

# HISTORIC DISTRICT

A Crossing to Freedom

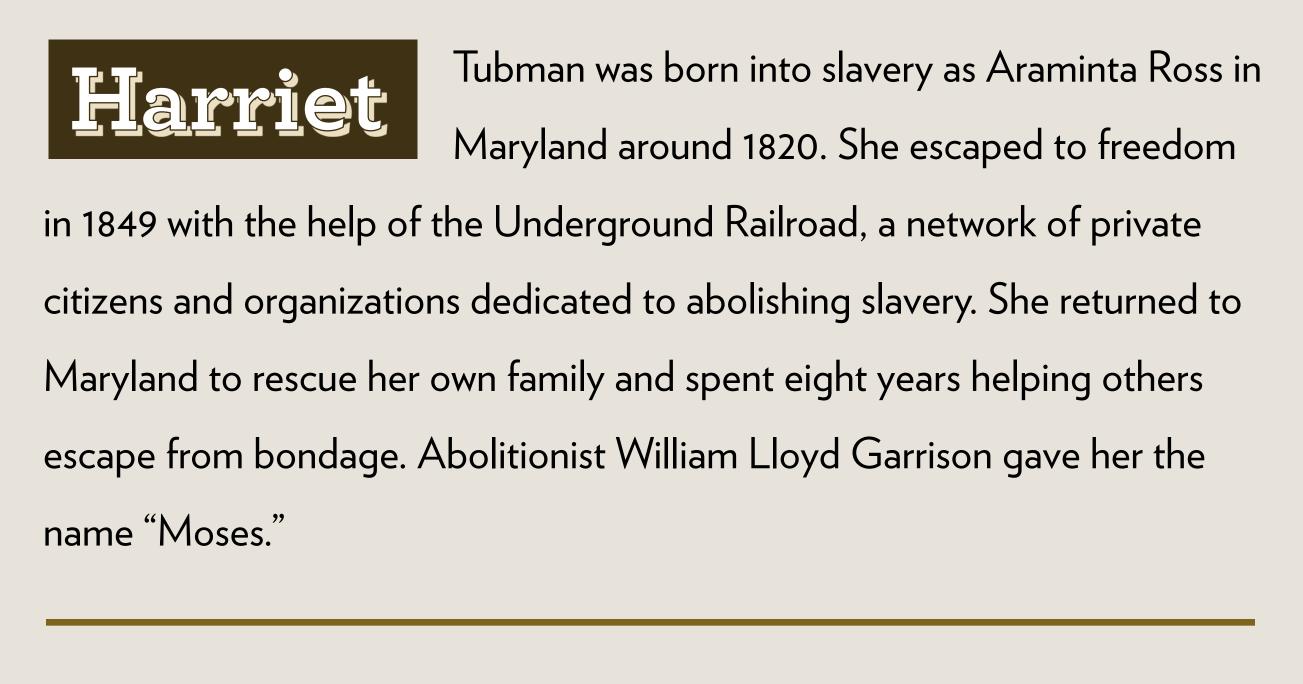


### Harriet Tubman: Conductor, Soldier, Spy

## The Combahee River Raid

"He who fights the battles of America may claim America as his country and have that claim respected." - Frederick Douglas, April, 1863

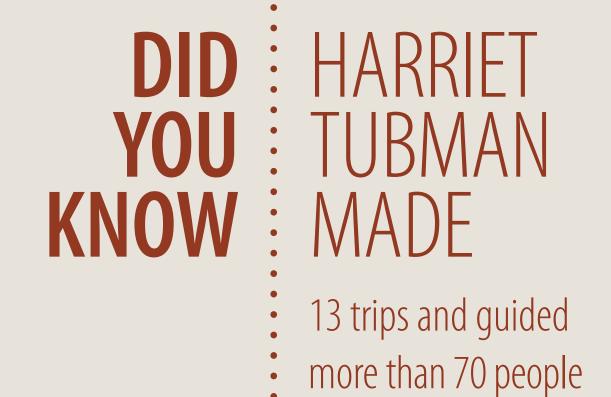
# Why Did the Raid Happen Here?



