to as the Middle Passage. Almost 20% of the captives died on the journey due to the horrendous conditions they endured. Most often slaves were first brought to the West Indies and then North America. In the United States the importation of slavery was banned in 1808. This did little to stop slavery from growing, however, as slaves were continually traded and many more were smuggled into the country. The population of slaves in America grew to around 2 million by 1830.

## Plantation Life

The majority of slaves lived on large plantations and most (80-90%) worked in the fields. At the same time, only a small minority of southern planters owned 20 or more slaves. In the South wealth was consolidated in the hands of a small minority of white plantation owners.

Cotton cultivation was back-breaking work. Slaves had to endure long hours of work in hot temperatures, often expected to pick 150-200 pounds of cotton per day. Slaves were induced to work frequently through the use of draconian punishments, especially whipping. Slave traders frequently tore slave families apart and slaves had to endure the humiliation of public auctions. Female slaves frequently suffered sexual abuse. Slaves were not allowed to marry, attend separate church services, learn to read and write, or own property.

## Slave Resistance

Slaves managed to retain some aspects of their culture despite the horrific situations in which they lived. Music, crafts, storytelling, and familial allegiances endured. Slaves also

resisted their position of subservience more openly. Some slaves engaged in workplace sabotage—destroying tools, freeing livestock, staging work slowdowns, and faking illness. Some slaves pushed their resistance in open rebellion, including the Stono Rebellion (1739) and Nat Turner's rebellion (1831). Many more escaped or attempted escape by running away to Free states in the North. The Underground Railroad was a loose network of escape routes and safe houses used to ferry slaves out of bondage.

### **Abolition Movement**

Both African Americans and whites publicly criticized slavery in the U.S. The abolition movement grew increasingly organized and active in the 1800s. Some of the most well-known abolitionists include William Lloyd Garrison, David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Sara and Angela Grimke, and Lucretia Mott. They were joined by throngs of men and women, religious groups, and social activists in their call for the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of slaves.

### **Fugitive Slave Act/Law**

As the institution of slavery grew, harsh slave codes were enacted and refined throughout the South. These codes restricted slave activities and meted out strict punishments, often whipping. Attempting to shore up slavery and in response to congressional limits on slavery in new territories, southern legislators fought for the inclusion of the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850. Under the law, alleged fugitives would be returned to slavery on the basis of a statement by the slave owner. They were not allowed to a trial by jury, the right to counsel, or to testify on their own behalf. At the same time, anyone who harbored a fugitive faced harsh punishments and fines.

### **ANTICIPATION GUIDE**

Another way to activate students' background knowledge is through questioning. Have students fill out the anticipation guide before reading the narrative. Have them discuss their initial responses with the whole class. Then after reading the narrative, have students discuss their responses as before, noticing any changes in their thinking.

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## ANTICIPATION GUIDE

PRE	POST	
1		A slave's life could be pleasant if he or she had a kindly master.
2		For some slaves, living conditions were good, and they preferred being a slave to having freedom.
3		House slaves had better lives than slaves who were forced to work in the fields.
4		Women slaves had better lives than male slaves.
5		White slave owners treated their household slaves like servants and respected their dignity.
6		A person could have white skin and still be regarded as a black slave.
7		A slave owner could be considered a good Christian and still have children with a slave woman.
8		The wives of slave owners accepted that their husbands would have sexual relations with women slaves they owned, if the women could have healthy babies.
9		Babies who were the children of a slave and her master were adopted by the slave owner or given the owner's last name.
10		For a slave it was better to surrender to her master than to resist and fight for her personal dignity.
11		Children who were born into slavery were allowed to stay under the same household as the mother.
12		Children born into slavery were not sold until after their 13th year.
13		It was impossible to retain one's personal dignity and still be a slave.
14		Slaves who escaped to the North were granted freedom.
15		Most white Americans supported the institution of slavery prior to the Civil War.

## HARRIET JACOBS'S BIOGRAPHY

Since *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is written as an autobiography, students will need to consider its authenticity and the reliability of Jacobs as the narrator of the story of her own life. Therefore, you may want students to have in mind an outline of Jacobs's life before they begin to read the narrative. The Introduction to the Signet Classics edition provides a short biography of Jacobs's life by Myrlie Evers-Williams. The definitive biography is *Harriet Jacobs: A Life* (Basic Civitas Books, 2004) by Jean Fagan Yellin.

Excellent biographical resources are available on the Web at the following sites:

Armistead Lemon. Summary: Harriet A Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Retrieved 5/28/2008 from <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/summary.html>.

William L. Andrews. Harriet A. Jacobs: A Biography. Retrieved 5/28/2008 from <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/bio.html>

Biography of Harriet Jacobs from PBS. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2923.html>

A related website on the slave experience is available at: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/gender/spotlight.html>

Assign students to read one of the web sites, the Introduction to *Incidents*, or a chapter in the Yellin biography. Ask students to create a chart listing five central events in Jacobs's life. Students who read individual chapters in the book-length biography can provide significant details about the central events highlighted by the other students. As a class compare the charts of "central events" and discuss why there are similarities or differences in the charts. Discuss: Are there events in Jacobs's life that she would find too difficult or private to share in an autobiography? Are there events she would want to emphasize? Why?

The following brief biography lists key events in Jacobs's life:

Harriet Jacobs was born in Edenton, NC in 1813. She was the daughter of Delilah, the slave of Margaret Horniblow, and Daniel Jacobs, the slave of Andrew Knox. For the first six years of her life Harriet did not know she was a slave but, when her mother died, Harriet was sent to her mistress' house. Margaret Horniblow was a relatively kind slave owner. She taught Harriet to read and write and treated her like a child. Upon her death Margaret bequeathed Harriet to her three year old niece, Mary Matilda Norcom. At the age of 11 Harriet fell under the direct control of Mary's father, Dr. James Norcom, a family physician in Edenton.

Throughout her teen years Harriet endured incessant sexual harassment from Norcom and found few allies to resist him. His wife directed her anger towards Harriet, and Harriet's grandmother, Molly Horniblow, could do little to shelter her or commiserate. Desperate to avoid becoming Norcom's mistress, Harriet entered a romantic relationship with a local lawyer, Samuel Tredwell Sawyer. Her relationship with Sawyer was flattering and, perhaps, strategic—he came from a wealthy family that wielded more power in the community than Norcom. Harriet gave birth to two children with Sawyer, Joseph and Louisa. Hoping to induce

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Norcom to sell her children to Sawyer, Harriet hid in her grandmother's narrow attic for seven years. Although he was able to buy the children from Norcom, Sawyer did not emancipate the children as Harriet wished. Instead, he sent Louisa to work as a house maid in New York City.

In 1842 Harriet escaped to the North by boat. After her escape Harriet led a tense and uncertain life as a fugitive slave. Eventually she secured employment as a seamstress and was able to reunite with her children in Boston. They lived together only briefly because Norcom continually pursued Harriet, forcing her to remain mobile. Finally in 1852 her friend and employer, Cornelia Grinnell Willis, bought her from Norcom's heirs and freed Harriet.

