

Name _____ Date _____

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

When Harriet Beecher Stowe met President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, he is reported to have said, “So this is the little lady who made this big war.” He was speaking about the Civil War and the part Harriet Beecher Stowe’s book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, played in fueling the flames of battle between the North and South.

Harriet Beecher was born in Litchfield, Connecticut on June 14, 1811, the seventh of nine children. Her father was Lyman Beecher, a minister, often described as demanding. Harriet’s mother, Harriet Porter, died early in Harriet’s childhood. A shy, quiet child, young Harriet loved to read more than anything else. As a young girl, she moved to Connecticut to attend Hartford Female Seminary. It was there that she first began to love writing. By the time she was sixteen, Harriet was teaching school.

Slavery first entered Harriet’s world when her family moved to Ohio. Although Ohio was a free state, right across the Ohio River lay Kentucky, which was a slave state. One summer day in 1833, Harriet saw slaves being mistreated. It was a sight she would never forget. It furthered her desire to abolish slavery.

On January 6, 1836, Harriet Beecher married Calvin Stowe. During the years of their marriage, she continued to write. She wrote for many newspapers and magazines. In 1843, her first book was published. Less than ten years later, in 1852, her world was changed with the amazingly successful publication of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The book was an international bestseller, due both to its timeliness and its stirring story.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin is the story of two slaves. One escapes to the North and freedom. The other, a slave named Tom, is moved from a kind owner to an evil master, Simon Legree. The book was a clear statement about the great harm caused by slavery. Some people challenged the book’s accuracy, and Harriet Beecher Stowe responded by publishing *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, in which she provided the factual data on which she had based her book. These two books made it impossible for people to avoid the truth: slavery was wrong. Many consider *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* a significant factor in the start of the Civil War.

Harriet Beecher Stowe died July 1, 1896 in Hartford, Connecticut. She had written a great novel, and perhaps more importantly, she had written what she believed in. She was indeed a “little lady” who made a big difference in American history.

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions about **Harriet Beecher Stowe**

1. Which U.S. President did Harriet Beecher Stowe meet in 1862?
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Abraham Lincoln
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. Jefferson Davis

2. What did this U.S. President reportedly call Harriet Beecher Stowe?
 - a. The little lady who made this big war.
 - b. The little lady who served the dinner.
 - c. A most welcome guest of the White House.
 - d. The greatest writer he'd ever read.

3. Which city and state can claim to be Harriet Beecher Stowe's birthplace?
 - a. Springfield, Maine
 - b. Litchfield, Connecticut
 - c. Hartford, Connecticut
 - d. Washington, D.C.

4. In which state did Harriet first see slaves?
 - a. Ohio
 - b. Missouri
 - c. Kentucky
 - d. Indiana

5. What was the title of Harriet's most famous book?
 - a. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
 - b. *Abraham Lincoln's War*
 - c. *Uncle Simon*
 - d. *Tom's Escape*

6. To which war is the book considered a contributing factor?
 - a. World War I
 - b. World War II
 - c. Civil War
 - d. American Revolution

Reading Comprehension

Name _____ Date _____

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE/ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. C