

Handout 3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Harriet Tubman Source Packet**

### **Document A** (2 textbook narratives abridged)

#### **Passage from The Americans**

##### **Underground Railroad**

One of the most famous *conductors* {of the Underground Railroad} was Harriet Tubman, born a slave in Maryland in 1820 or 1821. In 1849 after Tubman's owner died, she heard rumors that she was about to be sold. Fearing this possibility, Tubman decided to make a break for freedom and succeeded in reaching Philadelphia. Shortly after the passage of the *Fugitive Slave Act*, Tubman resolved to become a conductor on the Underground Railroad. In all she made 19 trips back to the South and is said to have helped 300 slaves - including her parents - flee to freedom.

##### **Passage from A New Nation:**

The Underground Railroad. Of about 3,200 conductors, the best known was Harriet Tubman. She had escaped to the North as a "passenger" on the Underground Railroad. She then helped others as a conductor. Tubman later recalled how she felt when she planned to escape slavery: "no man should take me alive. I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasts." After safely making her way to the North, Tubman risked great danger returning to the South 19 times, guiding more than 300 fugitives to freedom.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. According to these texts, what are Harriet Tubman's main contributions to American History?
2. How do these narratives align with what you already KNOW about Harriet Tubman?
3. What questions do you still have?

## Document B:

**Source:** History Channel short article published by Barbara Maranzani, a researcher and archivist for History.com, on May 31, 2013.  
<http://www.history.com/news/harriet-tubmans-daring-raid-150-years-ago>

One of the most complicated myths about Tubman is the claim (first mentioned in a 19th century biography) that she escorted more than 300 slaves to freedom over the course of 19 missions. Tubman herself never used this number, instead estimating that she had rescued around 50 people by 1860 - mostly family members. Historians now believe that it's likely that she was personally responsible for ushering around 70 people to freedom along the Underground Railroad in the decade before the Civil War... Shortly after war broke out in 1861...Working in a series of camps in Union-held portions of South Carolina, Tubman quickly learned the lay of the land and offered her services to the army as a spy, leading a group of scouts who mapped out much of the region. Tubman's reconnaissance work laid the foundation for one of the more daring raids of the Civil War, when she personally accompanied Union soldiers in their nighttime raid at Combahee Ferry in June 1863. After guiding Union boats along the mine-filled waters and coming ashore, Tubman and her group successfully rescued more than 700 slaves working on nearby plantations.

### Questions to Consider:

1. What did you learn from this text about the number of slaves rescued by Tubman?
2. Does this corroborate or contradict the existing narrative you and/or the textbooks have about Tubman? Describe why or why not.
3. What new information would you add to her narrative from this text? Provide a quote from the text to support your answer:

## Document C:

**Source:** Paul Donnelly (biographical note provided by the NYTimes): “*Paul Donnelly is an advocate for legal immigration*) for the [New York Times, June 7, 2013](#):

### Harriet Tubman’s Great Raid

It is arguably the most beautiful scene ever recorded in war. Two Union gunboats, the Harriet A. Weed and the John Adams, converted ferryboats, churning up the Combahee River... Steam whistles signal, while in the bow of the Adams, a small, powerful woman is... singing. From all around, hundreds hear Harriet Tubman’s call and run for the boats, for freedom. At least 727 men, women and children escape, mothers carrying babies, including one pair of twins: the largest liberation of slaves in American history.

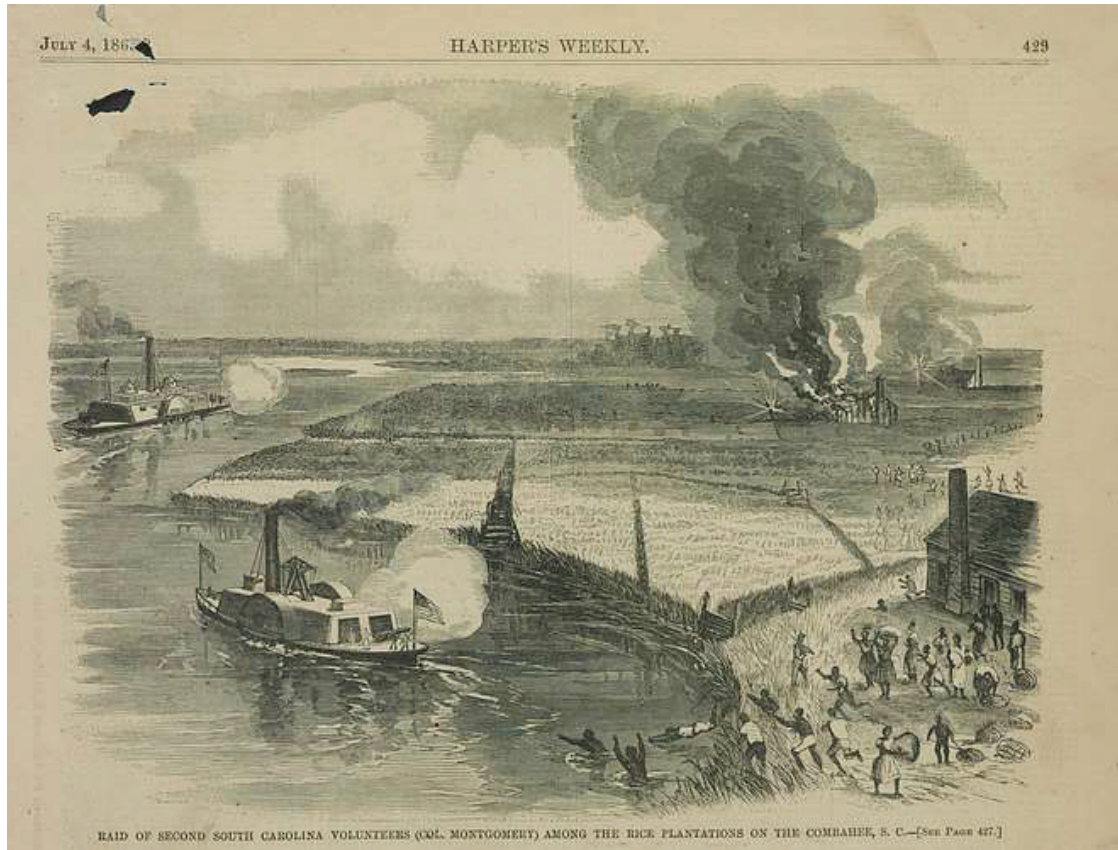
### Questions to Consider:

1. What is the Combahee River Raid according to this document and what was Tubman’s role?
2. Does this corroborate or contradict the existing narrative you and/or the textbooks have about Tubman? Describe why or why not.
3. What new information would you add to her narrative from this text? Provide a quote from the text to support your answer:

**Document D:**

**Source:** New York: Harper's Weekly, July 4, 1863. Title "Raid of 2nd South Carolina Volunteers (Col. Montgomery) among the rice plantations on the Combahee." Retrieved from *Library of Congress*.

**Headnote:** Harper's Weekly (at the time) was a partisan paper, on the side of Abraham Lincoln and the Union. It was published mostly in the North East United States and distributed. Circulation was about 200,000 people by 1860 (for the time this is a large number).



**Questions to Consider:**

1. Interpret this illustration (describe what you see and analyze).
2. How does this image fit into what you know about the raid?
3. What information is left out? Why might the illustrator have left some information out?

## Document E:

**Source:** Historical Marker at the Combahee River in South Carolina. Photo taken by Jeff Grigg.



Historical marker at Combahee River. Photo by Jeff W. Grigg.

## Questions to Consider:

1. What new information do you learn through this plaque?
2. What might a plaque like this leave out?
3. Who created this plaque? And why might that matter?
4. How does this add to your initial narrative of Harriet Tubman and her life?



## Document F:

**Source:** Colonel Montgomery wrote a telegraph on June 8, 1863 describing the raid. Retrieved from *Library of Congress*.

I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your orders, I proceeded up the Combahee River, on the steamers **(gun boats)** John Adams and Harriet A. Weed, with a detachment of three hundred (300) men of the Second South Carolina Volunteer Regiment and a section of the Third Rhode Island Battery, commanded by Captain Brayton. We ascended the river some twenty-five (25) miles, destroyed a pontoon bridge, together with a large amount of cotton, rice, and other property, and brought away seven hundred and twenty-seven slaves, and some fine horses. We had some sharp skirmishes, in all of which the men behaved splendidly. I hope to report more fully in a day or two.

Doc. 1.  
**EXPEDITION UP THE COMBAHEE.**  
COLONEL MONTGOMERY'S OFFICIAL REPORT.  
BY TELEGRAPH FROM BRADFORD, S. C., }  
Dated June 8, 1863. }

To Major-General D. Hunter, Commanding  
Tenth Army Corps, Department of the South:  
GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, in  
obedience to your orders, I proceeded up the  
Combahee River, on the steamers John Adams  
and Harriet A. Weed, with a detachment of three  
hundred (300) men of the Second South-Carolina  
volunteer regiment, and a section of the Third  
Rhode Island battery, commanded by Captain  
Brayton. We ascended the river some twenty-  
five (25) miles, destroyed a ponton bridge, to-  
gether with a vast amount of cotton, rice, and  
other property, and brought away seven hundred  
and twenty-seven slaves, and some fine horses.  
We had some sharp skirmishes, in all of which,  
the men behaved splendidly. I hope to report  
more fully in a day or two.  
I have the honor to be, General,  
Your most obedient servant,  
JAMES MONTGOMERY,  
Colonel Commanding E. C. V.  
A NATIONAL ACCOUNT.

## Questions to Consider:

1. What information is left out here and why might he have left it out?
2. What new information do you learn with this document?
3. How does this change your narrative of the life of Harriet Tubman?

## Document G:

**Source:** The following dispatch, quoted in part, appeared on the front page of *The Commonwealth*, a pro-Union, Boston newspaper, on Friday, July 10, 1863: Retrieved from *Library of Congress*.

Col. Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, *under the guidance of a black woman*, dashed into the enemy's country, struck a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars worth of commissary stores, cotton and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebeldom, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars worth of property, without losing a man or receiving a scratch. It was ...glorious ...

## Questions to Consider:

1. What information is left out here and why might he have left it out?
2. What new information do you learn with this document?
3. How does this change your narrative of the life of Harriet Tubman?

## **Document H:**

**Source:** UnCivil Podcast

“A group of ex-farmers, a terrorist from Kansas, and a schoolteacher attempt the greatest covert operation of the Civil War.”

LINK: [https://www.gimletmedia.com/uncivil/the-raid?utm\\_source=gimletPlayer&utm\\_medium=copyShare&utm\\_campaign=gimletPlayer](https://www.gimletmedia.com/uncivil/the-raid?utm_source=gimletPlayer&utm_medium=copyShare&utm_campaign=gimletPlayer)

## **Questions to Consider:**

1. What new information do you learn with this podcast?
2. How does this change your narrative of the life of Harriet Tubman?
3. What questions do you still have?