Harriet began to write publicly about her experiences as a slave in an article published in the *New York Tribune* in 1853. Lydia Maria Child, a prominent white abolitionist writer, edited Harriet's manuscript and helped her publish it in Boston. Praised by critics in the U.S. and Britain, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* addressed the unique issues facing female slaves.

Although Harriet's narrative ends before the Civil War, her story continued. Throughout the Civil War and after, Harriet and her daughter, Louisa, provided charitable services to freed slaves. It was this work that brought Harriet back to Edenton in 1867. Later she and her daughter established an orphan asylum and school in Savannah, GA. Eventually, having to flee racist violence in the South, they returned to Boston where they opened a boarding house in 1870. Little is known about the last decade of her life; by the late 1880s Harriet resettled in D.C. and died there in 1897.

*Incidents* was never reprinted in Harriet's lifetime. In 1973 it was finally reprinted but largely suspected to be a fictionalized account of the slave experience. In 1987 Jean Fagan Yellin's edition of *Incidents* established the veracity of her narrative and put to rest concerns that it was largely written by Child.

## VISUALIZING THE SETTING

### Edenton, NC

Edenton is located in northeastern North Carolina along the Albemarle Sound. Edenton was an important port during the American colonial period and the colonial capital. In 1774 it became the site of the Edenton Tea Party when fifty-one women gathered to protest British taxation on tea. Although it experienced severe depression during the War of 1812, it eventually reemerged as a thriving port. Plantations owners used the port to export cotton and import goods from the North and abroad.

An historic marker has been erected in Edenton to commemorate Harriet Jacobs. It reads: "Harriet Jacobs. c. 1813-1897. Fugitive slave, writer, & abolitionist. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) depicts her early life. Lived in Edenton." You can access an image of the marker at: <http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMT19>.

Use this marker to introduce students to Harriet Jacobs and to make predictions about her narrative. Discuss: What do the descriptors say about Jacobs? What is left out about

her life? Why? Encourage students to critically analyze the language/word choice used to describe her on this marker.

### Map Study

Provide students with a map of North Carolina to identify Edenton and to speculate about life there in the 19th century based on its location. If you have access to the Internet, you can provide students with a 19th century map of North Carolina at the following site: [http://www.cummingmapsociety.org/19thC\\_Maps.htm](http://www.cummingmapsociety.org/19thC_Maps.htm)

The University of North Carolina library offers an extensive collection of maps which students can explore. The web site is <http://www.lib.unc.edu/maps/>

## USING ART TO INTRODUCE TIME & PLACE

### Runaway Slaves

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000), a highly talented African American painter, captured the struggle for freedom and justice in America from the Civil War period of the 1860s through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Among his work, he created a series of paintings depicting Harriet Tubman and another depicting Frederick Douglass (both are housed at the Hampton University Art Museum, Hampton, VA). Among other themes, he captured the danger of escape for runaway slaves and a sense of pride and resilience on the part of African Americans. You can view one of these paintings, *Forward* (1967), at [http://www.ncmoa.org/collections/highlights/20thcentury/20th/1950-2000/034\\_lrg.shtml](http://www.ncmoa.org/collections/highlights/20thcentury/20th/1950-2000/034_lrg.shtml). Here Lawrence dramatizes Harriet Tubman's efforts to rescue slaves. In this painting she ushers a small group of runaways.

Use this image to focus student interest on *Incidents* and its major theme of escape and freedom. Ask students to journal about their reactions to the painting and the choices the artist made to depict the persons and to tell the story of the event. They can share their journal responses with a partner before the whole class discussion about the feelings generated by the painting. Ask students to talk about how they might depict freedom, escape, and slavery visually and then have students create their own visuals, using any media that is readily available in your classroom, such as collage, paint, colored pencils.

## MAKING PREDICTIONS

### A) Book Walk: Previewing the Text

Help your students get acquainted with the text. Have students browse the title page, introduction, and table of contents. It might be intimidating to some readers because it has over 40 chapters. Show students that the chapters are often short and based on specific events. Ask students to begin to make predictions about the text and the story they will read based on their examination of the Table of Contents. Ask them to predict the parts of Jacobs's life that will be covered in the autobiography.

### B) Examining the Title Page as a Primary Source

Analyzing the title page to *Incidents* can be a powerful pre-reading activity and provide students with a better understanding of primary sources. For this activity use the SCIM-C strategy. Individually, with partners, or as a whole class, ask students to answer a series of prompts as they read the title page. They will summarize the information they find, draw inferences, and check the accuracy of their inferences. (Note: if this activity is done

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individually or as partners, the teacher should provide students with reference texts—textbooks, Internet access, encyclopedia, non-fiction texts, to check their inferences and predictions.)

A copy of the original title page is provided in the Signet Classics edition of the text immediately preceding the preface. You can also find a digitized version at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/title.html>.

1. S—Summary: What type of historical document is the source? What specific information, details, and/or perspectives does the source provide? What are the subject, audience, and/or purpose of the source? What does the source directly tell us?
2. C—Context: Who produced the source? When, why, and where was the source produced? What was happening locally and globally at the time the source was produced? What summarizing information can place the source in time, space, and place?
3. I—Inference: What is suggested by the source? What conclusions may be drawn from the source? What biases are indicated in the source? What contextualizing information, while not directly evident, may be suggested from the source?
4. M—Monitor: What is missing from the source in terms of evidence that is needed to answer the guiding historical question? What ideas, images, or terms need further defining from the source in order to understand the context or period in which the source was created? How reliable is the source for its intended purpose in answering the historical question? What questions from the previous stages need to be revisited in order to analyze the source satisfactorily?
5. C—Corroborate: What similarities and differences exist between the sources? What factors could account for the similarities and differences? What gaps appear to exist that hinder the final interpretation of the source? What other sources are available that could check, confirm, or oppose the evidence currently marshaled?

—Adapted from Doolittle, Hicks, & Ewing, 2004

Note: You can download a SCIM-C strategy worksheet at [http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/tps/step1/workshop/2/m\\_a/psi/documents/lesson16/16\\_SCIM.pdf](http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/tps/step1/workshop/2/m_a/psi/documents/lesson16/16_SCIM.pdf); more details about using this strategy with *Incidents* can be found in Bolick, C.M. & McGlinn, M. (2004). Harriet Jacobs: Using on-line slave narratives in the classroom. *Social Education*, 68 (4), 198-202.

## II. GENRE STUDY

### PSEUDONYMS OR PEN NAMES

Nowhere in Harriet's narrative does she disclose her identity or those who shared in her story. Instead she wrote under an assumed name, Linda Brent, and used pseudonyms to refer to important people and places in her story. Although she insists in the preface, "I had no motive for secrecy on my own account," she nonetheless felt it important to shield herself.

Discuss as a class the advantages and disadvantages of using a pen name. Compare Harriet's use of a pseudonym to other famous authors with whom students may be familiar: such as George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), or O. Henry (William Sydney Porter).

Invite students to provide examples from popular culture of the practice of actors and artists using stage names. In what ways is this practice comparable to Harriet's desire to protect herself or the people she describes?

