

Title	"Levi Coffin on Trial"
Name	Ellen Haury
Date	7-24-01
School	Crooked Creek Elementary
City/state	Indianapolis, IN
Topic (Overall theme)	Examination of the moral and ethical issues involving slavery. Do religious convictions supersede legal issues, allowing those with antislavery convictions, such as Quaker Levi Coffin, to assist fugitive slaves with impunity?
City/state	Indianapolis, IN
Classroom sessions or estimated time	5-6 forty-five minute sessions
Grade Level(s)	4 (5 or 6)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to introduce students to Quaker beliefs about slavery to introduce students to actual statements of conviction about slavery by Levi Coffin to introduce students to the federal laws about returning escaped slaves, specifically the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 to compare the religious and legal issues involved with helping slaves to escape to use both primary and secondary sources for gathering information to write a persuasive piece to make an oral presentation

<p><u>*Geography Standards Addressed</u></p>	<p>Grade Four</p> <p>4.5.4 Define the term cultural group, identify the challenges faced by diverse cultural groups in Indiana history, and give examples of both conflict and cooperation among groups.</p> <p>4.5.8 Identify the contributions and challenges experienced by people from various cultural, racial, and religious groups in Indiana during different historical periods by reading biographies, historical accounts, and stories.</p> <p>4.5.9 Use primary sources, such as artifacts, interviews, and documents to acquire information about cultural life in Indiana.</p>
<p><u>*Indiana Social Studies Academic Standards addressed</u></p>	<p>Grade Four</p> <p>4.1.12 Explain the roles of various individuals, groups, and movements in the social conflicts leading to the Civil War.</p> <p>4.1.16 Identify various social and political movements and explain the roles they played in the state's development.</p> <p>4.1.25 Identify the causes of problems and challenges that have confronted people during various periods of Indiana history, and evaluate solutions that were chosen, keeping in mind the historical context.</p> <p>4.1.26 Generate questions and seek answers about people, places, and events using primary source and secondary source materials.</p> <p>4.2.11 Use a variety of information resources to research, develop, defend, and evaluate a position or course of action on a public issue relating to Indiana's past or present.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will use secondary and/or primary resource materials to gather information related to Quaker beliefs about slavery. 2. Students will use primary and/or secondary source materials to gather statements made by Levi Coffin about his moral and ethical opposition to slavery. 3. Students will read Sections 5, 6, and 7 of the Fugitive Slave Act

of 1850 and summarize.

4. Students will compare the religious and legal aspects of assisting a fugitive slave.
5. Students will, in the role of defense attorneys, prepare and present a final oral argument to a jury, explaining why Levi Coffin should be found "not guilty" of breaking the Fugitive Slave Act because of his religious convictions.

*Teacher
Background
Materials

Coffin, Levi. Reminiscences of Levi Coffin. Cincinnati: Western Tract Society, 1876

Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, (note Sections 5, 6, 7): http://www.trader-skis.com/documents/fu_sla_act.htm

7-26-01

Earlham has one of the world's largest collections of books, pamphlets, and published materials relating to the Society of Friends. These include numerous works on slavery and the opposition of Friends to it. The following library web page includes descriptions of most of the manuscript holdings and may be addressed at: <http://www.earlham.edu/~libr>

7-24-01

Thomas D. Hamm, Archivist and Professor of History, Lilly Library, Earlham College, Richmond, IN 47374 (765) 983-1511 or tomh@earlham.edu

Society of Friends. London Yearly Meeting. Epistle on Slavery from Our Yearly Meeting Held in London, by Adjournments from the 20th of the 5th Month to the 29th of the Same, Inclusive, 1840, Society of Friends, Indiana Yearly Meeting, 1840.

Wisehart, Randall. Luke's Summer Secret. Richmond: Friends United Press, 1991.

Smucker, Barbara. Runaway to Freedom.

Beatty, Patricia. Who Comes With Cannons?