"When I found I had crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything... and I felt like I was in heaven." Harriet Tubman

on reaching Pennsylvania, 1849

During the Civil War, Harriet Tubman worked for the Union Army at Hilton Head as a cook, nurse, scout, and spy. She traveled unnoticed throughout the region gathering information about Confederate troops and meeting local inhabitants. Harriet Tubman's espionage operations were conducted under the direction of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton.



: states and Canada.

2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina Volunteer Infantry ashore near Combahee Ferry. They were charged with seizing

Tubman guided three Union gunboats up the Combahee River. Colonel Montgomery planned Volunteer Infantry. This African American regiment three landings; Field's Point, Tar Bluff, and Combahee Ferry. In the early morning of June 2<sup>nd</sup> one of the gunboats reached Combahee Ferry. the regiment. Harriet Tubman, famed Union Army
Union forces met little or no resistance at any intelligence operative, planned and guided the raid. of these locations.

"...they all come running to the gun boats through the rice fields just like a procession. Thinks I, these here puts me in mind of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt..."

Union raid conducted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina

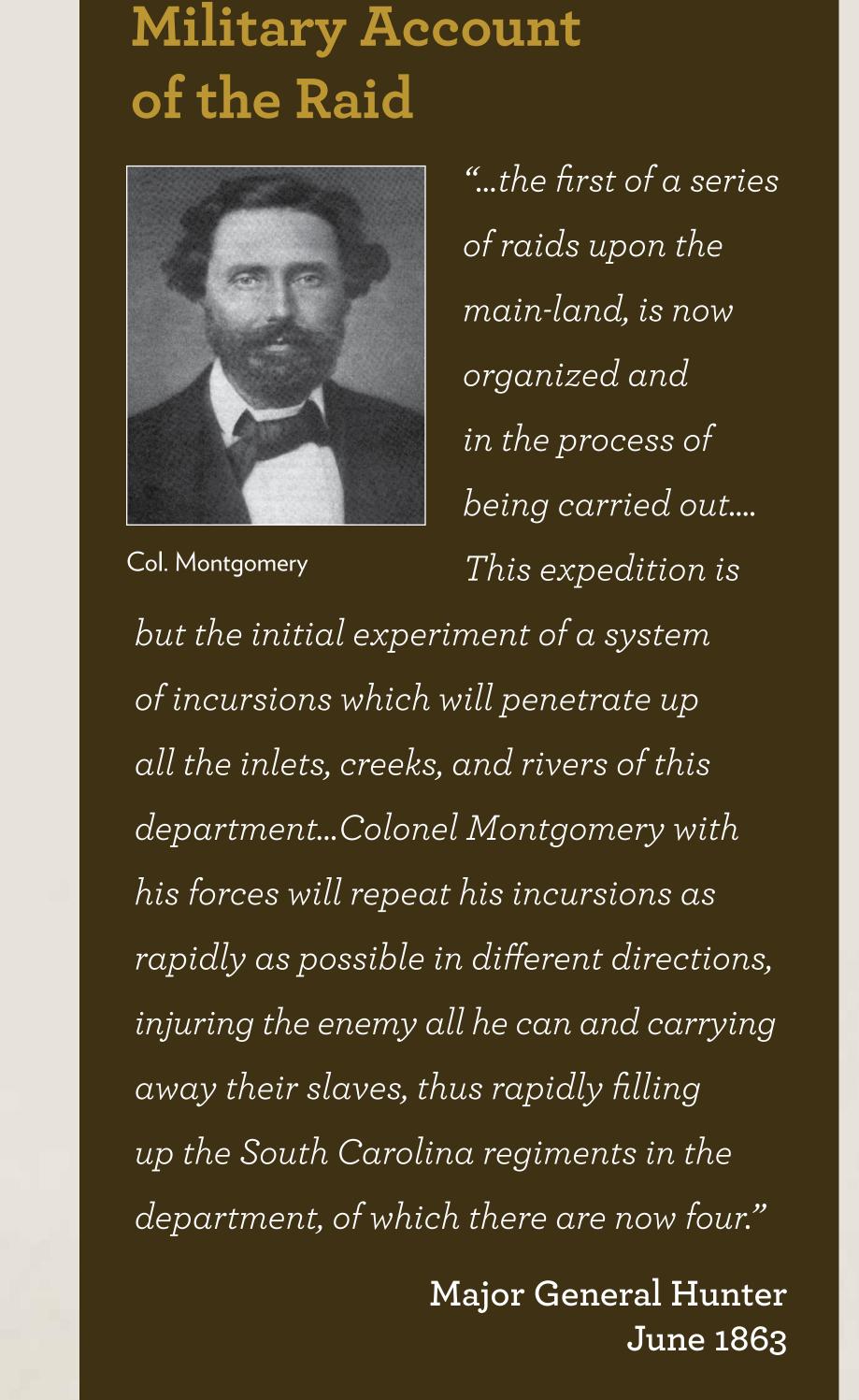
was organized at Beaufort and Hilton Head on