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHY VS. BIOGRAPHY**

As a literary genre, autobiography—narrating one's own life—is a variation of biography—a form of writing that describes the life of a particular individual. Both are intended to be considered as non-fiction. Autobiography tends to be introspective in nature as the author pieces together memories to form a complete narrative. Autobiography can take the form of a diary, journal, letters, or memoir. Biography is written from the perspective of an outside observer and often based on a variety of evidence. In modern times, documentary films are popular forms of biography.

It is important for students to understand that Harriet's narrative can be characterized as a primary source. Unlike secondary sources, such as a textbook or monograph, Harriet's narrative provides a first hand account of her experiences as a slave. Her account adds to the historical record, and it is because of this account that historians can write histories of the time period. In order to help students better understand what a primary source is, and to distinguish between autobiographies and biographies, have them complete the following activity.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Students bring in several primary sources from their own histories. This could include diaries, letters, reports, photographs, creative works, records, memos, and newspaper articles. Make sure students know they will be sharing their primary sources with a classmate.
2. In the classroom have students write an autobiography of their life based on the primary sources they brought with them.
3. Next have students share their primary sources with a partner.
4. After their show-tell, have the partners write a *biography* based on the classmates' primary sources.
5. Ask students to compare the autobiography they wrote to the biography their classmates wrote.
6. Use this activity to spark discussion not only about primary sources but also the differences between autobiographies and biographies.

### **III. INITIAL EXPLORATION OF THEMES**

Prepare students to attend to some of the key themes in Jacobs's autobiography, before they begin to read, by engaging them in one or more of the following activities and discussions.

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## RESISTANCE, SELF PRESERVATION, AND SURVIVAL EXPRESSION THROUGH SONG

Harriet writes that it wasn't until the age of 6 that she realized that she was a slave. Her growing awareness of her position as a slave and her eventual resistance to this identity form the bulk of the story. Harriet's history parallels the slave experience which is described in slave songs and spirituals. Have students examine slave songs at several web sites, looking for this theme of resistance. Ask students to collect passages that indicate slaves' resistance to share with the whole class.

Discuss: How did slaves resist the imposition of the role of slave from their white masters? What resources did slaves call upon in order to maintain their resistance? What do these songs tell us about the human spirit?

These web sites include the words of the songs and performances of selected songs:

<http://www.negrospirituais.com/news-song/index.htm>

<http://www.africanamericanspirituals.com/>

## RESISTANCE THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Students may be familiar with the historical experiences of other groups who have survived and resisted the racially inferior roles imposed on them by others, such as American Indians in the 19th century, European Jews during World War II, and U.S. Japanese citizens who endured internment. Divide your class into small groups to do background reading on the history of each of these groups and African Americans in order to create a visual scrapbook of images which portray each group. Ask students to focus on the theme of resistance in their research and their selection of images. Students can use history textbooks which record the histories of these groups and web resources.

You can direct students to the following web sites to begin their search:

### Native Americans

- **Digital History Site**  
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/native\\_voices/nav2.html](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/native_voices/nav2.html)
- **Library of Congress's American Memory Collection, search "Native Americans"**  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>
- **NativeWeb**  
[http://www.nativeweb.org/resources/history/united\\_states/](http://www.nativeweb.org/resources/history/united_states/)
- **Ojibway History Text**  
<http://www.turtle-island.com/historytext.html>

### Japanese Internment

- **Telling their Stories (The Urban School of San Francisco)**  
<http://www.tellingstories.org/>

## Holocaust

- **The Holocaust History Project:**  
<http://www.holocaust-history.org/>
- **Holocaust Memorial Museum:**  
<http://www.ushmm.org/>  
(see also “Rescue and Resistance at: [http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/#rescue\\_resistance](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/#rescue_resistance))

## COLOR AND IDENTITY

Color and identity are at the heart of Harriet’s narrative and, some might argue, the experiences of every American. Her narrative complicates our conceptions of race because she and her children could pass as whites. The PBS series, *Race: The Power of an Illusion* helps students reflect on their assumptions and misconceptions about race. Have students explore various aspects of the site by providing a hotlist of links and discussion questions.

Suggestions include:

“Is Race for Real” [http://www.pbs.org/race/001\\_WhatIsRace/001\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/001_WhatIsRace/001_00-home.htm) — provides background knowledge about the origins of modern definitions of race and clarifies common misconceptions about race.

“Sorting People” [http://www.pbs.org/race/002\\_SortingPeople/002\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/002_SortingPeople/002_00-home.htm) —provides a sorting activity that demonstrates how difficult it is to sort people based on their appearance.

“Race Timeline” [http://www.pbs.org/race/003\\_RaceTimeline/003\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/003_RaceTimeline/003_00-home.htm)— is an interactive timeline tracing changing American ideas about race.

“Me, My Race, & I” [http://www.pbs.org/race/005\\_MeMyRaceAndI/005\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/005_MeMyRaceAndI/005_00-home.htm)—is a narrated slide shows exploring various experiences with race.

Class discussion: How does an understanding of race as a social construct (created by racial prejudice rather than scientific evidence) impact our understandings of racial difference?

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

Harriet describes both white enemies and allies in her story. She is helped by activists in the abolition movement and eventually joins their cause. Help students to consider that slavery was the law of the land and individuals could be jailed and tried for aiding slaves to escape or for failing to disclose their whereabouts. Ask students to brainstorm any contemporary situations in which individuals may need to follow their own sense of morality over the legislated law. Some contemporary examples are laws that permit wiretapping of citizens without cause and anti-immigration laws. Students could choose one of these topics and read a series of newspaper articles on the issue from several different sources. Then students could create Pro and Con arguments to support or defy the law. After this presentation, discuss with students how an individual is justified in taking a stand that is counter to the law.

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## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Explore the idea of civil disobedience in Henry David Thoreau's essay, "Civil Disobedience" and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Both of these documents are readily available in textbooks and on the Internet. Divide the class in half, having each group read a different document. Ask the students to make a list of the arguments put forth by Thoreau and King for civil disobedience. Discuss as a group: What is the strongest argument posed by each of these writers? What is the weakest? Do you agree or disagree with their thinking? How is society improved when citizens continually test limits to rights and freedoms?

## "JUST" VS. "UNJUST" LAWS

Explore the idea that a law can be unjust and therefore must be challenged. King provides an excellent definition in his "Letter..." Ask students to take King's definition of a just law and apply it to several recent rulings of the Supreme Court that they find discussed in recent news. Do these decisions stand the test for a just law? Why or Why not?

## HISTORIC CRITICISM OF SLAVERY

Read Angelina Grimke's appeal calling on women of the South to rise up against slavery, "An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South." When it was published in 1836, it was burned in public in South Carolina and she was threatened with arrest if she ever returned home to Charleston. (<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/abolitn/abesaecat.html>)

Grimke outlines the arguments that were used to support slavery, particularly arguments based on biblical authority. Ask students to consider Grimke's appeal as an argumentative essay by asking them to list the arguments for slavery and how Grimke refutes these arguments. What is her most compelling argument against slavery?

## FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Harriet is supported throughout her hardships as a slave by members of her family. Her grandmother is an especially powerful force in her life. Have the students read Harriet's brief description of her grandmother's actions on behalf of her children and grandchildren (pp. 2-3) and the passage describing the grandmother's emancipation (pp. 8-9). Ask students to think about a member of their family or caretaker who is or was a source of strength for them. Have the students write in their journals about that person describing their physical appearance, character traits, and actions. Students can then share their writing in pairs or volunteer to read what they have written to the whole class.

