



# Across the River to Freedom: Early Black History in Sandwich, Ontario Curriculum Materials

Shantelle Browning-Morgan  
Greater Essex County District School Board

## Lesson Plan: Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Allen Watkins

**Grades:** 7-12

**Duration:** 3-5 classes

**Essential Question**

- Why was Caroline Quarlls Watkins' escape from slavery a success?

**Guiding Questions**

- What are the different ways that Caroline Quarlls Watkins resisted slavery?
- What can we learn about the Underground Railroad through primary sources related to Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Allen Watkins?
- What does learning about the choices people made teach us about the impact and power of our choices today?



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## Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will:

- use the historical inquiry process and concepts of historical thinking to analyze and evaluate primary sources to develop a deeper understanding of the life and experiences of Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Allen Watkins.
- consider the present-day implications of Caroline's escape from slavery.
- create arguments and support them using relevant historical evidence.

## Overview

Prior to this lesson, students viewed *Across the River to Freedom: Early Black History in Sandwich* in which they were introduced to Mary and Henry Bibb, Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Allen Watkins, and Thornton and Lucie Blackburn. In this lesson, students investigate primary source documents in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the individuals and stories presented in the documentary series.

## Materials

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Photo of Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Guiding Questions</li><li>• News Reports on Caroline's Escape</li><li>• A Map of Caroline's Journey</li><li>• United States of America and Canada Map</li><li>• Letters</li><li>• Excerpts from Lyman Goodnow's Account</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Storyboard</li><li>• Identity Charts</li><li>• Canada Post Stamp Assignment</li><li>• Culminating Activity</li><li>• index cards</li><li>• highlighters</li><li>• coloured pencils</li></ul> |
|---|--|

## Activities

### 1. Photo of Caroline Quarlls Watkins

#### Looking: Five Times Two

◦ This strategy encourages students to slow down and make careful, detailed observations by encouraging them to move past first impressions.

- Distribute *Photo of Caroline Quarlls Watkins* to students.
- Students will need a notebook or a sheet of lined paper.
- First, students will look at Caroline's photo for at least 30 seconds.
- Second, students will write down five words or phrases about any aspect of the photo.
- Third, students will repeat steps 1 and 2 and look at the photo again and try to add five more words or phrases to the list.
- Students will respond to the questions.

#### Think, Pair, Share

• Organize students into pairs. Students will share their lists from Five Times Two and their responses to the Guiding Questions.

#### Class Discussion

• Ask pairs to report on their conversations.

### 2. News Reports on Caroline's Escape

◦ Inform students that they will read two news reports which were published after Caroline Quarlls Watkins escaped from slavery. Both reports are from 1843.

• Organize students into pairs.

- Distribute *News Reports on Caroline's Escape* and *News Reports on Caroline's Escape – Guiding Questions* to students.
- Students will read the reports and answer the questions.

### 3. A Map of Caroline's Journey

- Still in pairs, students will examine a map of Caroline's journey from Wisconsin to Sandwich. Inform them that they will gain a better understanding of Caroline's experiences by analyzing her escape from slavery to Canada.
- Distribute *A Map of Caroline's Journey* to students. Students will analyze the map and answer the questions.
- Distribute the *United States of America and Canada Map* to students. Students will follow the directions on the map.

Students will:

- colour in the states that Caroline travelled through.
- colour in Caroline's final destination.
- mark significant events with symbols and include the symbols in the key.

#### Group Discussion

- Which states did you colour?*
- How many states did you colour?*
- What significant events did you note?*
- Which symbols did you use?*

### 4. Letters – Caroline Quarlls Watkins to Lyman Goodnow and Allen Watkins to Lyman Goodnow

- Inform students that in 1880, Caroline Quarlls Watkins sent two letters to Lyman Goodnow and Allen Watkins sent one. Remind students that Lyman Goodnow was the Underground Railroad operative and abolitionist who accompanied Caroline from Wisconsin to Michigan.
- Organize students into groups of three and assign each student a number from 1 to 3.
- Distribute the letters and the *Guiding Questions* to students.
- Student #1 will read Letter #1 aloud, student #2 will read Letter #2 aloud, and student #3 will read Letter #3 aloud.
- Once finished, students will respond to the *Guiding Questions*.
- Students can share their responses with classmates.

### 5. Excerpts from Lyman Goodnow's Account

- Inform students that they are going to read excerpts from Lyman Goodnow's 1880 account of Caroline's escape to freedom.
- Distribute *Lyman Goodnow's Account* to each student.
- As a class, read the account.

#### Save the Last Word for Me

- While various students read the text aloud, all students will highlight three sentences that stood out to them. They will write each sentence on the front of an index card. On the back, they will explain why they chose that quote – what it meant to them, reminded them of, etc.
- Divide the students into groups of three, labelling one student 1, one student 2, and the other 3 in each group.
- Student 1 will read one of their chosen quotations to their group. Then students 2 and 3 discuss the quotation. What do they think it means? Why do they think these words might be important? To whom?

After several minutes, student 1 will read the back of their index card and explain why they chose that quotation, thus having ‘the last word’. This process continues with student 2 sharing and then student 3.

### **Storyboard**

- Distribute the *Storyboard* handout to students.
- Students are going to create a storyboard to demonstrate their understanding of the main ideas/most important parts of Lyman Goodnow’s account. They will draw and colour nine images. Each drawing should have a short caption explaining what is happening in the picture.
- Students will compare storyboards with a partner or a small group. *How are their storyboards similar? How are they different?* This discussion can help students clarify basic ideas in the text and can also help them analyze which ideas are most important.