Levi Coffin House State Historic Site has prepared "An

	<p>Underground Railroad Station: Lesson Plan for Grades K-12" for teacher use. To obtain, contact Levi Coffin House State Historic Site, 113 US 27 North, Fountain City, IN 47341, (765) 847-2432, Fax (765) 847-2498.</p> <p>The National Geographic Underground Railroad Site is a wonderful interactive site about Harriet Tubman and her role in the UGRR. The participant is required to make choices and decisions regarding the journey out of slavery. Full of audio and video features. http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/99/railroad/</p> <p>7-26-01</p>
*Purpose of Materials	See "Teacher Background Materials"
Procedures	<p>First 45 minute session: (teacher directed)</p> <p>A. Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to generate a list of present-day reform movements similar to the Anti-slavery/Abolitionist movement. Discuss reasons why they may have developed. (examples are Civil Rights, Anti-war, Anti-sweatshop, easing immigration requirements in the US in order to save people from slave-like conditions in their own countries) 2. Think about laws and why they are made. (to keep people safe; to make life fair for everyone, etc.) Do laws always do what they are supposed to do? What would happen if a society did not have any laws? <p>B. Provide students with copies of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Analyze Sections 5, 6, and 7 together. Students should take notes, briefly summarizing each section.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 5 details the duties, responsibilities, and repercussions of the marshals and deputy marshals in searching for and arresting fugitive slaves. 2. Section 6 states that fugitive slaves may be pursued and

reclaimed, but proof needs to be established that the person arrested does in fact owe service to the person claiming him; and that testimony of fugitive slaves may not be admitted into evidence in a trial or hearing.

3. Section 7 outlines the punishment for anyone hindering arrest, rescuing or attempting to rescue, aiding or assisting to escape, or harboring or concealing a fugitive slave. Punishment was a fine not exceeding \$1000 and imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Second and third 45 minute sessions: (individual)

A. Provide books and materials containing the Quakers' moral and ethical objections to slavery.

1. Students will take notes on the Quaker beliefs.

B. Provide books and materials containing Levi Coffin's anti-slavery convictions, as justified by his religious beliefs.

1. Students will take notes.

2. Students will cite related quotes from Levi Coffin.

Fourth 45 minute session: (paired)

A. Face Off: In order to compare the religious and legal issues involved with helping slaves to escape, pair up students and have them sit face-to-face. Ask the question: Did Levi Coffin's religious convictions allow him to break the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850? One student should argue "yes", and the other should argue "no." Students should use the notes taken about the Fugitive Slave Act, the Quakers, and Levi Coffin. This face-off should help the students organize their thoughts about the moral issues involved.

	<p>Fifth 45 minute session: (individual)</p> <p>A. Students should write a persuasive argument which they will use for their oral argument explaining why Levi Coffin should be found “not guilty” because of his religious convictions.</p> <p>Sixth 45 minute session: (individual)</p> <p>A. Students should have an opportunity to dress up and present their oral arguments to an audience.</p>
*Teaching Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher directed 2. Individual research and writing 3. Pairs of students “facing off” 4. Individual oral presentation
*Assessments (key questions to simulate critical thinking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oral argument should be assessed in terms of content and presentation skills, as graded by a rubric based on the required proficiencies. 2. Essay question: If Levi Coffin is found innocent because of his religious convictions, where is the line drawn for people who might claim this defense whenever they want to break the law? 3. Essay question: Are all laws fair? Why or why not?
Adaptations and/or Extensions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write either a proslavery or antislavery position paper. 2. Compare the religious and legal issues involved with helping slaves to escape by presenting a mock trial of Levi Coffin, complete with prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, and jury. 3. Hold a debate in which one student presents the viewpoint that Levi Coffin is guilty of breaking the Fugitive Slave Act, and one student presents the viewpoint that Levi Coffin is innocent of breaking the Fugitive Slave Act because of his religious convictions. Have the class decide which side was most convincing. 4. Write a friendly letter from Levi Coffin to a fellow Hoosier trying to convince him that he should become a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Include both the positives and the

negatives, but make sure that the letter is persuasive. Include facts about the Coffins in your letter, focusing on their experiences and religious convictions.

5. Research the history of the Quakers, including their relationship to the Indiana Underground Railroad. Share your findings through some creative format other than a paragraph.

lavery. Do religious convictions