

Name:

Date:

Compare & Contrast Nonfiction Texts &

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

DIRECTIONS: Read the two texts below. Then, use the Venn diagram on the next page to compare and contrast details from the two passages.

TEXT 1

Starting in the early 1800s, the Underground Railroad was a secret organization of routes and safe places used by slaves to escape to freedom. Slaves left the southern states, where slavery was legal, and went to the northern states and Canada, where they could be free. Along the way, people who were against slavery, called abolitionists, would hide the slaves until they could move to the next stop along the route. Reverend John Rankin, one of many abolitionists involved in the movement, hid over 2,000 escaping slaves in his home in Ohio.

Using the Underground Railroad was dangerous. If slaves were caught escaping, they were subjected to extreme, violent punishments. Slaveholders and law enforcement used packs of dogs, called bloodhounds, to track down escaped slaves.

The Underground Railroad ended when slavery was abolished during the Civil War. At least 30,000 people used the secret system to make their way to freedom.

TEXT 2

The Underground Railroad was a movement that was organized by former slaves and people who opposed slavery.

Though it was a dangerous journey, it allowed thousands of slaves to find a path to free states in the north. Slaves were led by people who knew the route, called conductors, and traveled mostly during the night. Harriet Tubman, a former slave and one of the most famous conductors, led 13 groups of slaves to freedom.

As more and more slaves escaped to the north, slaveholders grew angry and asked the government to put a stop to the Underground Railroad. They believed that slaves were their property and that escaped slaves were “stolen” from them.

As the number of escaped slaves grew, the United States government passed a law called the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The law required law-enforcement officials to capture and return slaves to their owners, even if they were found in a free state. People who were caught helping slaves were subjected to harsh punishments.

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TEXT 1

TEXT 2

BOTH