

WELLS GALLERY

Harriet Tubman & Josiah “Joe” Bailey Illustrations by E.B. Lewis

**This following is text from the 1869 Harriet Tubman biography,
Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman by Sarah Bradford.**

It is the only detailed story of Tubman crossing at Niagara Falls though she most likely used the route many times since she brought her family and neighbors from Maryland to St. Catharine’s in Canada, and the quickest and surest route would have been through Niagara Falls.

An excerpt:

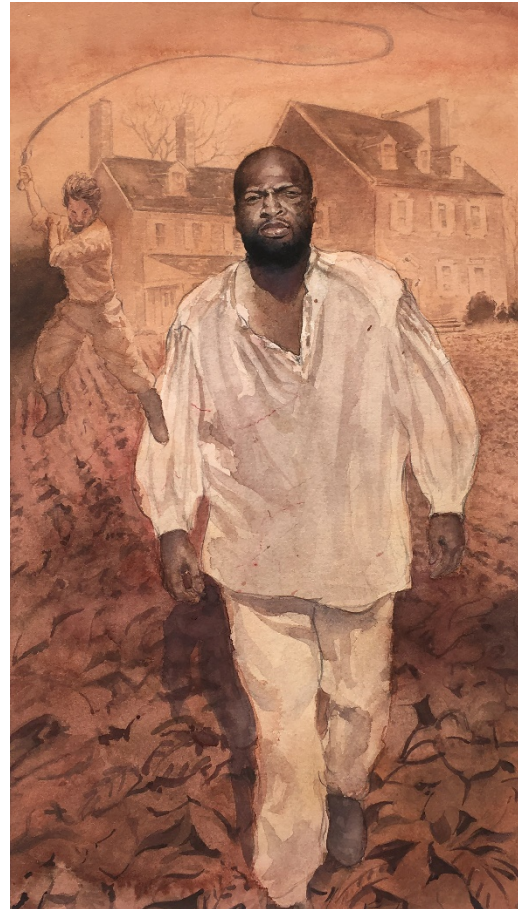
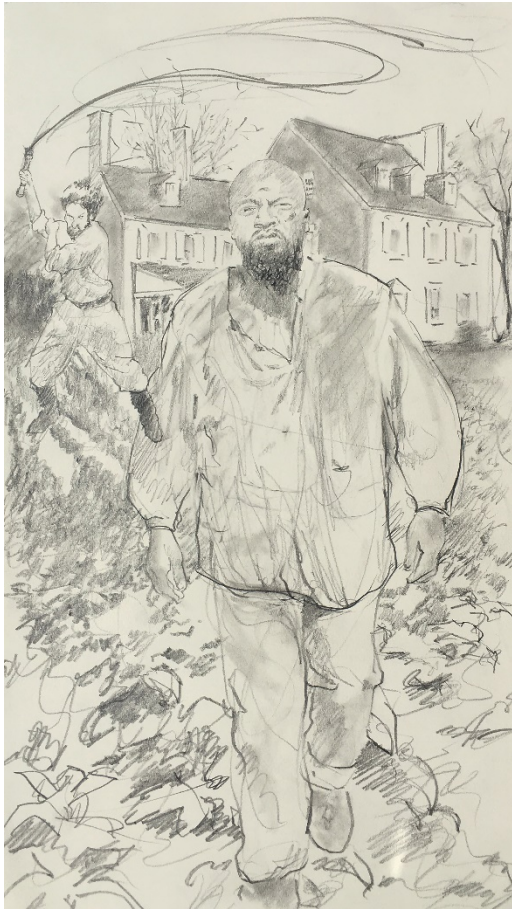
Of the very many interesting stories told me by Harriet, I cannot refrain from telling to my readers that of Joe, who accompanied her upon her seventh or eighth journey from Maryland to Canada.

Joe was a noble specimen of a negro and was hired out by his master to a man for whom he worked faithfully for six years, saving him the expense of an overseer, and taking all trouble off his hands. At length this man found him so absolutely necessary to him, that he determined to buy him at any cost. His master held him proportionably high. However, by paying a thousand dollars down for him, and promising to pay another thousand in a certain time, Joe passed into the hands of his new master.

