

LHR & The Underground Railroad

High School - General (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 a timeline of events relating to Daniel Hughes, the Underground Railroad, and the “peak” of lumber rafting on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.
2. Students will analyze the legal and moral implications of Daniel Hughes actions during this time period.
3. Students will connect people and events at the time and infer how the tone of the time period affected what information is available today.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer with internet access
- Materials for taking notes and making timeline (physical or virtual)

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

1. <https://underground.lynnestomin.com/>
2. <https://lumberheritage.org/rivers-timbers/>
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Hughes_\(underground_railroad\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Hughes_(underground_railroad))
4. <https://handsonheritage.com/daniel-hughes-giant-of-freedom-road/>
5. <https://paparksandforests.org/the-underground-railroad-and-the-susquehanna/>
6. https://www.bayjournal.com/news/people/log-rafts-and-raftmen-once-ruled-the-susquehanna-river/article_096cde44-c9bd-11ed-ad44-cfdcafb9bc4.html
7. <https://susqaha.org/riverroots-felling-penns-woods/>
8. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts>
9. <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1776-1865/abolition-slavery.html>
10. <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1LOO7qYH7V5M4K7UJu1X2czfe0rtu6Xo&ll=40.60762140203485%2C-77.4598957635107&z=10>
10. *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*

ACTIVITY

After learning about Daniel Hughes' story...

1. *Students will conduct research to create a timeline of Daniel Hughes' story and related time period; including the peak of lumber rafting, the estimated start of the Underground Railroad, the Fugitive Slave Acts, and the Civil War.*
2. *Students will research and identify the number of laws broken by Daniel Hughes in his participation in the Underground Railroad and what were the penalties.*
3. *Students will infer what influenced Daniel Hughes' (and others) actions to participate in what would have been considered civil disobedience and why these stories are not well documented.*

ASSESSMENT

Open discussion and/or written responses

1. *Students should analyze what assets allowed Daniel Hughes to assist so many people and what factors likely influenced him to do so, despite it being against the laws at the time.*
2. *Students should analyze why there is so little documentation on the routes and pathways taken on something as significant as the Underground Railroad.*

The Story of Daniel Hughes

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

Daniel Huges was born in Oswego County, NY in 1804. In 1828, Hughes moved to Williamsport Pennsylvania and married Ann Rotch. Their home and property were on the northern side of Williamsport where they had 16 children. Sometimes called “The Giant of Freedom Road”, Hughes was around 6ft 8in tall.

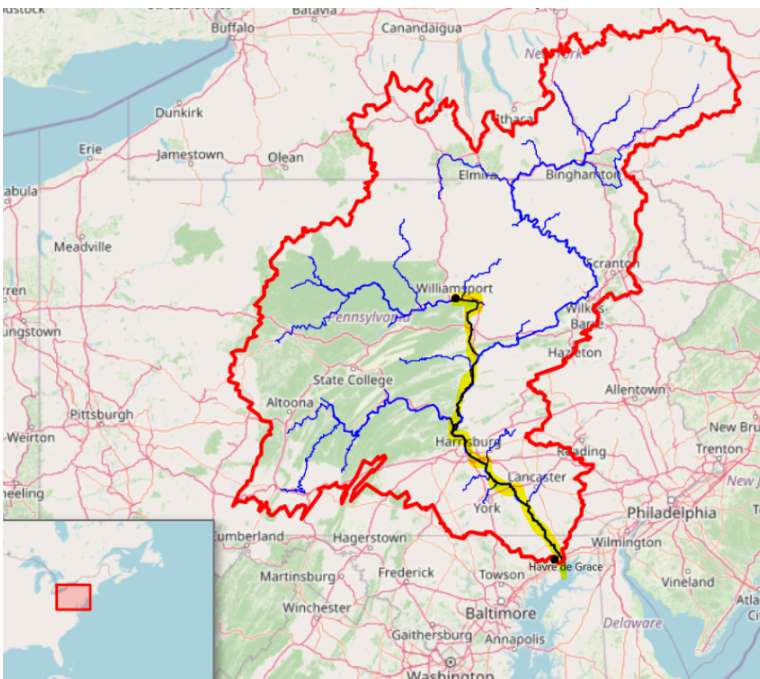


Williamsport, Pennsylvania provided Daniel and many others with work in the lumber industry. Throughout the 1800s, logging would tear through the area known today as the “Lumber Heritage Region”. The river systems provided natural highways for transporting timber, which was in high demand across the country. Williamsport itself held the title “Lumber Capital of the World” from about 1868-1906 and sawed more than 8 billion feet of white pine alone during those years. Situated along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, lumber barons and sawmills took full advantage of the natural resources of the area and lumber from Williamsport could be transported downriver to the Susquehanna River all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond.

Logs and rafts traveled down river by hundreds of millions each year. This was a very dangerous job for the raft crews, especially in rivers like the Susquehanna where natural obstacles like eddies, falls, rocks, rapids, and currents were frequent. Even if one survived falling

overboard; the icy spring waters of the rivers could be deadly. And of course the dreaded job of being the one to break up a log jam could also lead to death.

Many, including Daniel Hughes, transported lumber from Williamsport, PA to Havre de Grace, MD. It was through this important waterway that many people were also fleeing enslavement. By the 1800s, Pennsylvania and other Northern states had gradually abolished the practice of slavery. However, Southern states, including Maryland still held on to the practice. Laws like the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 were created to force people who had escaped slavery in the South to be returned, with severe penalties for those who tried to assist “runaways”.



This made networks such as the Underground Railroad (which lasted until the end of the civil war) illegal. However, this did not stop enslaved people from pursuing their freedom nor from some citizens like Daniel Hughes and his family from helping however they could. But this was a very dangerous endeavor for all involved.

Hughes was able to hide escapees on his return trip from Havre de Grace, MD to his home North of Williamsport, PA. He would use dark, moonless nights to conceal his actions and keep safe from those who might report his activities to bounty hunters and 'slave catchers'. His position as a lumber raftsman gave him the opportunity and cover to help others without being caught.

Once back in Williamsport, Hughes and his family would hide these people in their home or in natural caves nearby. The thickly wooded area helped conceal these freedom seekers, keeping them safe while they rested and replenished before continuing on their journey. Daniel's son, Robert 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 would come 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) was the great granddaughter of Daniel Huges and granddaughter of Robert Hughes. She spent a great deal of her life dedicated to sharing the history of her family and the Underground Railroad. It is estimated that Daniel and his family helped around 1,000 people on their journey to freedom and "never lost one of them".

Daniel Hughes donated a portion of his property to be used as a cemetery, where nine African-American veterans of the Civil War are laid to rest. Freedom Road Cemetery is located along the road of the same name. Daniel Hughes was laid to rest in an unmarked grave (honoring his wishes) after his passing in 1880.

Image Credits:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Hughes_\(underground_railroad\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Hughes_(underground_railroad))

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susquehanna_River

<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/underground-railroad>

