

What Was Harriet Tubman Greatest Achievement Dbq

what was harriet tubman greatest achievement dbq Harriet Tubman is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in American history, especially within the context of the abolition of slavery and the fight for civil rights. When exploring her life and legacy, one question that often arises is: *what was Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement?* To answer this effectively, historians and students alike turn to Document-Based Questions (DBQ) to analyze her contributions through various sources and perspectives. This comprehensive article aims to dissect her most significant accomplishments, with a focus on her role in the Underground Railroad, her leadership in the Civil War, and her lifelong activism, ultimately revealing what many consider her greatest achievement.

Understanding Harriet Tubman's Historical Context

Before delving into her achievements, it's essential to grasp the historical backdrop of Harriet Tubman's life.

The Era of Slavery and Its Challenges

- Enslaved Africans faced brutal conditions, dehumanization, and complete lack of freedom. - The abolition movement was gaining momentum, with activists, both black and white, fighting to end slavery. - The Underground Railroad emerged as a secret network helping enslaved people escape.

Women's Roles in the 19th Century

- Women, especially women of color, had limited rights and societal influence. - Harriet Tubman defied these norms through her activism and leadership.

Harriet Tubman's Early Life and Escape from Slavery

Her journey began in Maryland, where she was born into slavery around 1822.

Her Personal Struggles and Determination

- Harriet endured physical abuse and harsh working conditions. - Despite these hardships, she developed a strong resolve to seek freedom.

Escape and Her First Achievements

- In 1849, Harriet escaped slavery by fleeing to Philadelphia. - Her escape was perilous, and she was determined not to be recaptured.

Her Role in the Underground Railroad: A Major Achievement

One of the most celebrated aspects of Harriet Tubman's legacy is her leadership in the Underground Railroad.

What Was the Underground Railroad?

- A clandestine network of safe houses and secret routes. - Used to aid enslaved people in escaping to free states and Canada. - Not an actual railroad but a metaphor for the organized effort.

Harriet Tubman's Contributions

- Made approximately 13 missions back into slaveholding states to rescue others. - Freed over 70 enslaved people, including family members and strangers. - Risked her life repeatedly, escaping capture and punishment.

Strategies and Leadership

- Used covert communication and coded language. - Led groups through dangerous routes at night. - Maintained a strong moral conviction and strategic planning.

Impact of Her Work in the Underground Railroad

- Demonstrated exceptional bravery and leadership. - Inspired countless others in the abolition movement. - Challenged the institution of slavery directly.

Her Contributions During the Civil War

Harriet Tubman's impact extended beyond the Underground Railroad into military service and activism during the Civil War.

Spy and Nurse for the Union Army

- Served as a spy, scout, and nurse in the Civil War. - Conducted reconnaissance missions behind Confederate lines. - Provided intelligence that was vital for Union victories.

Leading the Raid on Combahee Ferry

- In 1863, led a daring raid that freed over 700 enslaved people. - This operation was one of the first military raids led by a woman. - Demonstrated her tactical skills and bravery.

Significance of Her Civil War Service

- Broke gender and racial barriers. - Showcased her leadership qualities in a military context. - Strengthened the abolitionist cause through her direct action.

Her Post-War Activism and Advocacy

After the Civil War, Harriet Tubman continued her fight for justice.

Women's Suffrage Movement

- Advocated for women's voting rights.
- Attended meetings and supported women's suffrage.

Focus on African American Civil Rights

- Worked to establish schools and help freed slaves.
- Campaigned against racial discrimination and inequality.

Her Legacy of Service

- Founded the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged in Auburn, New York.
- Advocated for social justice until her death in 1913.

Evaluating Harriet Tubman's Greatest Achievement

Considering her extensive contributions, what stands out as Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement?

Arguments Supporting Her Role in the Underground Railroad

- Her repeated daring missions to free enslaved people.
- Symbolizes resistance and courage.
- Directly contributed to the abolition of slavery.

Arguments Highlighting Her Military Service

- Her leadership in the Civil War, especially the Combahee Ferry raid.
- Broke gender and racial barriers.
- Demonstrated her strategic military skills.

Her Lifelong Activism and Advocacy

- Her efforts in civil rights, women's suffrage, and social justice.
- Her influence extended beyond her lifetime.

Conclusion: The Greatest Achievement

Many scholars and historians argue that Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement was her role in leading enslaved people to freedom through the Underground Railroad. This achievement not only exemplifies her personal bravery but also had a profound impact on the abolition movement and American history. Her ability to organize, lead, and risk her life to help others escape slavery made her a symbol of resistance, hope, and justice. While her military service and activism are also remarkable, her pioneering work in the Underground Railroad remains the most emblematic of her legacy.