As may be imagined, Joe was somewhat surprised when the first order issued from his master's lips, was, "Now, Joe, strip and take a whipping!" Joe's experience of whippings, as he had seen them inflicted upon others, was not such as to cause him particularly to desire to go through the same operation on his own account; and he, naturally enough, demurred, and at first thought of resisting. But he called to mind a scene which he had witnessed a few days before, in the field, the particulars of which are too horrible and too harassing to the feelings to be given to my readers, and he thought it best to submit; but first he tried remonstrance.

"Mas'r," said he, "habn't I always been faithful to you? Habn't I worked through sun an' rain, early in de mornin', and late at night; habn't I saved you an oberseer by doin' his work; hab you anyting to complain of agin me?"

"No, Joe; I've no complaint to make of you; you're a good nigger, and you've always worked well; but the first lesson my niggers have to learn is that I am master, and that they are not to resist or refuse to obey anything I tell 'em to do. So the first thing they've got to do, is to be whipped; if they resist, they got it all the harder; and so I'll go on, till I kill 'em, but they've got to give up at last, and learn that I'm master."



EB Lewis

Sketch for The Last Time and *The Last Time*

16x9" and 16x9"

Pencil sketch, watercolor

Joe thought it best to submit. He stripped off his upper clothing, and took his whipping, without a word; but as he drew his clothes up over his torn and bleeding back, he said, "Dis is de last!" That night he took a boat and went a long distance to the cabin of Harriet's father, and said, "Next time Moses comes, let me know."



EB Lewis

Sketch for Moses and *Moses*

16x9" and 16x9"

Pencil sketch, watercolor

It was only a week or two after that, that the mysterious woman whom no one could lay their finger on appeared, and men, women, and children began to disappear from the plantations. One fine morning Joe was missing, and his brother William, from another plantation; Peter and Eliza, too, were gone; and these made part of Harriet's next party, who began their pilgrimage from Maryland to Canada, or as they expressed it, from "Egypt to de land of Canaan."



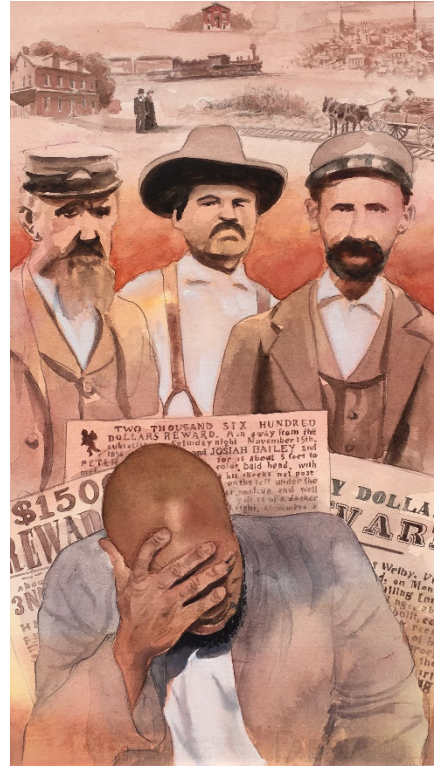
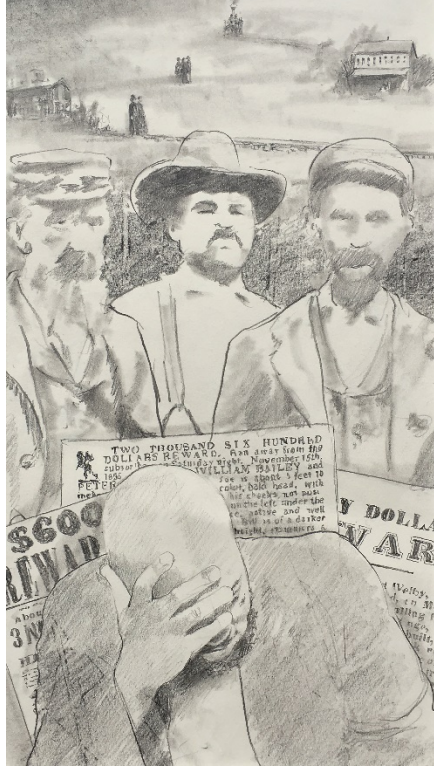
EB Lewis

Sketch for Egypt to Canaan and *Egypt to Canaan*

16x9" and 16x9"

Pencil sketch, watercolor

Their adventures were enough to fill a volume; they were pursued; they were hidden in "potato holes," while their pursuers passed within a few feet of them; they were passed along by friends in various disguises; they scattered and separated, to be led by guides by a roundabout way, to a meeting-place again. They were taken in by Sam Green, the man who was afterwards sent to State Prison for ten years for having a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in his house; and so, hunted and hiding and wandering, they came at last to the long bridge at the entrance of the city of Wilmington, Delaware. The rewards posted up everywhere had been at first five hundred dollars for Joe, if taken within the limits of the United States; then a thousand, and then fifteen hundred dollars, "an' all expenses clar an' clean, for his body in Easton Jail," Eight hundred for William, and four hundred for Peter, and twelve thousand for the woman who enticed them away.