May 22, 1863. Colonel James Montgomery led

Colonel Montgomery sent 300 men from the

### Harriet Tubman memoir

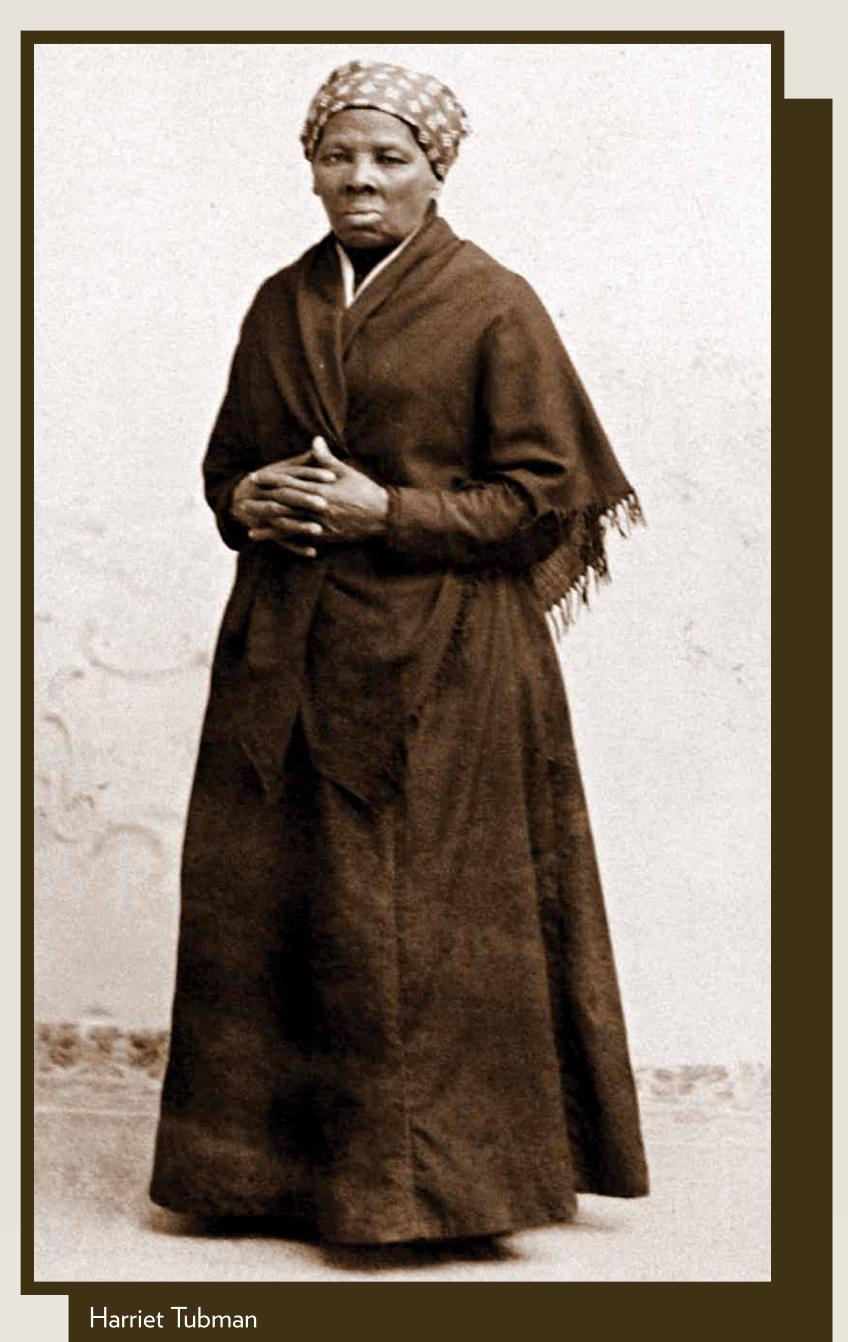
Enslaved people living on Combahee River plantations were not surprised by the raid. During her secret trips to reconnoiter