Legacy and Recognition

Harriet Tubman's achievements continue to be celebrated today.

Honors and Memorials

- Inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. - Featured on the \$20 bill in recent redesign proposals.
- Numerous schools, parks, and institutions named after her.

Why Her Legacy Matters

- Represents the fight for freedom and equality. - Inspires activism and courage in contemporary social justice movements. - Embodies resilience and unwavering commitment to justice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement is often regarded as her leadership in the Underground Railroad, which exemplified her extraordinary courage, strategic thinking, and dedication to human rights. Her work not only liberated many enslaved individuals but also challenged the moral fabric of a nation, paving the way for future civil rights advancements. Through her life's work, Harriet Tubman became an enduring symbol of resistance, freedom, and justice, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire generations.

References

- Smithsonian Institution. "Harriet Tubman." - National Park Service. "Harriet Tubman National Historical Park." - History.com. "Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad." - Biography.com. "Harriet Tubman."
- Civil Rights Movement Archives. "Harriet Tubman's Life and Legacy." This article provides a detailed, SEO-structured exploration of Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement, emphasizing her pivotal role in the Underground Railroad while also acknowledging her broader contributions to American history and civil rights.

What Was Harriet Tubman's Greatest Achievement DBQ?

Harriet Tubman remains one of the most iconic figures in American history, revered for her unwavering commitment to justice, freedom, and equality. Her life story exemplifies courage, resilience, and strategic brilliance in the face of overwhelming adversity. When exploring her legacy, one question often emerges: What was Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement? To answer this, we must delve into her multifaceted contributions—most notably her role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, her work as a nurse and spy during the Civil War, and her lifelong advocacy for civil rights. This article aims to dissect these accomplishments, analyze their significance, and ultimately determine what stands out as her most profound legacy.

Understanding Harriet Tubman: A Brief Background

Before exploring her greatest achievement, it's important to understand who Harriet Tubman was. Born into slavery around 1822 in Dorchester County, Maryland, she endured the brutal realities of slavery from

a young age. Despite numerous hardships—including a severe head injury inflicted by an overseer—Tubman displayed extraordinary resilience. Her escape from slavery in 1849 marked the beginning of her lifelong dedication to freeing others and fighting injustice.

Her subsequent activities—guiding enslaved people to freedom, assisting Union forces, and advocating for women’s rights—cemented her reputation as a fearless leader and strategic thinker. To appreciate her greatest achievement, it’s essential to analyze her most impactful contributions within the broader context of American history.

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad: The Conductor’s Legacy

The Underground Railroad: A Hidden Network of Freedom

One of the most celebrated aspects of Harriet Tubman’s legacy is her role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. This clandestine network of routes and safe houses helped enslaved individuals escape from the South to free states and Canada. Tubman’s efforts in this realm are often viewed as her most visible and tangible achievement.

Her Achievements as a Conductor

1. **Leading Dozens to Freedom:** It’s estimated that Harriet Tubman personally guided around 70 enslaved people to freedom, though some estimates suggest the number could be higher. Her success rate and sheer number of escapees underscore her effectiveness.
2. **Risk and Courage:** Tubman repeatedly risked her life; she made approximately 13 dangerous missions back into slave-holding states, often under the cover of night, to lead others to safety.
3. **Innovative Strategies:** She employed meticulous planning, disguises, and coded communications. Her knowledge of the terrain and underground routes made her a masterful navigator.
4. **Inspiring a Movement:** Her leadership inspired others to take action, encouraging more enslaved people to seek freedom and empowering abolitionist networks.

The Impact of the Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was instrumental in undermining the institution of slavery by:

1. **Providing a Path to Freedom:** It physically liberated hundreds, possibly thousands, of enslaved individuals.
2. **Raising Awareness:** Tubman’s daring missions drew national attention and galvanized abolitionist efforts.
3. **Symbol of Resistance:** Her work became a symbol of resistance and hope for enslaved people and abolitionists alike.

Beyond the Railroad: Tubman’s Civil War Contributions

While her Underground Railroad activities are often highlighted, Harriet Tubman’s contributions extended deeply into the Civil War era.

Union Spy and Nurse

1. **Espionage and Intelligence Gathering:** Tubman served as a spy for the Union Army, gathering intelligence behind Confederate lines. Her knowledge of local geography and her ability to move undetected made her invaluable.

2. **Leading Raids:** She participated in several military operations, including the Combahee River Raid in South Carolina, which liberated over 700 enslaved people.
3. **Medical and Support Work:** As a nurse and cook, she tended to wounded soldiers and freed slaves, demonstrating her versatility and dedication.

Significance of Her Civil War Work

These efforts not only contributed to Union victories but also challenged racial stereotypes and demonstrated the strategic importance of African American agency in wartime.