EB Lewis
Sketch for Wanted and Wanted
 16x9" and 16x9"
 Pencil sketch, watercolor

The long Wilmington Bridge was guarded by police officers, and the advertisements were everywhere. The party were scattered, and taken to the houses of different colored friends, and word was sent secretly to Thomas Garrett, of Wilmington, of their condition, and the necessity of their being taken across the bridge. Thomas Garrett is a Quaker, and a man of a wonderfully large and generous heart through whose hands, Harriet tells me, two thousand self-emancipated slaves passed on their way to freedom. He was always ready, heart and hand and means, in aiding these poor fugitives, and rendered most efficient help to Harriet on many of her journeys back and forth.

As soon as Thomas Garrett heard of the condition of these poor people, his plan was formed. He engaged two wagons, filled them with bricklayers, whom of course he paid well for their share in the enterprise, and sent them across the bridge. They went as if on a frolic, singing and shouting. The guards saw them pass, and of course expected them to re-cross the bridge. After nightfall (and fortunately it was a dark night) the same wagons went back, but with an addition to their party. The fugitives were on the bottom of the wagons, the bricklayers on the seats, still singing and shouting; and so they passed by the guards, who were entirely unsuspecting of the nature of the load the wagons contained, or of the amount of property thus escaping their hands. And so they made their way to New York. When they entered the anti-slavery office there, Joe was recognized at once by the description in the advertisement. "Well," said Mr. Oliver Johnson, "I am glad to see the man whose head is worth fifteen hundred dollars." At this Joe's heart sank. If

the advertisement had got to New York, that place which it had taken them so many days and nights to reach, he thought he was in danger still. "And how far is it now to Canada?" he asked. When told how many miles, for they were to come through New York State, and cross the Suspension Bridge, he was ready to give up. "From dat time Joe was silent," said Harriet; "he sang no more, he talked no more; he sat wid his head on his hand, and nobody could 'muse him or make him take any interest in anything." They passed along in safety, and at length found themselves in the cars, approaching Suspension Bridge. The rest were very joyous and happy, but Joe sat silent and sad. Their fellow-passengers all seemed interested in and for them, and listened with tears, as Harriet and all their party lifted-up their voices and sang:

*I'm on my way to Canada,
That cold and dreary land;
The sad effects of slavery,
I can't no longer stand.*

*I've served my master all my days,
Widout a dime's reward;
And now I'm forced to run away,
To flee the lash abroad.*

*Farewell, ole master, don't think hard of me,
I'll travel on to Canada, where all the slaves are free.*

*The hounds are baying on my track,
Ole master comes behind.
Resolved that he will bring me back,
Before I cross de line;*

*I'm now embarked for yonder shore,
There a man's a man by law;
The iron horse will bear me o'er,
To shake de lion's paw.*