Newspaper Accounts of the Raid "Col. Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, *under the guidance of a black* woman dashed into the enemy's country, struck

a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars-worth of commissary stores, cotton and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebeldom, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars-worth of property... the Colonel was followed by a speech from the black woman, who led the raid and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted. For sound sense and real native eloquence, her address would do honor to any man, and it created a great sensation."

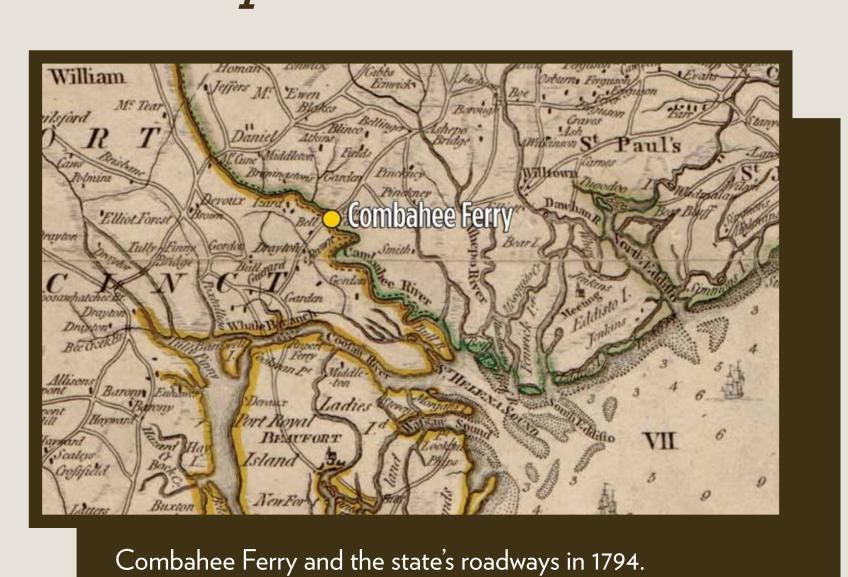
> $The\ Commonwealth$ July 10, 1863



"We destroyed a vast amount of rice, corn, and cotton stored in the barns and rice-mills, with many valuable steam-engines. We broke the sluice-gates and flooded the fields so that the present crop, which was growing