Following this activity, students can be given time to write letters or email to a family member or friend describing how they feel about the person.

Read to the students the first chapter of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (1969, Random House). This chapter describes Maya Angelou's grandmother, Annie Henderson, who takes Maya and her brother in after their parents' divorce. Lead a discussion about how Annie is a source of strength and support for the children and ask students to reflect on the sources of support in their lives.

Nikki Giovanni has collected tributes to mothers and grandmothers in a collection

published in 1994, *Grandmothers: Poems, Reminiscences, and Short Stories about the Keepers of our Traditions* (New York: Holt). You can see a preview of the book at <http://books.google.com> where you will find a poem by Gwendolyn Brooks, "My Grandmother is Waiting for Me to Come Home," and essays by Virginia Fowler, Susan Power, Sharon Dilworth, and Erin Khue Ninh. Select one or more of these pieces for students to read and discuss. Then ask students to write a poem or character sketch about a grandparent or other family member. They should begin by brainstorming memories about the person with specific details on a graphic organizer. Students should share their visuals with a partner, adding more details as they talk about the person. As a closure activity students can craft "Bio poems" or short sketches of this individual, using the samples which they have read as models. Alternately students could bring in a picture of a grandparent or family member that they wish to describe. Using the pictures, students should describe the physical traits of the person in detail and then tell one memory they have of this person that reveals his/her character or approach to life.

## **SEXUAL POLITICS**

Jacobs's narrative presents intriguing questions about her struggle with her master, Dr. Flint, and her resistance to his advances. Discussion of Harriet's situation may be more comprehensible if students are aware of the situation of women in the late 19th century.

Read two short stories from the turn of the century to get a picture of the roles of women in marriage at this time: "The Story of an Hour" written by Kate Chopin (1894), available at <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/hour/> and "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1899) available at: <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/wallpaper.html>.

Discuss: What do these stories show about the married relationship of men and women in the late 19th century? How does Mrs. Mallard expect her life to change when she thinks her husband has died? Why is she joyous at this prospect? What does the language the husband uses in "The Yellow Wallpaper" when speaking to his wife show about how he thinks about her? Notice that the women in these stories "escape" through death or madness. What does this say about the authors' ideas about women's choices at this time?

## **THE CULT OF DOMESTICITY OR CULT OF TRUE WOMANHOOD**

During the nineteenth century, in Great Britain and the United States, women, particularly upper and middle class women, were taught that they should take on the role of loving wife and nurturing mother within the domestic sphere. They were supposed to embody certain virtues of piety, purity, and obedience to the will of their fathers and husbands. Ask students to do a web search on the "cult of true womanhood" in order to understand its delineation of the role of women. Then discuss as a class:

1. How would this "cult" affect the way in which southern women saw themselves?
  2. How would a southern woman deal with her husband's sexual advances to slave women living in the household?
  3. Did this "cult" impact working class women or slaves? Why or why not?
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## DURING READING ACTIVITIES

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The following Reader Response prompts, discussion questions, and activities will engage students in tracing themes and enable them to deepen their critical thinking about Jacobs's autobiography.

### I. NOTING INITIAL REACTIONS

#### **Sticky note summaries**

As students are reading, it is helpful for them to jot down notes and questions on sticky notes which they can later refer to in class discussions and other activities. The teacher might request students use an alternate color post-it to write chapter summaries.

### II. READER RESPONSE

Students can respond to selected quotes from the text. Quotes can be used for free writing, journal entries or discussion starters. The following quotations may lead to rich responses:

"I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away" (Ch. 1, p. 1).

"Mrs. Flint, like so many southern women, was totally deficient in energy. She had not strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit in her easy chair and see a woman whipped, till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash" (Ch. 2, p. 9).

"O, you happy free women, contrast your New Year's day with that of the poor bond-woman!" (Ch. 3, p. 13).

"Forgive me for what mother? For not letting him treat me like a dog? No! I will never humble myself to him. I have worked with him for nothing all of my life, and I am repaid with stripes and imprisonment. Here I will stay till I die, or till he sells me" (Ch. 4, p. 21).

"He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof as him" (Ch. 5, p. 27).

"The secrets of slavery are concealed like those of the Inquisition. My master was, to my knowledge, the father of eleven slaves. But did the mothers dare to tell who was the father of their children? Did the other slaves dare to allude to it, except in whispers among themselves? No indeed! They knew too well the consequences" (Ch. 6, p. 35).

"Yet few slaveholders seem to be aware of the widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system" (Ch. 9, p. 56).

"I thought I should be happy in my triumph over him. But now that the truth was out, and my relatives would hear of it, I felt wretched. Humble as were their circumstances, they had pride in my good character. Now, how could I look at them in the face? My self-respect was gone!" (Ch. 10, p. 61).

"At the south, a gentleman may have a shoal of colored children without any

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disgrace; but if he is known to purchase them, with the view of setting them free, the example is thought to be dangerous to their 'particular institution,' and he becomes unpopular" (Ch. 34, p. 195).

"There is a great difference between Christianity and religion at the south" (Ch. 13, p. 82).

Harriet said, "I like a straightforward course, and am always reluctant to resort to subterfuges. So far as my ways have been crooked, I charge them all upon slavery. It was that system of violence and wrong which now left me no alternative but to enact a falsehood" (Ch. 32, p. 187-188).

"O, the hypocrisy of slaveholders! Did the old fox [Dr Flint] suppose I was goose enough to go into such a stupid trap? Verily, he relied too much on 'the stupidity of the African race'" (Ch. 34, p. 195).

"She [Mrs. Bruce] told me she was an English woman, and that was a pleasant circumstance to me, because I had heard they had less prejudice against color than Americans entertained" (Ch. 33, p. 190).

"I longed for some one to confide it [that Harriet was a fugitive slave]; but I had been so deceived by white people, that I had lost all confidence in them" (Ch. 33, p. 190).

"My answer was that the colored servants ought to be dissatisfied with themselves, for not having too much self-respect too submit to such treatment; that there was no difference in the price of board for colored and white servants, and there was no justification for difference of treatment" (Ch. 35, p. 199).

"Let every colored man and woman do this, and eventually we shall cease to be trampled under foot by our oppressors" (Ch. 35, p. 199).

"Again I was to be torn from a comfortable home, and all my plans for the welfare of my children were to be frustrated by that demon Slavery!" (Ch. 36, p. 203).

"She [Ellen] was mine by birth, and she was also mine by Southern law, since my grandmother held the bill of slave that made her so. I did not feel that she was safe unless I had her with me" (Ch. 36, p. 203).

"For the first time in my life I was in a place where I was treated according to my deportment, without reference to my complexion. I felt as if a great millstone had been lifted from my breast" (Ch. 37, p. 206).

"During all that time [in England], I never saw the slightest symptom of prejudice against color" (Ch. 37, p. 208).

"He [Benny] was liked by the master, and was a favorite with his fellow-apprentices; but one day they accidentally discovered a fact they had never before suspected—that he was colored! This at once transformed him into a different being" (Ch. 38, p. 209).

