

DEATH OF "QUEEN OF THE UNDERGROUND"

Mrs. Harriet Tubman Davis Succumbs To An Attack Of Pneumonia

WAS A FRIEND OF THE GREAT ABOLITIONISTS

In Many Ways She Proved Herself To Be One Of The Foremost Women Of Her Times

Auburn, N. Y., March 14.—Harriett Tubman Davis, one of the foremost personages in the great abolition movement heroine of the "Underground Railroad," and associated with Frederick Douglas, John Brown, Horace Mann, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerritt Smith, George T. Downing, Henry Highland Garnet and others battling for the freedom of the race, died at the Harriett Tubman Home Monday night. She was nearly one hundred years of age, and was not able to withstand the ravages of an attack of pneumonia. Of pure Ashantee blood, she was born on a plantation in Dorchester County, Maryland. At the early age of thirteen her instinctive antagonism against the tyranny of master over slave caused her to protest at the brutality of an overseer who pursued a slave with a club. The overseer knocked her down.

FREED MANY SLAVES.

The injuries she received on that occasion brought on fits of somnolency with which she suffered until long after the war, when she obtained relief at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Perhaps it was this injury that gave her the wonderful cunning, rising at times to the cleverest strategy, which was so remarkable in one of her apparent intellectual attainments.

She fell ill, and while confined to her cabin became very religious, developing an almost fanatic faith that carried her through dangers where strong men of the race faltered.

Her master died, and word went around the quarters that the slaves were to be "sold South"—the thing most dreaded by Negroes of the upper tier of Southern States. Harriett counselled the Negroes to run away, but none had the courage to follow her. She knew only that if she followed the north star it would lead her to freedom, and one night she stole away.

Of the terrible journey north she remembered little; her instinct guided her and her great strength enabled her to stand the privation.

She obtained employment and saved all she earned. Then she disappeared and was not seen for months. She had dared to go back to the land of bondage to show others the path to freedom.

It was not long before throughout the plantations of Maryland and Virginia were spread rewards for a Negro woman who was luring the slaves from their masters. The price for the capture, dead or alive of Harriett Tubman rose to over \$40,000 but she was never taken. She made over nineteen trips into the very heart of the country where the head money was offered. She continued this work until the beginning of the civil war.

When the abolition movement became active she went into it heart and soul. Whenever she could get to a meeting she went and inspired others with her great

faith. It was while on her way to attend a meeting in Boston at the invitation of Gerritt Smith that she fought the greatest single battle of her career.

LED RESCUE AT TROY.

She had stopped off at Troy, and while there learned that a fugitive slave, Charles Nalle, a half brother of the master who had followed him, and as white as his owner, had been taken and was in the hands of the officers, having been remanded back to Virginia. She went at once to the office of the United States Commissioner, collecting on the way a large crowd.

The crowd held back the officers, who were about to convey the slave to a wagon, and bids for the slave's purchase began. The owner offered to sell for \$1,200, but when that was bid he raised his price to \$1,500. A man across the street raised a window and shouted:

"Two hundred dollars for his rescue but not one cent to his master!"

That fired the crowd, and when the officers tried to bring the slave out the crowd surged around the wagon. Harriett, who had kept her position at the door of the Commissioners' office, shouted: "Here he comes! Take him!" and led the assault.

Her enormous physical strength has been spoken of. Breaking through the police line she seized the prisoner under the armpits and began to drag him down the street.

"Drag us out!" she shouted to her friends. "Drag him to the river! Drown him, but don't let them have him!"

A policeman hit her on the head with his club, and, freeing one

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hand, she knocked him back into the crowd. Another jumped for her, but she caught him about the neck, throttled him, and threw him over her shoulder.

Mrs. Davis was dragged down, but kept her hold on the slave. Aroused to fighting pitch by her splendid courage, the crowd massed around her, and dragged her and the slave into the river, where the fugitive was thrown into a boat, which pulled out.

As the slave-owners had paid agents in Philadelphia, she decided to establish her free slaves elsewhere, and started a settlement at Cape May, N. J., in 1852. This place was successfully managed by her with the aid of Thomas Garrett, the Quaker abolitionist, of Wilmington, Del. She personally escorted 300 Negroes to freedom in parties of one to nine.

The Fugitive Slave law enforcement made her work more difficult each year. Driven from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, she came to New York. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 forced her to establish her last station on the underground in Canada. At this time Auburn came into prominence as one of the underground stations, and William H. Seward, later Lincoln's Secretary of State, was one of Harriett's best supporters, giving liberally from his private funds to pay carfare for fugitives from Auburn to Suspension Bridge, whence they got into Canada.

When, in 1863, it was decided to use Negro troops, Harriett pleaded to be appointed an army nurse. When the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteers marched away from camp at Readville, Mass. under command of Col. Robert Gould Shaw, Harriett left for the South with a commission in her dress pocket from Gov. Andrew. Down at Port Royal, she cooked for Col. Shaw, and dined with him, too on occasions, when she had important information to impart.

When she was not acting as cook, she scouted around the enemy's lines where she listened, and returned to repeat many things to the Union officers that they were glad to know. On one occasion, she informed Maj.-Gen. Hunter at Hilton Head of mines planted in the river, and several gunboats sent to the scene removed a lot of torpedoes that would have smashed an expedition that was about to pass over this dangerous ground.

ABILITY ADMIRER.

Mrs. Davis lived for a time at the home of Emerson, in Concord, and spent some time visiting the family of William Lloyd Garrison, the Alcotts, the Whitneys, Mrs. Horace Mann and Phillips Brooks. Wendell Phillips wrote of her, on June 16, 1868:

Illustrative of her hold upon the officers of the North and their confidence in her, one of her many war time passes may be quoted showing the privileges she enjoyed. It was issued to her by Major-Gen. David Hunter at Port Royal, near Hilton Head, headquarters of the Department of the South in 1863. It reads:

Pass the bearer, Harriett Tubman, to Beaufort and wherever she wishes to go; and give her free passage at all times on all Government transports. Harriett was sent to me by Gov. Andrew of Massachusetts, and is a valuable woman. She has permission, as a servant of the Government, to purchase such provisions from the Commissary as she may need.

David Hunter, Major-General Commanding.

Mrs. Davis located in Auburn, N. Y., permanently. She was the widow of a man named Tubman, who died in the South and later she married Nelson Davis.

In 1896 she bought a portion of what was known as the Beardsley estate north of her property, founded in that year the Harriett Tubman Home, converting the former dwelling into the home.

Mrs. Davis had been in destitute circumstances and during the past several years the Empire State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs had raised funds necessary for her support. The home, which she founded and in which she passed away to an honored death, is now under the control of the A. M. E. Zion Church. Her funeral services here yesterday were largely attended, and many were the tributes to the woman that many times risked her life in order that the chains of slavery might be broken from some member of her race.