

PRE-SHOW CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Using the map below, have the students imagine that they are slaves and plot out their escape route to Canada. Draw an arrow line of the path of a fugitive slave escaping from a plantation in Mississippi, stopping in Philadelphia (where William Still resided), and on to Canada.



Engage in a class discussion:

- Is the path the shortest route?
- What rivers did you cross or travel near?
- What cities would you stop in?
- How long do you think your journey would take?

2. There were four main routes that the enslaved could follow: North along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to the northern United States and Canada; South to Florida and refuge with the Seminole Indians and to the Bahamas; West along the Gulf of Mexico and into Mexico; and East along the seaboard into Canada. The routes were often not in straight lines; they zigzagged in open spaces to mix their scent and throw off the bloodhounds.

Sometimes they would even double back on their routes to confuse the slave catchers.

Have the students work in groups, using the blank map (on the next page below). After a brief overview of plotting routes, have the students draw their escape route. So that they differ somewhat, provide these routes.

Start in Alabama; go through Pennsylvania, stopping in Canada. Miles: Car: Foot:
Start in Virginia; go through Pennsylvania, stopping in Canada. Miles: Car: Foot:
Start in Georgia; go through Pennsylvania, stopping in Canada. Miles: Car: Foot:
Start in Mississippi; go through Michigan, stopping in Canada. Miles: Car: Foot:

Discuss approximately how many miles each route is and how long it would take to drive. Point out how much longer it would take by foot and without modern day vehicles.

3. You are an enslaved person headed for the Underground Railroad. You can only choose one thing most special to you to escape with. On a sheet of paper draw the thing that you choose and write two paragraphs explaining why you chose that thing.

NORTH AMERICA