"I knew the law would decide that I was his [Dr. Flint] property, and would probably still give his daughter a claim to my children; but I regarded such law as the regulations of robbers, who had no rights that I was bound to respect" (Ch. 38, p. 211).

"I know all about it mother', she [Ellen] replied. 'I am nothing to my father, and he is nothing to me. All my love is for you. I was with him five months in Washington, and he

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never cared for me. He never spoke to me as he did to his little Fanny,” (Ch. 39, p. 212).

“The slave Hamlin, the first fugitive that came under the new law, was given up by the bloodhounds of the north to the bloodhounds of the south. It was the beginning of a reign of terror to the colored population. The great city rushed on in its whirl of excitement, taking no note of the ‘short and simple annals of the poor.’ But while fashionables were listening to the thrilling voice of Jenny Lind in Metropolitan Hall, the thrilling voices of poor hunted colored people went up, in an agony of supplication, to the lord from Zion’s church” (Ch. 40, p. 214).

“I dreaded the approach of summer, when snakes and slaveholders make their appearance. I was, in fact, a slave in New York, as subject to slave laws as I had been in a Slave State. Strange incongruity in a State called free!” (Ch. 40, p. 218).

“I well know the value of that bit of paper; but as much as I love my freedom, I do not like to look upon it. I am deeply grateful to the generous friend who procured it, but I despise the miscreant who demanded payment for what never rightfully belonged to him or his” (Ch. 41, p. 226).

### III. TRACING EVENTS AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE NARRATIVE

#### Bulletin Board

In order to trace their growing understanding of Harriet’s life and circumstances, have students, as a group project, create a bulletin board related to Harriet’s life and the historical context in which she lived. Ask students to add to the bulletin board throughout their reading of the narrative by creating their own drawings, collecting images, and using symbols to represent the various events, places, and people in Harriet’s narrative.

#### Creating a Timeline

1. Have students first create a timeline in which they post the chronology of Harriet’s narrative. The whole class could use a large sheet of newsprint paper or assign students to create timeline entries on specific/dates using construction paper or word processing software.

Dates which could be included on the timeline of Harriet’s life:

1813	Born
1819	mother died
1825	bequeathed to Flint’s daughter
1835-1842	Hiding
1842	Escape
1861	Wrote narrative
1897	Died

2. Next, have students superimpose the larger historic context of U.S. History.

Discuss: What are key events during the years of Jacobs’s life, 1813-1897? In what ways is her life story parallel to the story of the U.S. during these years?

#### Mapping Harriet’s Travels

Harriet describes her travels to many places and in each instance she experiences different levels of prejudice and friendship. Provide students with a blank map of the United States.

Have them map-out Harriet's travels by noting the date next to each point on the map. Students may also want to use different colors of ink to plot the path of Harriet's brother and children.

## **IV. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

### **CHILDHOOD AND EARLY ADOLESCENCE: FACING HER SLAVE IDENTITY CHAPTERS 1-9**

1. What were Harriet's feelings about her life before she was six years old and after?
2. What might have motivated Harriet's mistress to bequeathing Harriet as a slave to her five-year-old niece?
3. What might be some of the reasons that Dr. Flint was so attracted to Harriet?
4. What kind of woman is Harriet's grandmother and what effect does she have on the family?
5. What effect does slavery have on the lives of the slave holders and why?

### **EARLY ADULTHOOD: TAKING CONTROL OF HER DESTINY CHAPTERS 10-16**

1. Why does Harriet have a sexual relationship with Mr. Sands and not have a relationship with the freed slave whom she loves?
2. Do you think that Harriet's grandmother's judgment about Harriet's morals is fair?
3. Why does Harriet need her grandmother's approval so much?
4. How does the practice of slavery violate Christian principles?
5. Why does Harriet work so hard for her masters?
6. What is the key factor that resolves Harriet to escape from Mr. Flint's plantation?

### **ESCAPE & HIDING CHAPTERS 17-30**

1. Who are all of the people who assist Harriet in her hiding?
  2. What could motivate a white southern person to hide a run-away slave?
  3. What motivated Dr. Flint to search for Harriet so vigorously?
  4. Why does Mr. Sands buy Harriet's children? Do you think that he will free them or keep them as slaves?
  5. What must it have been like for Harriet to hide so long in the confined space in her grandmother's shed?
  6. How does Harriet show her strong love for her children during the time of her hiding?
  7. Why do you think it was important to Phillip to provide a funeral and burial for Aunt Nancy?
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## FREEDOM AND LIFE AS A FUGITIVE

### CHAPTERS 31-41

1. Who are the people who support Harriet while she is in Philadelphia and New York?
2. Why is it important to Harriet that she pay her own way to New York?
3. In what condition does Harriet find her daughter?
4. Why hasn't Mr. Sands freed Ellen?
5. What are some of the ways that Harriet's life in New York is different from her life in North Carolina?
6. Why do you think that the hotel staff and black servants treated Harriet so meanly when she traveled with the Bruce family to Albany?
7. Compare and contrast the plight of the poor in England with that of the slave in America. Do you agree with Harriet's judgment about which group has the worst situation?
8. What does Harriet's attempt to run an anti-slavery reading room in Rochester say about her character?
9. Until Mrs. Bruce purchases her freedom, Harriet still feels endangered in New York. Why is she not more protected by society in this northern state? Why are her owners in North Carolina so eager to reclaim her?

## AFTER READING ACTIVITIES

### I. DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

#### Send-a-Question: Involving Students in Small Group Collaborative Thinking

This collaborative strategy allows students to engage in discussion of key themes found in the text.

1. Divide the class into small groups no larger than six in a group.
2. Prepare an envelope for each group with one of the discussion questions below written on the face of it and two index cards within it.
3. Ask each group to read the question on the front of the envelope. Ask students to discuss possible answers, referring back to the text of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Once students have come to a consensus, have one member of the group record the group's response on the index card.
4. When all groups are finished with their first question, have students place their index cards back into the envelope and pass it to another group. The process is repeated when the groups consider this new question, write their solutions on the index card, and pass the envelopes on to the next group.
5. In the final round, the group will review the answers written on the index cards. The final group should discuss the question on the envelope, their classmates' responses, and come to consensus about the best and most complete response. These final groups will present their synthesis to the whole class.

6. The teacher should lead a full-class discussion, referring back to the text, about the questions and how the characters dealt with these issues. The teacher might provide each student with a handout listing the questions and space for students to jot down notes. This activity can be adapted using any of the themes mentioned below.

—Adapted from Barkley, Cross, & Major. (2005) *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

## II. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions build on initial reactions and lead students back to the narrative and their research to make connections and to deepen their analysis. These questions can be used for the Send-a-Question activity, class discussion, journal writing, or as essay topics.

### 1. The Antebellum South

What was life like for slaves prior to the beginning of the Civil War? Use examples from Harriet's narrative or information you gained from other sources to describe the institution of slavery.