### **Group Discussion**

After the students have completed the exercises, ask the following questions:

- What biases do you think Lyman Goodnow might have had? Why?
- Provide one reason you might trust this source.
- Provide one reason you might not trust this source.
- Why is this account useful for learning about Caroline Quarlls Watkins?
- What was Lyman Goodnow’s connection to Caroline Quarlls Watkins?
- What new information did you learn about Caroline Quarlls Watkins from this account?
- What do Caroline Quarlls Watkins’ words suggest about her?
- What new information did you learn about the Underground Railroad?

### **6. Identity Charts**

- Identity charts are a graphic tool that helps students consider the many factors that shape individuals. Using identity charts deepens students’ understanding of others. Using evidence from the documents they’ve investigated, students will respond to the questions, “*Who was Caroline Quarlls Watkins?*” and “*Who was Allen Watkins?*” Students can use quotes from the documents as well as their own words and phrases.
- Based on what students have learned from *Across the River* and the materials in this lesson plan, students will describe Caroline and Allen.
- Distribute the *Identity Chart* handouts.
- Students will write words and phrases describing Caroline Quarlls Watkins and Allen Watkins. They can use words and phrases directly from the documents as well as add additional words and phrases that they think are appropriate based on their investigations.
- Give students a few minutes to share their identity charts with each other and encourage them to add words and phrases from others’ charts to their own.

### **7. Canada Post Stamp Suggestion Assignment**

- Inform students that they are going to write a proposal to Canada Post explaining why Caroline Quarlls Watkins should be featured on a stamp. Students will also design a stamp.
- Distribute *Canada Post Stamp Suggestion* handout to students and review the criteria together.
- Students will work individually.
- They will write a brief description about Caroline Quarlls Watkins and explain her importance in the Canadian context. Students will explain why she deserves to be on a postage stamp. Any significant anniversaries or upcoming events can also be mentioned.
  
- Students will design and colour a stamp.

### **Gallery Walk**

- All stamps will be displayed around the room. Students will participate in a gallery walk to view all of the stamps.

### **8. Culminating Activity**

- Inform students that they will answer the historical question using evidence from the sources they've investigated.
- Distribute the *Culminating Activity* handout to students.
- Students will think of three reasons that contributed to the success of Caroline Quarlls Watkins' escape from slavery to freedom.
- Students must use three different sources.
- Students will provide evidence and an explanation to support their three reasons.
- Students can share their responses with classmates.

### **Teaching Strategy Sources**

*Project Zero's Thinking Routine Toolbox*. PZ's Thinking Routines Toolbox | Project Zero. (n.d.). Retrieved April 2, 2022, from <https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines>

*Teaching Strategies*. Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.). Retrieved April 3, 2022, from <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies>

## Photograph of Caroline Quarlls Watkins

Name \_\_\_\_\_



### Guiding Questions

1. Provide at least five details about the photo.
2. What do the details you have noticed make you think about?
3. Why is this photo historically significant?
4. What historical event is connected to the photo?



According to SHEG, an image is historically significant if it:

- was important or influential at the time an event occurred
- had lasting effects on people and/or society
- was a moment of change or transition in history,
- was representative of broader trends or changes in society

Source: <https://sheg.stanford.edu/>

### News Reports on Caroline Quarlls' Escape

| <i>St. Louis Republican</i> , August 17, 1843.  | <i>Western Citizen</i> , September 14, 1843.  |
|---|---|
| <p>RUNAWAY – A negro woman belonging to one of our citizens made her escape to Galena, on board of one of our steamboats a few days since. She succeeded then in procuring a passage further north. The owners of the boat have discovered that they carried an expensive passenger, as they will have to pay her full value, with the expenses incurred in endeavoring to apprehend her.</p> | <p>We understand that this is the same woman whose case lately made considerable excitement in Wisconsin. She was followed by a couple of woman-hunters who discovered their prey in Milwaukee. Fortunately, however, the girl found friends, and by great difficulty she was delivered from the power of her enemies; she was secreted by being headed up in a barrel, and fed for several days on crumbs, which she received through small holes bored in the head. She is sixteen or eighteen years of age, and has but little, if any negro blood in her veins, but nevertheless is a slave; and she has been guilty of the atrocious crime of pretending to be free and passing herself off as a white person! What depravity! That's the way liberty is protected in Wisconsin—headed up in a barrel! She was considered a valuable piece of property, on account of her color and genteel appearance; the hunters declaring that she could be sold for \$1200.</p> |

Source: Larry A. McClellan and Kimberly Simmons. *To the River: The Remarkable Journey of Caroline Quarlls A Freedom Seeker on the Underground Railroad*. Thorn Creek Press, 2019.