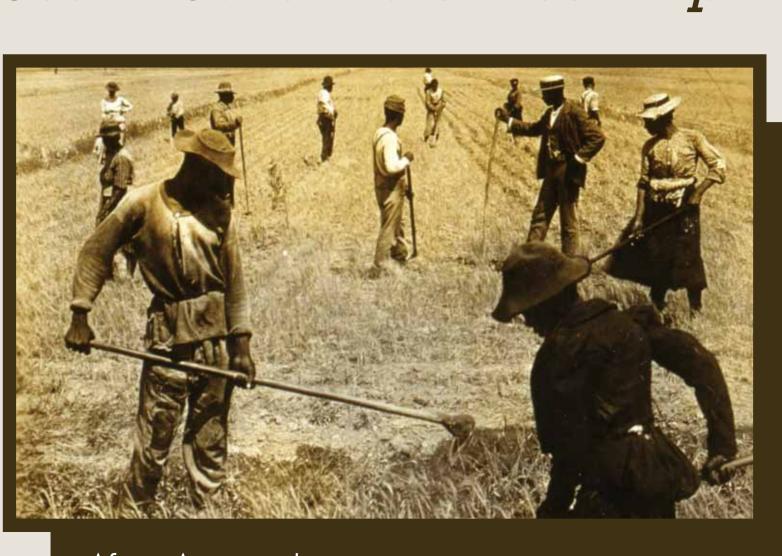
beautifully, will be a total loss. We carried out the President's proclamation too, and brought away about 800 contrabands, 150 of whom are now serving their country in the regiment which liberated them. The rest were old men, women, and children. The rebel loss from our visit must amount to several millions of dollars. We are now about commencing operations on the Georgia coast. We skirmished all day with the rebels, but escaped without the loss of a man. Their cavalry killed and wounded some of the slaves as they swarmed to the protection of the old flag."

A Transportation Hub



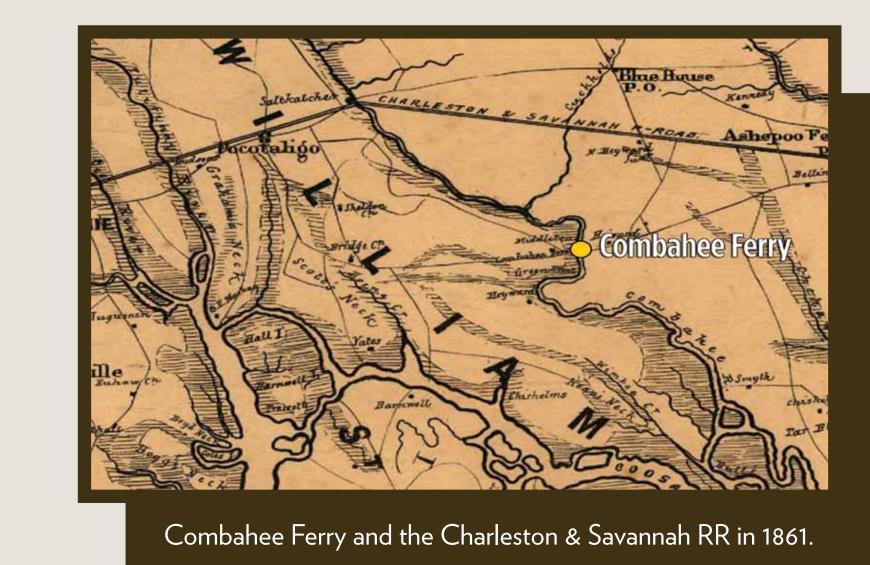
At the founding of the Carolina Colony, the region's rivers were its principal means of transportation. Later a network of roads and ferries created a statewide transportation system. The General Assembly chartered a ferry on the Combahee River in 1711. For nearly 200 years there was a tavern or store at the ferry most productive in the state. to serve the needs of travelers. Combahee Ferry was replaced by a permanent bridge in 1927. The new four-lane Harriet Tubman Memorial Bridge

The Heart of South Carolina's Rice Empire Strategy of Defense



The Combahee River marshes were the setting of a rice empire that developed in the 1740s. Henry Middleton, William Heyward, Stephen Bull, and other planters made great fortunes growing rice with the forced labor of enslaved Africans. The Combahee River rice fields were some of the The Combahee River rice plantations

were a symbol of oppression for those who supported abolition. In June 1863, Colonel A Confederate



The Combahee Ferry has been a strategic military crossing since the American Revolution. General William Moultrie used it as a gathering place for troops and supplies. At the beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln determined to block southern ports and destroy coastal fortifications. After the Confederates were defeated by the Union navy at Port Royal Sound in November 1861, Robert E. Lee decided to focus efforts on defending interior positions such