### 2. Race as Black and White

In chapter one, Harriet describes her uncle Benjamin as a "bright, handsome lad, nearly white; for he inherited the complexion my grandmother had derived from Anglo-Saxon ancestors" (p. 2). Much later her son Benny is ostracized from his fellow apprentices when it is discovered that he is black. What do these instances reveal about the role of skin color and perceptions of race? To what extent do these examples call into question cultural conceptions of race as black and white?

### 3. Struggle for Self identity, Self-preservation, and Freedom

Harriet's autobiography is a story of her continual pursuit of individual freedom. With this struggle comes Harriet's internal struggle for self identity and self preservation. Find examples of this struggle within the text. List all of the identities Harriet filled—e.g. mother, daughter, nurse maid, etc.—and the impact slavery had on her ability to fulfill these identities.

### 4. Bond between Harriet and Her Relatives

Harriet's autobiography is also a great story about family. Throughout her life Harriet is dependent on family members to keep her safe and provide affection. At the same time, it is her great wish to live freely with her children—"I do not sit with my children in a home of my own, I still long for a hearthstone of my own, however humble" (p. 227). Find examples of the centrality of family in Harriet's story. How were Harriet's experiences similar to or different from the experience of the other slave families she described?

### 5. Obedience and Familial Loyalty

Harriet points to some of the tensions that exist for slaves as they are forced to choose between their family needs and those of their masters. For instance, Harriet's brother is forced to choose between father and mistress, Harriet ostracizes her grandmother through her relationship with the young lawyer, and Harriet leaves her own children for the better part of a year while she travels to England with her ward. What kind of evidence do these and other examples provide about the impact of slavery on familial loyalty?

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## 6. Spirituality and Moral Character

Harriet seems to continually refer to her own moral character and blames her failings on the institution of slavery. What examples does Harriet provide? Is she convincing? What seems to be her motivation in referring to moral character?

## 7. Gender

In the preface Harriet wrote, “But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I have suffered, and most of them far worse” (p. xvii-xviii). To what extent is Harriet’s story a *woman’s* story? Provide examples. How effective is she in providing evidence to “arouse the women of the North”?

## 8. Religion and Slavery

Harriet repeatedly refers to religion, specifically Christianity, in her text. Use examples from the text to illustrate her views of religion. What is the effect of these references on the overall tone and message of the text? Do you think it is effective as a literary and persuasive strategy?

To learn more about the role religion played in the lives of slaves, consult the following website:

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/religiouscontent.html>

## 9. White Religious Practices and Slavery

In addition to describing her religious convictions and those of her fellow slaves, Harriet also refers to the role of religion in white culture. For instance she offers two conflicting portrayals:

Harriet wrote, “There is a great difference between Christianity and religion at the south” (Ch. 13, p. 82), and, “The contemptuous manner in which the communion had been administered to colored people, in my native place; the church membership of Dr. Flint, and others like him; and the buying and selling of slaves, by professed ministers of the gospel, had given me a prejudice against the Episcopal church. The whole service seemed to me a mockery and a sham” (p. 208).

However, in England, Harriet met a clergyman “who was a true disciple of Jesus.” Harriet noted “The beauty of his daily life inspired me with faith in the genuineness of Christian professions. Grace entered my heart, and I knelt at the communion table, I trust in true humility of soul” (Ch. 37, p. 208).

How does Harriet’s description of religion in white culture serve her narrative? How does she seem to deal with the contradictions and hypocrisy that she encounters? To what extent does it justify her ideas about the immoral nature of slavery?

## 10. “Self-imposed” Exile

The most harrowing and awe-inspiring portion of the book is perhaps the seven year span that Harriet spent in concealment in her grandmother’s attic. What does this experience reveal to the reader about Harriet’s character? How does it impact her future experiences?

## 11. Fugitive Slaves

There are many examples of runaway slaves being pursued and caught by their former owners. Dr Flint pursues Harriet continually until his death and refuses to sell the

children until he is tricked into it. Read the following runaway slave notice for Harriet Jacobs : <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1541.html>. What does this slave notice tell modern readers about the institution of slavery in general and about Harriet specifically? [Note: the University of Virginia's Valley of the Shadows website offers additional lesson plan ideas for analysis of runaway slave ads: [http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/lang\\_runaways.html](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/lang_runaways.html)].

## **12. Freedom**

It is hard to pin-point the exact moment when Harriet gained her freedom. For instance, she was clearly free when her employer bought her freedom, or was it earlier, when she took control of her own life? What do you think? Use examples from the narrative to support your argument.

## **13. White Views of Slavery**

Do you believe that all whites held the same view about African American slaves during this time period? Use evidence from your reading to support your response.

## **14. Education**

Since education was denied to most slaves, does it surprise you that Harriet Jacobs was able to write such a descriptive account of her experiences? Why or why not? Why do you think it was so important to Harriet that her daughter and son had the opportunity for an education?

## **15. Incidents: Novel or Memoir?**

Why do you think critics read this text as a novel? What conventions of a novel appear in the text? How does your understanding of the text change if you take it to be a true accounting of Jacobs's life?

# **III. GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS**

## **BIO-POEM OF HARRIET JACOBS'S LIFE**

As a review or to encourage students to conduct more research on Harriet Jacobs, assign a Bio-poem. The following format can be used:

First name  
Four traits that describe the character  
Relative of  
Lover of [three people]  
Who feels [three adjectives]  
Who needs [three items]  
Who fears [three things]  
Who gives [three things]  
Who would like to see [three results]  
Resident of  
Last name

Encourage students to follow the correct format, use information from the text or their individual research, and focus on creativity.

—Adapted from NCSS (2008) *Adapting Women's History through Literature*.

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Note: An alternative to this format is for students to write a descriptive phrase for each letter of Harriet's first or last name, e.g.

H  
A  
R  
R  
I  
E  
T

## HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION: TRUE STORY?

Have students gather archival evidence to support the validity of Harriet's story and to make a case, with supporting evidence from their sources, for the authenticity of the narrative.

Sources could include: "Introduction by the Editor [L. Maria Child]" (*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, p. xix-xx); the Runaway Slave Notice for Harriet (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h1541.html>); her brother, John Jacobs's narrative (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jjacobs/summary.html>); portions of Jean Fagan Yellin's biography of Harriet Jacobs (Yellin, Jean Fagan. *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*. New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004).

Note: According to William Andrews: "Not until the extensive archival work of Jean Fagan Yellin did *Incidents* begin to take its place as a major African American slave narrative. Published in Yellin's admirable edition of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Harvard University Press, 1987), Jacobs's correspondence with Child helps lay to rest the long-standing charge against *Incidents* that it is at worst a fiction and at best the product of Child's pen. Child's letters to Jacobs and others make clear that her role as editor was no more than she acknowledged in her introduction to *Incidents*: "to ensure the orderly arrangement and directness of the narrative, without adding anything to the text or altering in any significant way Jacobs's manner of recounting her story" (from William Andrews' biography retrieved from <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/bio.html>),

## CREATING A DIGITAL DOCUMENTARY ABOUT HARRIET JACOBS

Have students create a digital documentary about the life of Harriet Jacobs within the context of her time. Options include having students use Microsoft Moviemaker, Apple's iMovie, or PrimaryAccess, a free web-based application available at <http://www.primaryaccess.org>. To create a digital documentary, students will write a cohesive script, select images, and add narration and music. To get started you may want to refer to the following teacher resources:

- 1) Digital Historic Narratives  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/classroom/narratives/narratives.html>
- 2) Teaching Matters: Digital Documentaries  
<http://www.atschool.org/digidocs/>  
(their checklist is very helpful)  
[http://www.atschool.org/digidocs/printable/technology\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.atschool.org/digidocs/printable/technology_checklist.pdf)
- 3) Ferster, B., Hammond, T., & Bull, G. (2006). PrimaryAccess: Creating digital documentaries in the social studies classroom. *Social Education*, 70(3), 147-150.