### News Reports on Caroline's Escape – Guiding Questions

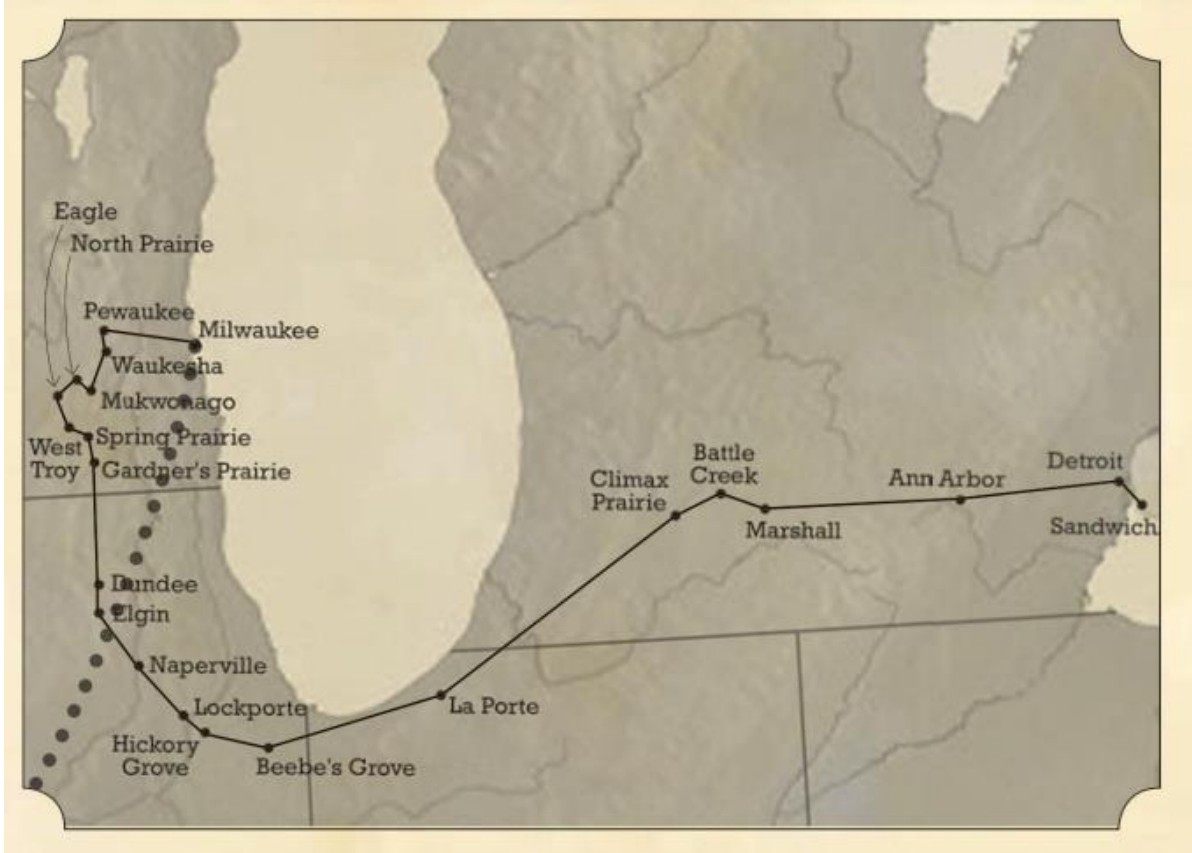
|   | <i>St. Louis Republican</i> | <i>Western Citizen</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. How long after Caroline's escape was this article written?                       |                             |                        |
| 2. What does the article suggest about Caroline?                                    |                             |                        |
| 3. According to the article, what happened?   |                             |                        |
| 4. Why did the author write this article?   |                             |                        |
| 5. What did you learn from the article that you haven't learned from other sources? |                             |                        |
| 6. Provide one reason you might trust this source.                                  |                             |                        |
| 7. Provide one reason you might not trust this source.                              |                             |                        |



## A Map of Caroline's Journey

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Review the map and respond to the questions.

