

# *Harriet Tubman*

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Born Araminta "Minty" Ross, C 1820 - 1913

**I** found this picture of Harriet Tubman, born as Araminta Ross. When I googled old photos from the 1800's on the internet, I first didn't recognize her as Harriet Tubman, but I was curious about this woman. She had something in her eyes and posture that I found very interesting, and I wanted to investigate more about her.

**T**he photo is taken in 1885 by Photographer H. Seymour Squyer, he was born in 1848 and died 18. Dec 1905. Harriet Tubman was a leading abolitionist, she had escaped slavery in 1849, and she led hundreds of enslaved people to freedom in the North, and she returned many times. Harriet becomes a famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. This was a secret network of safe houses organized for that meaning. Harriet was a respected woman, she became an American icon after her death.

**H**arriet Tubman is 65 years old on this photo; she has lived a tough life and been extremely brave. I believe the photographer was fascinated about Harriet, and that's the reason why he took this picture, to document history, a brave and heroic woman. Harriet had one admirer Sara H. Bradford that wrote about her in 1869, Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman, so there could be many reasons why the photographer chooses to take a portrait of her. The photograph tells me that the photographer documented history, a brave woman; he wanted to capture all of her, not just her face.

**H**arriet looks strong and determined in the picture. She looks like she has lived a long life, a woman with knowledge. There are a lot behind her eyes. She has a soft posture, but still she looks strong. She holds her thumbs together, like she is thinking about something, or want to say something. Her clothing is discreet, not showing off, the picture tells me that she is a strong woman with a lot of willpower, and yet down to earth and that she has experienced much.

**T**he photograph is printed on paper; it looks almost like a post card. The technical quality of the picture is medium, I think it is beautiful, simple and minimalistic. The picture can be found today at National Portrait Gallery.

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**I** think the photographer has taken a good picture of her, you can see all the details in the photo. The picture is in black and white with a Sepia tone to it, or the Sepia feeling can be caused by the aging of the photograph. It looks like the picture once have been white, but now have turned Sepia because of aging. The photographer must have been proud of his photo, since he have signed it with his signature.

**T**he photographer stood right in front of Harriet when he captured the photo. From my point it looks like the photographer had his camera height at waist level, this makes the body look balanced and natural.

**H**arriet is positioned in the middle of the picture, there is nothing else in the picture, she is the focus point. She stands a little bit on the side, not directly posing from the front. She has turned the shoulder against the camera and that makes her appear smaller in the photograph. The folding hands it gives a peaceful look. There is not much going on in the picture except from Harriet Tubman, and she brings the photo alive with her strong presence.

**I** chose this picture because I wondered about this woman, what was her story, and as I discovered - it is an amazing story. Harriet is a hero to us all, and I will read more about her in the future. It is so important that history is kept, and that we learn and bring our knowledge on to the next generation. By taking photographs we freeze moments in time.

