LHR & The Underground Railroad

Grades 5-6 (Adapt as needed)
Prepared by the Lumber Heritage Region Educators

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Highlight the history and connections of the Lumber Heritage Region and the Underground Railroad in America. Deepen understanding of the importance of the Underground Railroad and some of the routes through the Lumber Heritage Region. Acknowledging significant people involved with the Underground Railroad and their ties to the lumber industry.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

1. Social Studies: Connections & Conflict
2. Geography
3. History
4. Pennsylvania Core Standards for Reading/Writing in History and Social Studies
5. Civics & Government
6. Pennsylvania Integrated Standards for Science, Environment, Ecology, Technology, and Engineering

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will identify the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, Susquehanna River, and Chesapeake Bay on a map.
2. Students will identify important places mentioned in Daniel Hughes' Story.
3. Students will explain the route Daniel Hughes would have traveled for his lumber and Underground Railroad work.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Map of watersheds and rivers relevant to LHR (Rivers should show the West Branch of the Susquehanna River *at least* from Williamsport, PA to Harve de Grace, MD
   https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1LOO7qYH7V5M4K7UJu1X2czfe0rtu6Xo&ll=40.60762140203485%2C-77.4598957635107&z=10

2. Computer/Internet Access

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

1. https://underground.lynnestomin.com/
2. https://lumberheritage.org/rivers-timbers/
3. https://www.google.com/maps
4. https://handsonheritage.com/daniel-hughes-giant-of-freedom-road/
5. https://paparksandforests.org/the-underground-railroad-and-the-susquehanna/
6. https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1LOO7qYH7V5M4K7UJu1X2czfe0rtu6Xo&ll=40.60762140203485%2C-77.4598957635107&z=10

ACTIVITY

Students will identify the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, Susquehanna River, and Chesapeake Bay on a map.

Students should then read the Story of Daniel Hughes.

After reading the story, students should identify on a map places mentioned in the story. For each point they place on the map students should explain what was significant about that point.

Students should show their understanding by drawing their own map (with a key) showing Daniel Hughes' route. A written description of the journey they recreated on their map should also be included.

ASSESSMENT

Steps to check for student understanding

1. Writing Prompt(s) - suggested
   a. Describe the involvement of Daniel Hughes with the Underground Railroad.
   b. What resources did Daniel Hughes use to his advantage?

The Story of Daniel Hughes

By Rowan Crisp - Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania, Inc.

Daniel Hughes was born in Oswego County, New York, in 1804. In 1828, he moved to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and married Ann Rotch. They lived on the north side of Williamsport and had 16 children. Daniel was a very tall man—about 6 feet 8 inches! Because of his work helping people escape slavery, some called him "The Giant of Freedom Road."

Williamsport, Pennsylvania, was an important place for the lumber industry. In the 1800s, people cut down many trees in what we now call the "Lumber Heritage Region." Rivers were used like highways to move logs, which were in high demand across the country. From 1868 to 1906, Williamsport was called the "Lumber Capital of the World" because it sawed more than 8 billion feet of white pine! The West Branch of the Susquehanna River allowed logs to travel all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond.

Moving logs downriver was very dangerous. Every year, millions of logs floated down rivers like the Susquehanna. The men who worked on these rafts faced strong currents, rapids, and rocks. Falling into the icy water could be deadly, and breaking up log jams was one of the most dangerous jobs of all.

Daniel Hughes was one of the men who transported lumber from Williamsport, PA, to Havre de Grace, MD. But the river was not just used for moving logs—many people escaping slavery also used it to travel north. By the 1800s, Pennsylvania and other Northern states had made slavery illegal, but Southern states like Maryland still allowed it. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act made it a crime to help people who had escaped slavery. If caught, helpers like Daniel Hughes could be fined or even jailed.
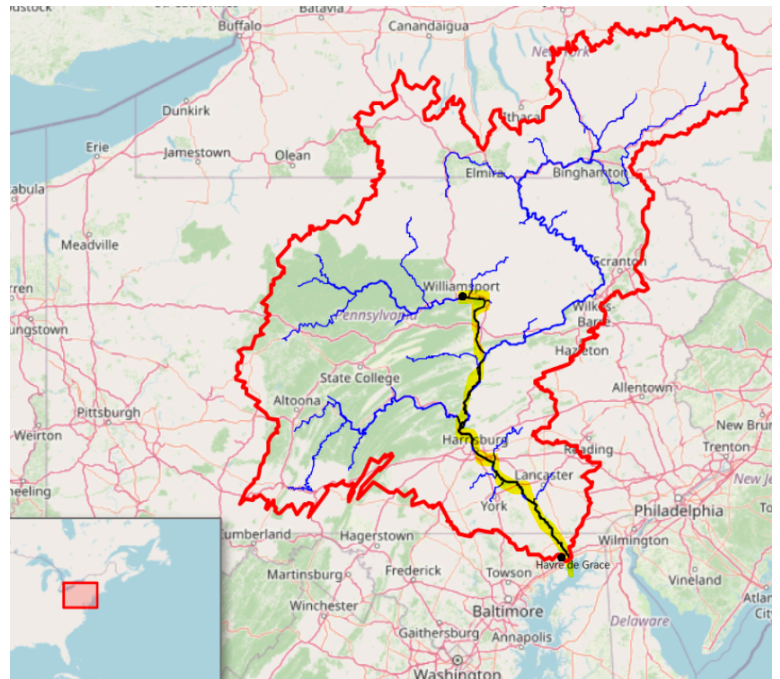
Even though it was risky, Daniel Hughes and his family chose to help. On his way back from Maryland, he hid people escaping slavery on his lumber raft. He traveled on dark, moonless nights to avoid being caught by bounty hunters and slave catchers. His job as a lumber raftsman helped him keep his actions secret.

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When he returned to Williamsport, Daniel and his family hid these freedom seekers in their home or in nearby caves. The thick forests helped keep them safe while they rested and prepared for the next part of their journey north. Daniel's son, Robert, later remembered:

"I was just a little boy, but I remember very well carrying meals out to them in the woods. They usually traveled in groups of two or three men. Often, patrollers came to our place looking for runaways. They never caught anyone at our place. Rich people and good people in Williamsport, mostly Quakers, helped in the work."

Mamie Sweeting Diggs (1933-2011), Daniel Hughes' great-granddaughter, spent much of her life sharing her family's history and their role in the Underground Railroad. It is believed that Daniel Hughes and his family helped about 1,000 people escape to freedom—and never lost a single one.

Daniel Hughes also gave part of his land to create a cemetery. Today, nine African American soldiers from the Civil War are buried there. The cemetery is called Freedom Road Cemetery, named after the road it sits on. When Daniel Hughes passed away in 1880, he was buried in an unmarked grave here, just as he had wished.