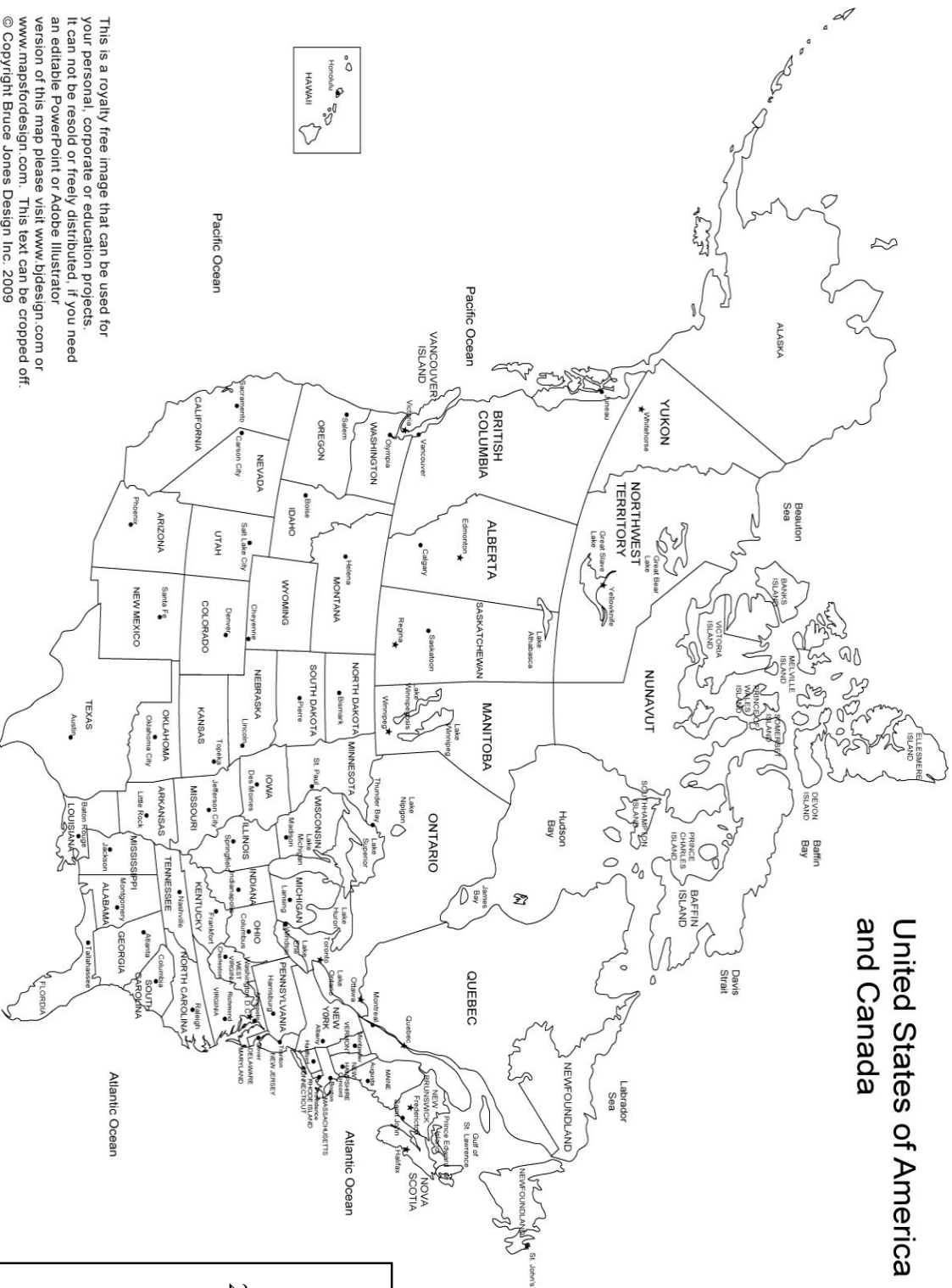


Source: The Civil War Museum Upper Middle West Experience [https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/UndergroundRailroadTeacherResources\\_CivilWarMuseum\\_Dec2020.pdf](https://museums.kenosha.org/civilwar/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/UndergroundRailroadTeacherResources_CivilWarMuseum_Dec2020.pdf)

How is this map connected to the history of Sandwich?

| Where was Caroline's starting point? | List as many locations as possible related to her journey. | Where was Caroline's final destination? |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                      |  |   |

# United States of America and Canada



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1. Colour in the states that Caroline travelled through.
2. In another colour, shade in the area of Caroline's final destination.
3. Indicate significant events with symbols.
4. Create a key.

(Pg 1)

1880  
Sandwich April 17<sup>th</sup>

Dearest friend pen  
and ink could hardly  
express my joy when i heard  
from you once more

I am living and have  
to work very hard but i  
have never forgotten you nor  
your kindness i am still  
in Sandwich the same place  
where you left me

Just as soon  
as the postmaster  
\_\_\_\_ read the name  
to me your name  
my heart was filled with

joy and gladness and i should  
like to see you once more

(Pg 2)

Before i die to return you  
thanks for your kindness  
towards me

I would like for  
you to send me one  
of those that you  
was speaking about

Dearest friend  
you dont know how  
rejoiced i feel since i  
hear from you

Answer this as  
soon as you get it  
and let me know how  
you are and you address

Direct your letter to  
Caroline Watkins Sandwich  
Ont 98

(Pg 3)

\_\_\_\_ i hope you will  
send me one of those  
books you spoke of to the

Caroline Quarlls Watkins to Lyman Goodnow, April 17, 1880  
Courtesy of Civil War Museum, Kenosha, Wisconsin

post master

(Pg 1)

1880

Sandwich April 24

Mr goodnow allow me to present  
myself to you Mr Watkins excuse me  
for taking these liberties but according  
to your request and my wishes i shall  
endeavor to give you a short narrative of  
my life as far as i can remember and  
believe me as a stranger that you cannot  
imagine how much pleasure it affords  
me to be able to answer a few for a friend  
who has been such a deliverer  
friend to the poor fugitive slaves who was  
oppressed in the bitter \_\_\_\_ of slavery  
and may the lord ever Bless you and  
peace reign in your household  
in my prayer I was born in richmond  
virginia raised in kentucky  
the first thing that started me from  
slavery i married and had 5 children and

(Pg 2)

they sold my wife after the sold her i became  
so much dissatisfied going to church one  
Sunday the minister told me that i was  
sold also his name was Nathan riggs a  
baptist minister i then resolved to go away  
that night i stole a boat and manage  
to get across the Ohio river that night  
after i crossed i went and stopped in  
Mud creek bridge the bridge has 2 storys  
and the pursuers passed right under  
me and i was lying on the top part  
and could hear every word they said  
they went straight up to Cincinati expecting  
me was up there but it so happen that we did  
not go we went up the hill into a field  
and stopped there one week during the  
week we get in with aboliner friends  
and they brought us 60 miles we  
traveled on foot shuning all towns  
and villages until we got to pickle town

and from there we got with friends  
again who carried us to Sandusky  
city and thank god for \_\_\_\_\_

(Pg 3)

Sandusky City \_\_\_ good friend  
put us on a boat and  
took me clean through to  
detroit and from there  
to canada and i am  
able to say that i had  
no trouble getting to  
canada not as my wife  
had and i will be always  
be ready and willing to  
speak a good word for  
those glorious abolitioners

