

Harriet Tubman



Born a slave on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Harriet Tubman endured constant brutal beatings, one of which involved a two-pound lead weight and left her suffering from seizures and headaches for the rest of her life.

Worried that she would be sold and separated from her family, Tubman fled bondage in 1849, following the North Star on a 100-mile trek into Pennsylvania. Nicknamed "Moses," she would go on to become the Underground Railroad's most famous "conductor," embarking on about 13 rescue operations back into Maryland and pulling out at least 70 slaves, including several siblings.

A master of ingenious tricks, such as leaving on Saturdays, two days before slave owners could post runaway notices in the newspapers, she boasted of having never lost a single passenger. Tubman continued her anti-slavery activities during the Civil War, serving as a scout, spy and nurse for the Union Army and even reportedly becoming the first U.S. woman to lead troops into battle.