

Harriet Beecher Stowe was an American author and abolitionist, most famous for authoring *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852.

Harriet was born on June 14, 1811, in Litchfield, Connecticut. She had four siblings, including her brother, the famous abolitionist preacher Henry Ward Beecher. After enrolling in a seminary run by her sister, Harriet moved to Cincinnati, Ohio to be with her father who was the president of Lane Theological Seminary. In 1836, she married Calvin Ellis Stowe, a professor at the seminary and outspoken abolitionist. Together, they had seven children and housed several runaway slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. They eventually moved to Brunswick, Maine, where Calvin became a professor at Bowdoin College.

After the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Harriet published her first installment of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in an antislavery journal known as *The Era*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an antislavery novel, fully published in 1852, that illustrated the horrors of slavery in the Southern United States. The book was meant to convince Northern readers of the urgency in ending slavery. The story was so powerful, and so polarizing, that it had a significant effect on sectional relations in the United States, and is often considered one of the causes of the deterioration in relations between the North and South. Slavery advocates were outraged by the novel, many of whom claimed it to be utterly false. The book was wildly popular in England, where over 1.5 million copies eventually circulated.

Harriet Beecher Stowe quickly became a household name and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became the best selling novel, and second best-selling book in the 19th Century – it was only outsold by the Bible. Stowe's book helped fuel the abolitionist cause and Abraham Lincoln is sometimes quoted as saying "So you're the little lady that started this great war!" upon their meeting at the start of the Civil War.

After *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet wrote many other books. For 23 years prior to her death, she lived next door to the famous author Mark Twain in Hartford, Connecticut. Today, the house is preserved as the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. There is also a Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, where her famous novel was written. She died on July 1, 1896.

1. Which of the following best describes the environment in which Harriet grew up in?

- A. She grew up in an anti-slavery, religious environment
- B. She grew up in a pro-slavery, religious environment
- C. She grew up in an anti-slavery environment without religion

D. She grew up in wartime environment without religion

2. Which of the following does not support Harriet's stance as an abolitionist?

- A. She married Calvin Ellis Stowe
- B. Her brother was Henry Ward Beecher
- C. She housed runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad
- D. Her book sold 1.5 million copies in England

3. What best describes the southern reaction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*?

- A. It became a bestseller in the South
- B. Southerners agreed with it
- C. Southerners claimed the book was not realistic
- D. It made southerners understand why many northerners were against slavery

4. In the third paragraph, the word "polarizing" is used to describe *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Which of the following best describes its meaning?

- A. Cold or Hot
- B. Produces strong and opposite reactions
- C. Natural or unnatural
- D. Difficult or easy

5. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*...

- A. was the best selling book of the 19th Century.
- B. had little effect on the onset of the Civil War.
- C. was the only book written by Stowe.
- D. helped fuel the abolitionist cause.

6. To which of the following questions would "Connecticut" be the answer?

- A. Where was *Uncle Tom's Cabin* written?
- B. In what state was Stowe's neighbor Mark Twain?
- C. In what state did Harriet's husband become a professor?
- D. In what state did Harriet grow up?

7. Why was *Uncle Tom's Cabin* important to the Abolitionist cause?

- A. Because Abraham Lincoln believed Stowe's book was an important cause of the Civil War
- B. Because it showed the horrors of slavery to those who might not have known
- C. Because it pulled the North and South farther apart and brought the nation closer to the Civil War
- D. Because the book sold over 1.5 million copies in England