No more at present  
i should very much pleased to  
hear from you at any time and  
if any of your family ever comes  
here i should be happy to have  
you call as i own my house  
where i live i remain  
your well wishes

Allen Watkins  
Sandwich Ont

(Pg 4)

I hope if you get that paper  
printed you will send us  
some write often as you  
can if you please

(Pg 1)

Caroline Watkins  
1880  
Sandwich April 27

Dear friend  
i received your  
letter and was glad to  
hear from you and your  
family and that you was well  
and doing well it leaves me in not  
very good health I did mary a  
man on Col prices farm by  
name of Watkins but he was  
considerable elder than i was  
and had children by his first wife as  
old as i was but she was sold  
from her children in slavery and  
before she got to the end of her journey  
she killed herself

I learned to read  
and write in canada/ went to school  
the first year after i came here to  
askin i was here nearly 3 years

(Pg 2)

Before i was married my husbands  
occupation is a cook I get a  
pretty good living but by working  
pretty hard for it but i am  
not very happy - I have heard  
from St louis several times since  
i came by my cousin who served  
her time out and got free and  
came here my old mistress is dead  
and my master is married  
again that is charles r hall  
I knew about me having property  
left me before i came away  
perhaps if i had of stayed until  
i became of age i could have  
got it and perhaps not there was  
not but only 2 of us i had  
one sister but she died before i  
came away I have forgotten  
how long i was going from  
alton to milwaukee by stage  
Mr pots was the name of the minister  
that my master and his wife went to

(Pg 3)

and they were presbyterians

my husband was once a slave  
born in richmond virginia  
belonged to a man by the name  
of William Watkins after he died  
he fell heir to a widow  
in kentucky by the name  
of Nancy cleveland and remain (d)  
there until he came to canada  
I have six children 3 boys  
and 3 girl 3 married and  
3 single the youngest is 16  
a boy my oldest boy is a farmer  
and my other boy is in cincinatti(sp)  
my youngest girl 18 is at home  
i am trying to educate her for  
a school teacher only she had  
quite a impediment in her  
speech they have all very good  
educations - mr askell is dead  
he moved away from here the  
second year after i came  
here he was not the man as

(Pg 4)

(Top of Page reads...)

I have answered all the  
questions you have asked me  
until the next time good bye

(Body of main letter continued:)

professed to be he had some very  
dark traits about him My  
grandfather and father both was  
born in richmond virginia  
then emigrated to st louis my  
father was name robert prior  
qualls (sp) i was born in st louis  
on the corner of pine and sixth str  
I got the box out of my masters store  
room aand hid it in a cherry hedge  
i left in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July My masters  
folks treated well enough for a  
slave Yes i have been whipped  
yes i had to do the house work  
for i was kept for that purpose  
I told my grand mother that i  
was going to canada but i  
was so young that she did not  
pay any attention to me nor  
any of the rest of them



### Guiding Questions – The Letters

|  | Letter #1 | Letter #2 | Letter #3 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Who wrote this document?  |           |           |           |
| 2. When and where was this document produced?                                  |           |           |           |
| 3. What kind of document is this?  |           |           |           |
| 4. What are the strengths and limitations of this document?                    |           |           |           |
| 5. Write five important things the author wrote.                               |           |           |           |
| 6. What does the author tell the reader about herself/himself?                 |           |           |           |
| 7. What surprised you?   |           |           |           |
| 8. After reading this document, write a question you'd like to ask the author. |           |           |           |

### Excerpts from Lyman Goodnow's Account (1880)

There probably was never more excitement in old Prairieville than during the search for, and escape of Caroline, a fugitive slave girl from St. Louis.

Caroline was an octoroon, probably. She had a straight nose, thin lips, skin not very dark, and a slender form of medium height. Although quite intelligent, she could not read or write. She was fifteen or sixteen years of age when in Waukesha. Her master was Charles R. Hall, a merchant at St. Louis, who formerly lived in Kentucky. Caroline was probably never badly abused while in bondage, though occasionally whipped in addition to being deprived of her freedom. She was brought up to do fine sewing, embroidery, and probably to wait upon her mistress. She was not allowed to attend church on the Sabbath, but was locked in the house to "scrub paints," as she called it.

Caroline wished to be free. She meditated on the subject for a long time, listened to all the talk about the North for a year or more, and conversed with her stepfather on the subject, though no one suspected her intention. Her mistress became angry at her one day, and cut off her hair, which was long and beautiful. That decided her to run away as soon as possible. She was some time in perfecting her plans. She managed in some way to possess herself of \$100, and when the opportunity came for her to go, threw a bundle of clothes out of the window, after obtaining permission of her mistress to go and see a sick girl of her acquaintance. She kissed the sick girl, bade her good-bye, went back, picked up her clothes, and walked down to the ferry. The boat was just ready to start, it being about 5 o'clock P. M. Caroline bought a ticket to Alton, Ill., where there was a school for young ladies. She wore a quantity of rich jewelry, stayed on deck in the daytime, with other young ladies, and when there was dancing she danced.

