Student Information Sheet: Historic Heroes

Freedom Fighters from Brazil to the U.S.

Although the great Brazilian leader Zumbi was born free, at age 6 he was captured by the Portuguese. He escaped at 15 and returned to Palmares, a self-sustaining community of over 20,000 free Africans (c. 1655). By the time he was in his twenties, he was a respected military strategist. Zumbi wanted complete abolition of enslavement and not just the partial freedom for his community. Zumbi assumed leadership and the attacks against Palmares worsened. Zumbi continued to fight the Portugese army until his death. November 20 is the day of Afro-Brazilian Consciousness honoring Zumbi.

William Lambert was a free African American born in 1817. Lambert began serving as a conductor on the Underground Railroad at the age of 15. He moved to Detroit at the age of 18 and continued his Underground Railroad activities. He became one of Detroit's successful businessmen and political leaders. He helped organize the U.S. 102 Colored Citizens of Michigan and gave financial support to John Brown's Harper Ferry Raid. He was also a co-founder of St. Matthews Episcopal Church in Detroit (UR stop). Though he was born free, he dedicated his life to freedom of all.

Frederick Douglass was born enslaved in 1817. He ran away to New York in 1838 and published the "North Star," an abolitionist newspaper that provided readers with Underground Railroad activity. Douglass, a great orator and writer, was also a member of the anti-slavery society and instrumental in the abolitionist movement. On March 12, 1859 Douglass met with John Brown, an ardent abolitionist, and other operators and supporters of Detroit's Underground Railroad to discuss methods of abolishing all enslavement in America. Douglass sought a solution by political means.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? ? ?
How do we promote peace and freedom in our lives? Do you know anyone who inspires awe and respect?

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Antônio Conselheiro, in English "Anthony the Counselor" was born in 1830 in the sertao to family of cattle herders. He became disillusioned with the poverty and violence of the common people in the backlands and began to wander the countryside for years and preach to all he encountered. He restored churches, counseled free Africans and peasant farmers, helped alleviate hunger caused by extreme draught, and created a huge following. He was arrested several times. He also founded of the village of Canudos, the scene of the War of Canudos (1896–1897), a civil rebellion against the central government.

The accounts of her life differ, but it has been said that she was a Nigerian or Angolan princess, captured in the 17th century. She refused overtures of affection by her captors. Her punishment was to wear the metal face mask and iron collar. She stoically maintained her human dignity despite degradation and died tragically from gangrene in the neck caused by the iron collar. Anatascia is also seen by the Black Consciousness Movement as a martyr, a symbol of resistance and African consciousness against the horrific system of enslavement.

Harriet Tubman was born enslaved in 1820 in Dorchester County, Maryland and experienced an extremely cruel childhood. In 1849, she ran away and escaped by hiding during the day and following the North Star by night. Harriet returned to the South nineteen times and guided over 300 enslaved African Americans to freedom during a ten-year period. In 1851-1857, Tubman made eleven trips from Maryland to Canada. She became **k**nown as "Moses of her people" because she led so many to freedom.

What Do You Think? ? ?

Can a symbolic figure, like the image of Anastascia, be a valuable force in the lives of people, whether she actually lived or not? Explain.
Can a powerful image or symbol be interpreted and used by people to build values that can be sustaining?
Ordinary people who do something selfless and extraordinary can become symbols to us. Do you know anyone who inspires awe and respect?