## RUNAWAY SLAVES

Using advertisements for slave runaways from the Virginia Runaways Project, can help students understand the circumstances of 19th century slaves. A mini lesson on these advertisements is available at University of Virginia's Valley of the Shadows Project and can be accessed at: [http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/slave\\_runaways\\_main.html](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/slave_runaways_main.html).

## IV. EXTENDED READING

### IN THE FAMILY: COMPARE AND CONTRAST NARRATIVES OF HARRIET JACOBS AND HER BROTHER

Harriet's brother, John S. Jacobs, also wrote a narrative of his experience in slavery. Provide students with a copy or electronic access to John S. Jacobs (1815-1875) "A True Tale of Slavery," a serialized narrative that appeared in four issues of *The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation* in February 1861 available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/jjacobs/summary.html>.

It is suggested that you either divide up the reading of this narrative or point students towards specific excerpts. Ask students to compare the narratives based on key themes such as: "role of family," "skills/work," "treatments," "relationship to owners," "escape," and "views of slavery." After students have had a chance to jot down their ideas, encourage them to share their impressions with a classmate before engaging students in a full-class discussion about the two narratives. Discuss: How do Harriet's experiences differ from her brother's? Why?

### MALE AND FEMALE SLAVE NARRATIVES

Compare Harriet Jacobs's narrative to the accounts of other slaves: Frederick Douglass and Ellen Craft. Frederick Douglass' autobiography is available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass55/douglass55.html>. (Also available from Signet Classics.)

Note this text has two parts: 1) "My life as a slave" and 2) "My life as a free man."

Ellen Craft's "Running a thousand miles to freedom" (available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/craft/menu.html>) tells the story of William and Ellen Craft who escaped from slavery. This narrative was published in 1860, the same year as Harriet Jacobs's *Life of a Slave Girl*.

Divide the class into groups who are assigned to read different section of Douglass' or Craft's autobiographies. Students should prepare lists describing the different times in Douglass' and William Craft's lives, on one side of a column; then they can fill in the matching column, listing parallel events in Jacobs's and Ellen Craft's lives. Discuss: Are the experiences of male vs. female slaves different? Why?

### CREATING A PICTURE BOOK

As an alternative to having students read Craft's narrative, read out loud *The Daring Escape of Ellen Craft* by Cathy Moore (illustrations by Mary O Keefe Young, 2002, Carolrhoda Books). After a brief discussion about the text, have students begin developing their own picture book on the life of Harriet Jacobs. You may want students to work in

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groups of 2-3. Depending on the available resources, students can create their finished book from construction paper and other art supplies or using Microsoft Publisher or word processing software. Students should be evaluated on the basis of the historical content, creativity, and aesthetics of the picture book they produce. If possible, arrange for the students to share their picture books with younger audiences.

Here is a brief list of picture books on slavery which you may wish to have in the classroom as resources; students may be able to use these picture books as models for their own creative efforts:

- Walter, Mildred Pitts. *Alec's Primer*. Illus. by Larry Johnson. Middlebury, VT: Vermont Folklife Center, 2004.
- Rappaport, Doreen. *Freedom River*. Illus. by Bryan Collier. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2000.
- Levine, Ellen. *Henry's Freedom Box*. Illus. by Kadir Nelson. New York: Scholastic Press, 2007.
- Wright, Courtnei Crump. *Journey to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad*. Illus. by Gershon Griffith. New York: Holiday House, 1994.
- Miller, William. *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*. Illus. by Cedric Lucas. New York: Lee & Low, 1995.
- Hopkinson, Deborah. *Under the Quilt of Night*. Illus. by James E. Ransome. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001.
- Schroeder, Alan. *Minty: A Story of Harriet Tubman*. Illus. by Jerry Pinkney. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996.

### CHILDHOOD NARRATIVES OF SLAVERY\*

1. To begin this learning activity, have students write a brief journal entry on a memorable event from their childhood.
2. Review the sections from Jacobs's narrative in which she discusses the lives of slave children. For example, pages 11–12; page 14 beginning "Such were the unusually fortunate" to page 15 ending with "born to be a chattel."
3. Next provide students copies or electronic copies of excerpts from the following narratives:
  - Frederick Douglass: Chapters I and II (to page 20), available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass55/douglass55.html>
  - Olaudah Equiano: Volume One, page 5, pages 13–14; Volume One, Chapter Two, pages 45–50, available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/menu.html>
  - Omar Said, page 792 beginning "I cannot write my life" to page 793 ending with "Fayd-il," available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/omarsaid/menu.html>

Note: You may also want to use excerpts from Jacobs (beginning on page 195 "The Flight") and Douglass (Second Part, Chapter One beginning on page 196 "Escape From Slavery") to compare and contrast how each planned their escape. More resources are available in the Signet Classics teacher's guide to *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick*

Douglass at: <http://us.penguingroup.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/narrative.pdf>

4. Assign students to read one of the documents and to analyze it using the SCIM-C method described above [S-summarizing, C-contextualizing, I-inferring, M-monitoring, C-corroborating].
5. Allow students assigned to the same document to compare their analysis and to make changes or additions.
6. As a whole class engage in a discussion about aspects of the students' childhood and those of slave children.

\*Note: This lesson plan is available at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/mmcglinn912004135>

## WHITE ACCOUNTS OF SLAVERY

Students can compare Harriet Jacobs's account of slavery to the one written by Mary Norcott Bryan, the daughter of a wealthy slave holder from New Bern, North Carolina. Her narrative, "A Grandmother's Recollections of Dixie" offers a sentimental account of the antebellum south and criticism of Reconstruction.

Web-based resources:

- Narrative of Mary Norcott Bryan is available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/bryan/menu.html>
- The biography of Mary Norcott Bryan is available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/bryan/summary.html>
- Note: Also see the full lesson plan comparing the narrative of Mary Norcott Bryan to William Henry Singleton, a slave, at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/two-perspectives-slavery>.

## BECOMING CRITICAL: WRITING A REVIEW OF *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL*

When *Incidents* was first published it received some attention from abolitionist publications. Have students read book reviews written by Jacobs's contemporaries and then write their own book review of *Incidents*. Students might be encouraged to write as if they were her contemporaries or from the perspective of today.

Book reviews can be found on-line at the follow sites:

- Review in *The Weekly Anglo-African* April 13, 1861  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support6.html>
  - William C. Nell's review in *The Liberator*, January 24, 1861  
Available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support8.html>
  - Review in *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, February 23, 1861  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support10.html>
-

## ADOLESCENT NOVELS ON SLAVERY

Literature circles on adolescent novels on the subject of slavery can be created for a period of two to four weeks. Students will have an opportunity to hear book talks (by the teacher or media specialist) on the novels before making their choices after which the teacher will set up the circles. Students will determine the pace of reading and the roles they will fulfill for each meeting of the circle.