After dinner, we started on our journey, Mr. Beebe accompanying us as far as the schoolhouse, where their meetings were held. Sunday-school was just out. Beebe said they were all Abolitionists at the schoolhouse, and he wanted the people to see Caroline. So we stopped and he told the people her history. Several young ladies, Sunday-school teachers, came out after church to see Caroline and talk with her. Near by stood one of the 'liberty poles,' so called, which are common to Northern villages. Turning toward it, she asked them what it was. They replied properly. 'What is it for?' 'To commemorate the birth of liberty in America,' they answered. 'What do you do with it?' 'Oh, look at it,' was the reply. 'Who may look at it?' 'Everybody,' said the girls. 'But you said it was a liberty pole; can a slave look at it? How can it commemorate liberty in a country where there are slaves? Have you repealed the law [the Fugitive Slave Act], and raised this pole to mark the event? Do those who have their liberty have their names written on the pole or in some book? If not, how do you know who the pole is for?'

These and similar searching questions so confused the young ladies that no replies could be made to Caroline, and their Pastor attempted to reply for them but was not fully equal to the occasion. She had thoroughly befuddled her visitors, who were glad enough to call her attention to something besides liberty poles, and their connection with liberty and the Fugitive Slave Act.

We passed through Detroit at 6 o'clock on Tuesday night—about three weeks from home—while the streets were filled with workmen on their way home. We were not discovered, and arrived safely at Ambler's, who kept the last station this side of the Detroit River, his house being only separated from that stream by a narrow street. He was absent, but we were well cared for, and his wife sent

two men—one of whom I had known in the East—to take us over the river. To him I paid twelve shillings, the first money I had paid out in the whole journey, which, on account of the circuitous route followed by the underground railroad, had extended over a distance of between five and six hundred miles. After crossing the Detroit River, Caroline began crying, and clutched me by the arm, asking if it was possible that she was being taken back to St. Louis. I talked and explained, but it took some time to clear her mind, that side of the river appearing to her like the country across from St. Louis. I left Caroline with Rev. Haskell, or at his house. He was a missionary at Sandwich, Canada.

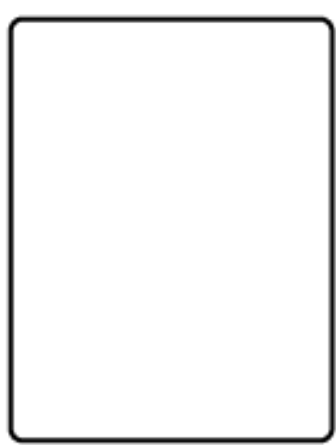
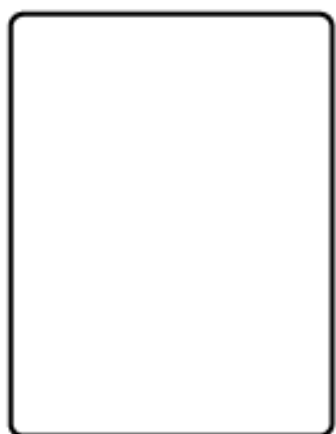
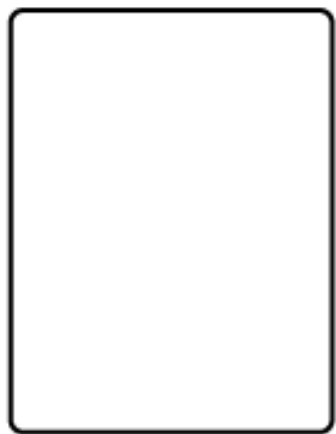
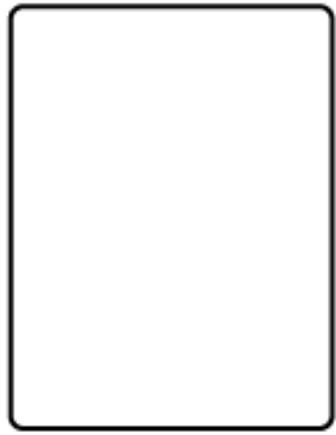
The clerk of the steamboat, whose owners were afterward compelled to pay \$800 for transporting Caroline from St. Louis to Alton, was in Detroit when we got there, and had been watching every ferryboat that crossed the river for a fortnight. How long he remained on watch I do not know, but he never found Caroline.

When Caroline was on the road to Canada, she was asked if she could read or write. 'I can't write,' said she, 'but I can read; I know as much as half my letters.'