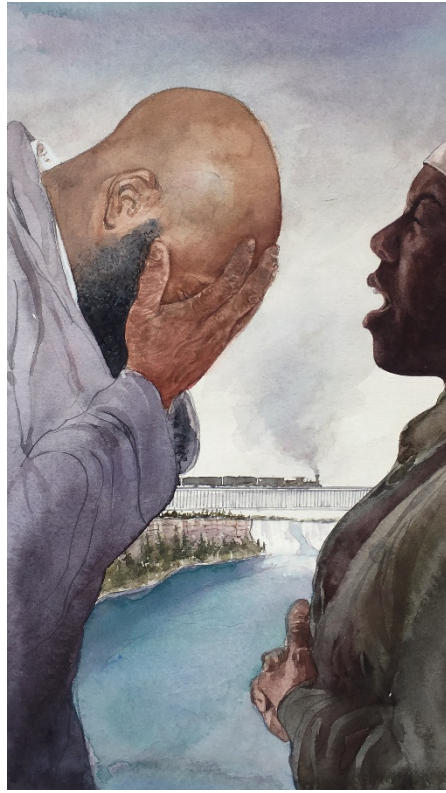
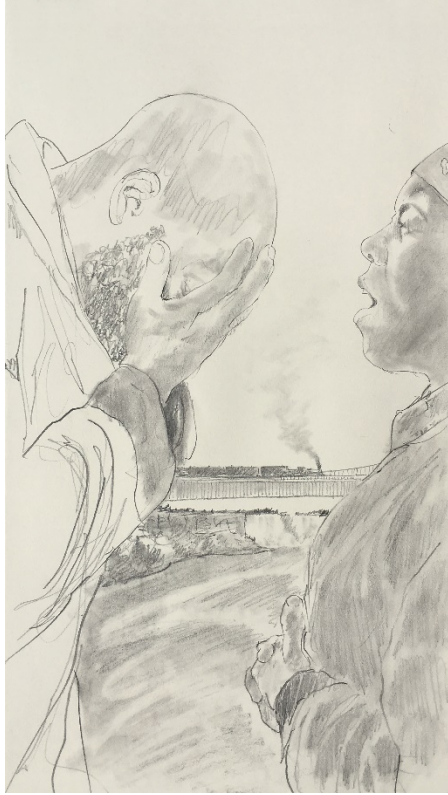
*Oh, righteous Father, wilt thou not pity me,
And aid me on to Canada where all the slaves are free.*

*Oh, I heard Queen Victoria say,
That if we would forsake
Our native land of slavery,
And come across the lake;*

*That she was standin' on de shore,
Wid arms extended wide,*

*To give us all a peaceful home
Beyond de rolling tide.*

Farewell, ole master.



EB Lewis

Sketch for Crossing The Line and *Crossing The Line*

16x9" and 16x9"

Pencil sketch, watercolor

The cars began to cross the bridge. Harriet was very anxious to have her companions see the Falls. William, Peter, and Eliza came eagerly to look at the wonderful sight; but Joe sat still, with his head upon his hands. "Joe, come look at de Falls! Joe, you fool you, come see de Falls! It's your last chance."

But Joe sat still and never raised his head.

At length Harriet knew by the rise in the center of the bridge, and the descent the other side, that they had crossed "the line." She sprang across to Joe's seat, shook him with all her might, and shouted, "Joe, you've shook de lion's paw!" Joe did not know what she meant. "Joe, you're free!" shouted Harriet.

Then Joe's head went up, he raised his hands on high, and his face, streaming with tears, to heaven, and broke out in loud and thrilling tones:

*"Glory to God and Jesus too,
One more soul is safe!"*

*Oh, go and carry de news,
One more soul got safe."*

"Joe, come and look at de Falls!" called Harriet.

*"Glory to God and Jesus too,
One more soul got safe."* was all the answer.



EB Lewis

Sketch for Glory To God and Glory To God

16x9" and 16x9"

Pencil sketch, watercolor

The cars stopped on the other side. Joe's feet were the first to touch British soil, after those of the conductor.

Loud roared the waters of Niagara, but louder still ascended the anthem of praise from the overflowing heart of the freeman. And can we doubt that the strain was taken up by angel voices, and that through the arches of Heaven echoed and reechoed the strain:

*Glory to God in the Highest,
Glory to God and Jesus too,
One more soul is safe.*

"The ladies and gentlemen gathered round him," said Harriet, "till I couldn't see Joe for the crowd, only I heard 'Glory to God and Jesus too!' louder than ever." William went after him, and

pulled him, saying, "Joe, stop your noise! you act like a fool!" Then Peter ran in, and jerked him mos' off his feet,--"Joe, stop your hollerin"! Folks 'll think you're crazy!" But Joe gave no heed. The ladies were crying, and the tears like rain ran down Joe's sable cheeks. A lady reached over her fine cambric handkerchief to him. Joe wiped his face, and then he spoke.

“Oh! if I'd felt like dis down South, it would hab taken nine men to take me; only one more journey for me now, and dat is to Hebben!”

“Well, you ole fool you,” said Harriet, with whom there seems but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, "you might a' looked at de Falls fust, and den gone to Hebben afterwards."

She has seen Joe several times since, a happy and industrious freeman in Canada.

(Tubman and Joe Bailey, William Bailey, Peter Pennington, and Eliza Manokey, in Sarah Bradford's, Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman (Auburn: Moses, 1869), 27-.)

Please contact Wells Gallery for additional information.

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