For teachers new to literature circles, there is information available on line at <http://www.literaturecircles.com> and in books by Harvey Daniels, such as *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*.

The following adolescent novels deal with the subject of slavery:

- Draper, Sharon. *Copper Sun*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.
- Hansen, Joyce. *The Captive*. New York: Scholastic, 1994.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. New York: Scholastic, 2007.
- Rinaldi, Ann. *The Ever-After Bird*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2007.
- Brenaman, Miriam. *Evvy's Civil War*. New York: Putnam, 2002.
- Paulsen, Gary. *Nightjohn*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1993.

## COMPARISONS TO *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, was published in 1852 and is often cited as a major cause in turning American opinion against slavery, especially the Fugitive Slave Act, in antebellum U.S. According to Harriet Jacobs's biographer, Jean Yellin, Harriet attempted to gain Harriet Beecher Stowe's support in publishing her narrative. Eager to share her story, Jacobs was introduced to Stowe through the Anti-Slavery Society. Upon learning that Stowe was soon to depart for England, Jacobs suggested that Stowe allow Louisa to join her on a tour of England. Stowe rebuffed this request citing that "it would be much care to her to take Louisa." Adding insult to injury, Stowe suggested she could include verifiable portions of Jacobs's story in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Yellin, p. 121). Stowe's rejection seems to have only temporarily stalled Jacob's attempts to publish her narrative. Rather, she stumbled across a copy of First Lady Julia Tyler's defense of slavery, "The Women of England vs. the Women of America," in an old newspaper. Outraged with the claims that most southern slaves are well-fed and clothed and rarely separated from their families, Jacobs wrote a rebuttal account of slavery (Yellin, p 122). She signed it "A Fugitive Slave" and sent it to the *New York Tribune* (see also <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support16.html>).

Students could be encouraged to conduct background research on the biographies of Stowe and Jacobs to compare and contrast their lives and perspectives. Additionally students could compare the fictionalized account of slavery that Stowe presents to the narrative presented by Jacobs.

Suggested resources:

- Harriet Beecher Stowe Center  
[http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/index\\_home.shtml](http://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/index_home.shtml)

- *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (full text)  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/STOWE/stowe.html>

## HARRIET JACOBS AS A WRITER AND ACTIVIST

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was not the only text Harriet Jacobs wrote. Her writings appeared both before and after the publication of *Incidents*. Suggestions for bringing these resources into the classroom include making them available for students' individual research or for more guided study. Students could identify themes that are present throughout her writings, investigate the evolving nature of Harriet's ideas and literary style over time, compare her later writings to *Incidents*, examine Harriet's work as an activist, and compare her accounts of issues facing African Americans in the antebellum versus post-Civil War periods.

Suggested resources:

### Jacobs's first retelling of her experiences:

- "Letter from a Fugitive Slave" *New York Daily Tribune* (June 21, 1853)  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support16.html>

### Jacobs describes her work in the post-war South:

- "From Savannah," in *The Freedmen's Record* (January 1866). Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support2.html>
- "Life Among the Contrabands," in *The Liberator* (September 5, 1862). Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support5.html>
- "Colored Refugees in Our Camps" *The Liberator* (April 10, 1863). Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support7.html>

### Jacobs's views on School and the education of freed slaves

- "Letter from Teachers of the Freedmen," in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (April 16, 1864). Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support4.html>
- "Savannah Freedmen's Orphan Asylum." *Anti-Slavery Reporter* March 2, 1868.  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support1.html>

### Accounts written by Harriet Jacobs's daughter, Lousia Jacobs

- Lousia Jacobs's report "From Savannah," *The Freedmen's Record*, March 1866.  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support14.html>
- Lousia Jacobs's report "From Savannah," *The Freedmen's Record*, July 1866.  
Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support13.html>

### Descriptions of Harriet Jacobs's work and experiences from the *Freedmen's Record*

- Description of Harriet's work from *The Freedmen's Record*, February 1865. Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support12.html>
- Report of Harriet Jacobs's visit to Edenton, N.C., *The Freedmen's Record*, December 1865. Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support11.html>
- Report of Harriet and Louisa Jacobs in Savannah, GA, *The Freedmen's Record*, September 1866. Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/support15.html>

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## KEY WEBSITES

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- **African American History across North Carolina**  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/roundup.html>
- **Biography of Harriet Jacobs from Documenting the American South (DocSouth)**  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/menu.html>
- **Biography of Harriet Jacobs from PBS**  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2923.html>
- **Discovery Education: Understanding Slavery**  
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/slavery/index.html>
- **Explore Women's History in North Carolina**  
[http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/women\\_nc.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/women_nc.html)
- **Geography of Slavery in Virginia**  
<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/>
- **Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War**  
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/>
- **Slavery in America**  
[http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs\\_es\\_overview.htm](http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_overview.htm)

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- Lemon, A. (2004). Summary: Harriet A Jacobs: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Retrieved 5/28/2008 from <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/summary.html>.
- Lyons, M. E. (1992) *Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs*. New York: Scribner.
- Yellin, J. F. (2004). *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*. New York: Basic Civitas Books.

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## PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

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- Bolick, C.M. & McGlinn, M. (2004). Harriet Jacobs: Using on-line slave narratives in the classroom. *Social Education*, 68(4), 198-202
  - McManus, J.M. (2008) A novel idea: Historical fiction in the social studies. *Middle Level Learning*, 32, M8-M9.
  - "Overview of the SCIM-C Strategy." Primary Source Learning. Library of Congress. Retrieved from: [http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/handbook/part4/ch9/scimc\\_overview.shtml](http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/handbook/part4/ch9/scimc_overview.shtml).
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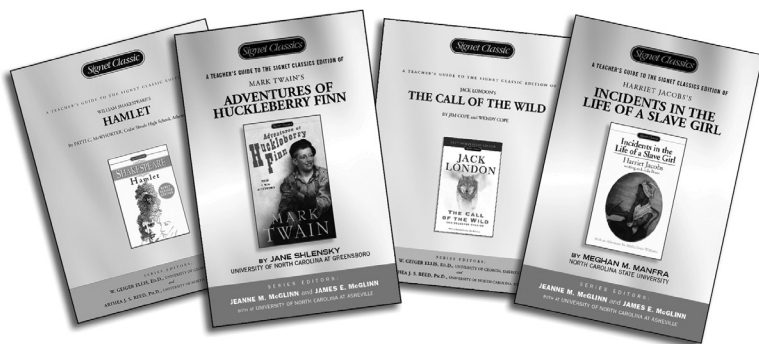
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- Girl in Hyacinth Blue
- The Grapes of Wrath
- Great Expectations
- Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
- Jane Eyre
- A Journey to the Center of the Earth
- The Jungle
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- The Life of Ivan Denisovich
- Listening Is an Act of Love
- Looking Backward
- Lysistrata

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Of Mice and Men  
The Mousetrap and Other Plays  
A Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,  
An American Slave  
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Pygmalion  
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