**Storyboard Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



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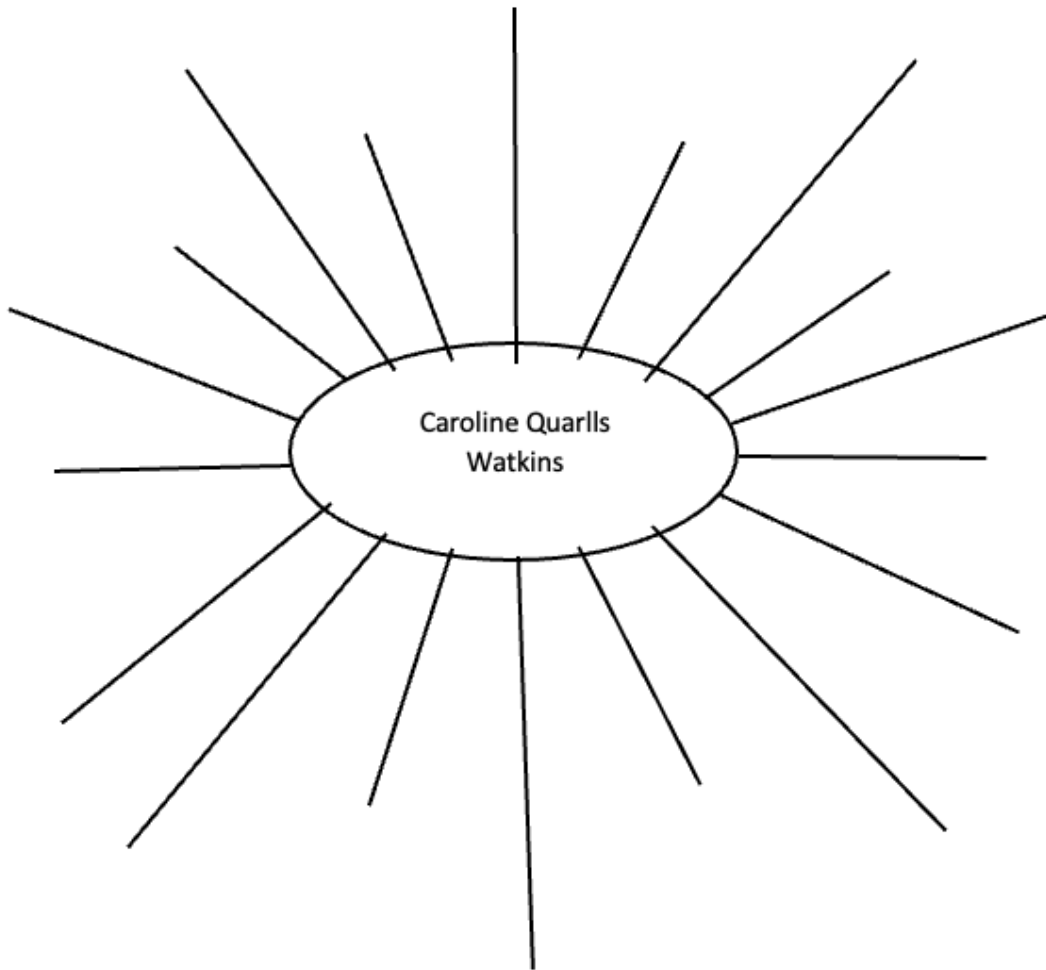
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

## Identity Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

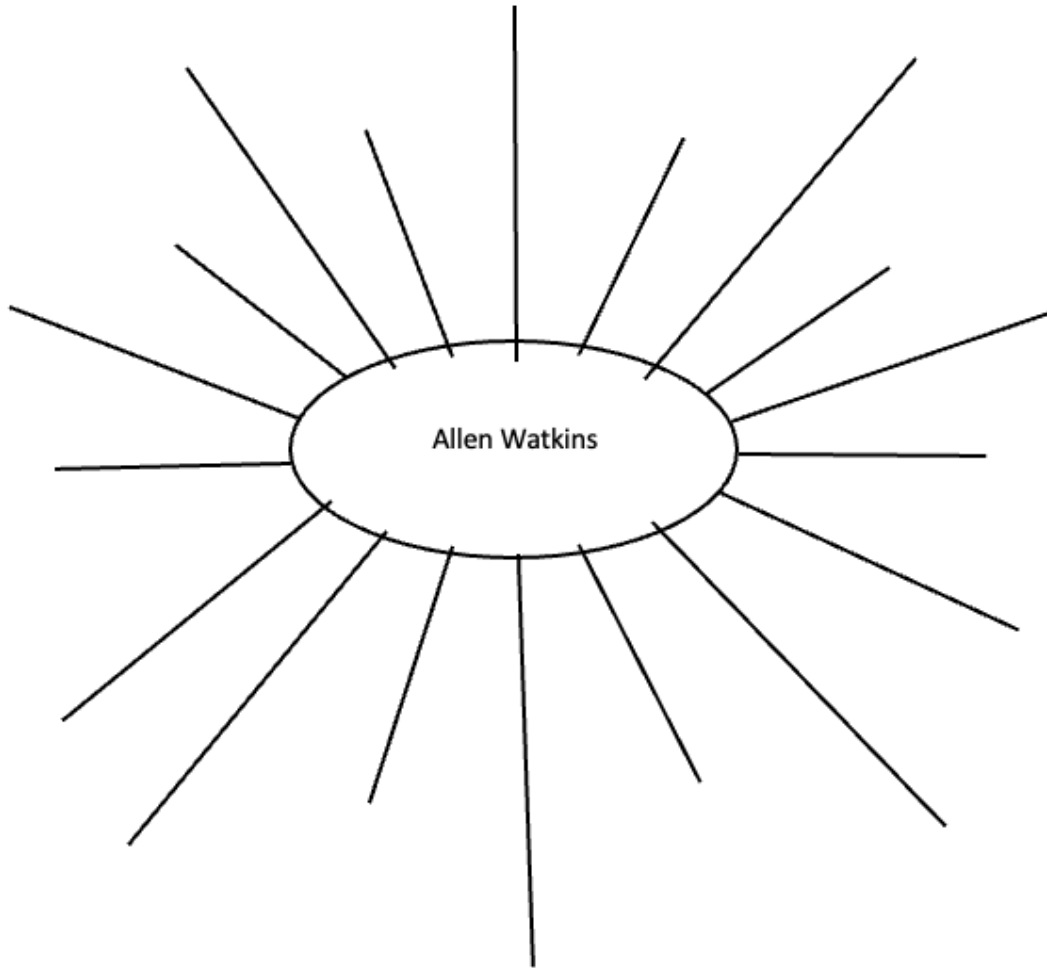
Write words and phrases describing Caroline Quarlls Watkins. You can use words and phrases directly from the documents as well as add additional words and phrases that you think are appropriate based on your investigations.