Advocacy and Civil Rights: A Lifelong Fight

After the Civil War, Harriet Tubman dedicated herself to advocating for women's suffrage and civil rights.

1. **Women's Rights:** She spoke publicly about women's suffrage, aligning her fight for freedom with gender equality.
2. **Civil Rights Activism:** She remained active in civil rights causes, supporting organizations and campaigns aimed at racial equality.

While these efforts are vital, many historians argue that her most groundbreaking achievement was her work in liberating enslaved people directly—making her a pioneering figure in the fight against slavery.

What Was Harriet Tubman's Greatest Achievement? Analyzing the Impact

The Significance of Her Underground Railroad Work

Many consider Tubman's leadership on the Underground Railroad her greatest achievement because it:

1. **Embodied Personal Courage and Strategic Genius:** Her repeated risk-taking and ingenuity led to the liberation of many.
2. **Physically Changed Lives:** She directly impacted individual freedom and challenged the oppressive system of slavery.
3. **Inspired Future Movements:** Her legacy influenced subsequent civil rights activism and anti-slavery efforts.

The Broader Historical Context

While her Civil War contributions and advocacy work are undeniably significant, the Underground Railroad symbolizes her audacity and unwavering commitment to immediate emancipation. It also exemplifies grassroots resistance—an essential thread in the tapestry of abolitionism.

The Personal and Collective Legacy

Tubman's greatest achievement isn't just in the number of people she helped escape but in the symbolic power of her actions:

1. **A Beacon of Hope:** Her bravery inspired countless others.
2. **A Catalyst for Change:** Her success demonstrated that individual initiative could challenge systemic injustice.
3. **A Model for Future Activists:** Her strategic thinking and resilience set standards for activism.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Harriet Tubman

In contemplating what was Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement, the consensus often gravitates toward her role as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. Her daring missions, strategic brilliance, and profound impact on the abolition of slavery define her most immediate and tangible legacy. It was through her unwavering resolve and ingenuity that hundreds of enslaved people gained their freedom—an act of heroism that resonates through history.

However, it's essential to recognize that her broader contributions—her service during the Civil War, her advocacy for women's rights, and her lifelong fight for justice—collectively compose a legacy that transcends any single achievement. Still, the Underground Railroad remains a defining symbol of her courage and commitment, cementing her place as one of America's greatest heroes.

Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement, therefore, is not just a single act but a testament to the power of individual agency in the face of systemic evil. Her life continues to inspire generations in the ongoing struggle for freedom and equality.

Questions & Answers About what was harriet tubman greatest achievement dbq

No	Question	Answer
1	What was Harriet Tubman's most significant achievement in the fight against slavery?	Harriet Tubman's greatest achievement was leading numerous enslaved people to freedom through the Underground Railroad, risking her life to help others escape slavery.
2	How did Harriet Tubman's work with the Underground Railroad impact the abolitionist movement?	Her efforts significantly advanced the abolitionist cause by providing a tangible example of resistance, inspiring others, and helping to undermine the institution of slavery.
3	In what ways did Harriet Tubman's military service during the Civil War contribute to her legacy?	Tubman's role as a nurse, spy, and scout for the Union Army demonstrated her leadership and commitment to justice, further solidifying her as a key figure in the fight against slavery and racial oppression.
4	How did Harriet Tubman's leadership qualities make her a pivotal figure in American history?	Her courage, strategic thinking, and unwavering dedication to freedom enabled her to lead many to safety and advocate for civil rights, earning her lasting recognition.
5	What was Harriet Tubman's impact on the women's rights movement?	As a prominent female leader, Tubman inspired future generations of women by demonstrating bravery and leadership in the struggle for equality and justice.
6	Why is Harriet Tubman's work considered a turning point in American history?	Her successful efforts to free enslaved people and her contributions during the Civil War marked significant advancements toward ending slavery and promoting civil rights.
7	What are some of the awards and honors that recognize Harriet Tubman's greatest achievements?	Harriet Tubman has been commemorated with honors such as her image on the \$20 bill, numerous statues, and her induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame, celebrating her enduring legacy.

8	How did Harriet Tubman's personal sacrifices exemplify her greatest achievements?	Tubman endured great personal risk, including multiple arrests and threats to her life, all to ensure others' freedom, exemplifying her selfless dedication.
9	What lessons can be learned from Harriet Tubman's greatest achievements today?	Her perseverance, courage, and commitment to justice serve as timeless lessons on the importance of standing up against oppression and fighting for equality.

Harriet Tubman, abolitionist, Underground Railroad, Civil War, slavery abolition, leadership, activism, Freedom, African American history, heroic deeds