

HARRIET TUBMAN, FREEDOM FIGHTER (1822- 1913)

Harriet Ross Tubman was born into slavery on a plantation on Eastern Shore of Maryland. Tubman gained international fame as an Underground Railroad operator, abolitionist, Civil War spy and nurse, suffragist, and humanitarian. After escaping from enslavement in 1849, Tubman dedicated herself to fighting for freedom, equality, and justice for the remainder of her long life, earning her the biblical name "Black Moses" and a place among North America's most famous historical figures.

Tubman laboured as a field slave on a plantation where she endured physically demanding working conditions and severe abuse. Tubman escaped without her husband in search of freedom in the northern States. "I started with this idea in my head, there's two things I've got a right to...death or liberty." When the Fugitive Act of 1850 allowed slave owners to recapture runaways in the Northern Free States, she was lucky to reach Canada safely in 1851.

Over the next decade she would return to the American South, relocating members of her family to St. Catharines. North Street in St. Catharines remained her base of operations until 1857. While there, she worked at various jobs to finance her activities as a conductor on the Under Ground Rail Road. She attended the Salem Chapel British Methodist Episcopal Church on Geneva Street where a plaque now commemorates her significant role as part of St. Catharines' local history. After the outbreak of the American Civil War, Tubman returned to the states to serve the Union Army. She died on 10 March 1913 in Auburn, New York.