## Identity Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Write words and phrases describing Allen Watkins. You can use words and phrases directly from the documents as well as add additional words and phrases that you think are appropriate based on your investigations.



## Canada Post Stamp Suggestion

You are going to suggest and design a postage stamp in honour of Caroline Quarlls Watkins.  
Your suggestion must include:

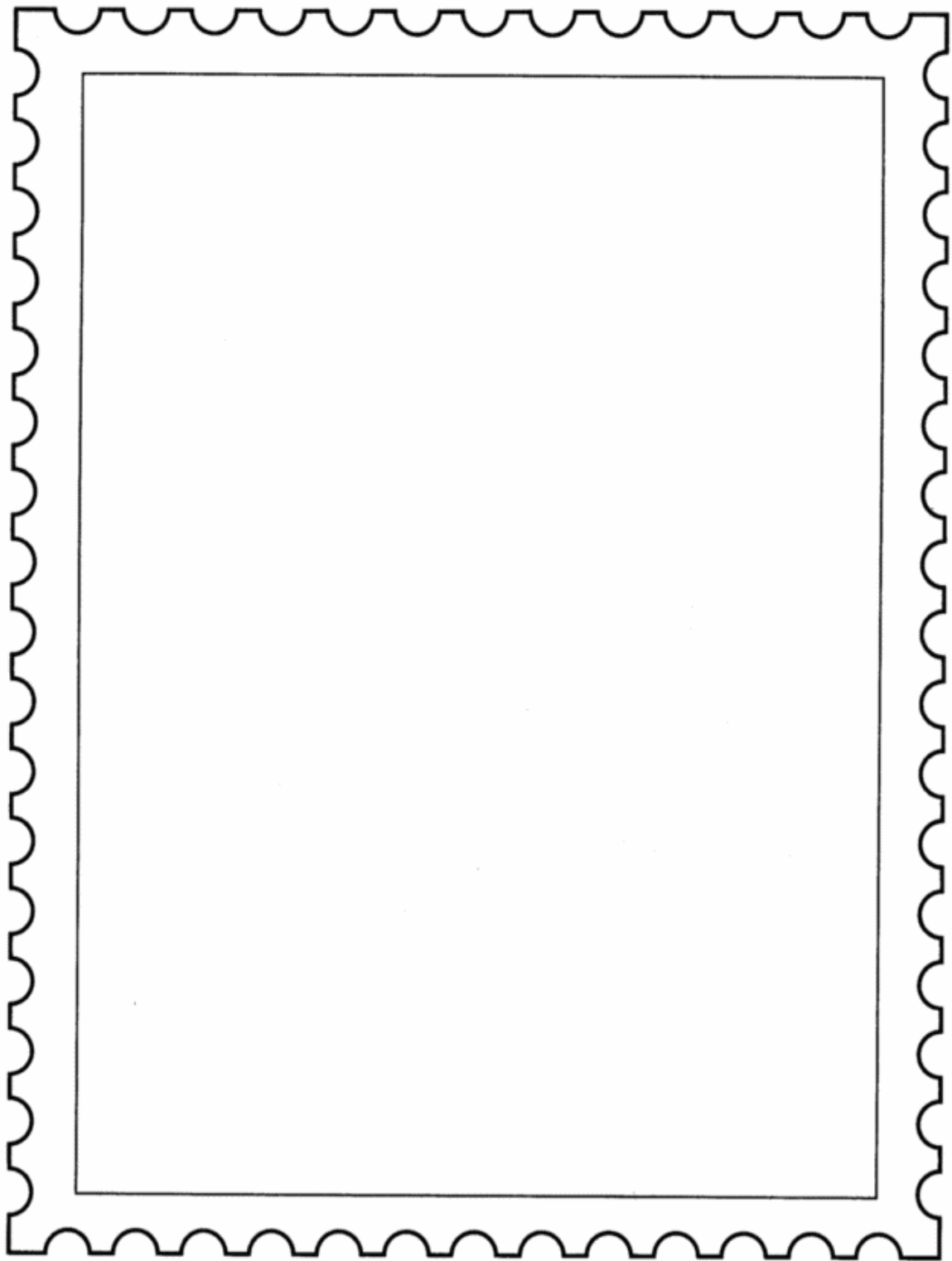
- A brief description of the subject.
- Her importance in the Canadian context.
- Any significant anniversaries or upcoming events.

Your suggested subject for a stamp should:

- Have broad appeal to the Canadian population, encouraging Canadians of all ages to buy and collect stamps.
- Relate primarily to Canada and is of national significance, such as:
  - Evoke Canadian history, traditions, accomplishments or natural heritage.
  - Illustrate the social, cultural, political or economic life of Canada.
  - Commemorate people (generally after their death), their work, their birth or a life event to recognize outstanding contributions to Canada.

All stamp subject suggestions should be directed to:

Chairperson of the Stamp Advisory Committee  
CANADA POST CORPORATION  
2701 RIVERSIDE DRIVE SUITE N0875  
OTTAWA ON K1A 0B1





**Why was Caroline Quarlls Watkins' escape from slavery a success?**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Use three different sources to answer the question.

| <b>Reason #1</b>                             | <b>Reason #2</b>                             | <b>Reason #3</b>                             |
|--|--|--|
| Source:<br><br>Evidence:<br><br>Explanation: | Source:<br><br>Evidence:<br><br>Explanation: | Source:<br><br>Evidence:<br><br>Explanation: |