



**The Underground Railroad: The True Story of
Hundreds of Slaves Who Escaped Through the
Secret Network Formed by Abolitionists and
Former Slaves: Narratives, Recorded Testimonies
& Letters**

William Still

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"The Underground Railroad" chronicles the stories and methods of some 649 slaves who escaped to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Author, William Still included his carefully compiled and detailed documentation about those that he had helped escape into the pages of The Underground Railroad Records. William Still (1821-1902) was an African-American abolitionist in Philadelphia, conductor on the Underground Railroad, businessman, writer, historian and civil rights activist.

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From Reader Review The Underground Railroad: The True Story of Hundreds of Slaves Who Escaped Through the Secret Network Formed by Abolitionists and Former Slaves: Narratives, Recorded Testimonies & Letters for online ebook

Andrew Anderson says

WOW!

This begs one simple question; and we were the ones considered savages and in need of saving? Wow! Thanks to those who assisted us in seeking the freedom that God intended for all men, regardless of race. Still applicable today.

Jason says

Profound source material for the operation of the Underground Railroad, especially through Philadelphia. William Still was on the Vigilance Committee in that city and welcomed many of those escaping slavery. From each arrival he took a brief account of their adventures on The Road, as well as their hardship under slavery.

Still's writing makes use of the abolitionist rhetoric of his day with such phrases as "the no-pay system" and "seeker of Freedom". The language can be challenging because it is dated, but it is authentic. Each anecdote recounts a successful method of escaping north but also alludes to the many unsuccessful attempt. Still only recorded the stories of those who were successful, but the grim reality of slavery comes through in every line. Still employs humor, a tried and true method for coping with any hardship, with great skill. Many passages caused me to laugh out loud. Of course, many more passages elicited strong emotions of horror and sadness, too. But, the tone of the passage quoted below is so dry in the context of extreme suffering that the juxtaposition is funny and disturbing:

Turner, [escaped from Richmond, Virginia in 1859]...was about twenty-one, a bright, smart, pre-possessing young man. He fled from A. A. Mosen, a lawyer, represented to be one of the first in the city, and a firm believer in Slavery. Turner differed widely with his master with reference to this question, although, for prudential reasons, he chose not to give his opinion to said Mosen.

Tom says

First published in 1872, the 2007 edition I read is a selection of first hand interviews Mr. Still conducted with escaped slaves as they arrived in Philadelphia between 1850 and 1860. Many of the stories are augmented by newspaper accounts. There are also trial transcripts and accounts of the heroic actions by members of the Under Ground Rail Road and a copy of the Fugitive Slave Bill of 1850 and the Organization of the Vigilance

Committee. One aspect I missed was an overall picture of the structure of the U.G.R.R. However, the interviews of the escaping men and women (many will continue on their escape until reaching Canada because none of the northern states are truly safe from slave hunters), the bulk of the book, are as real, tragic and human as any tale you might imagine. This book was written by the son of slaves and at the time executive director of the General Vigilance Committee it presents mankind at its best and worst. I found it to be a treasure and a keeper.

Royce Ratterman says

Read for personal research - found this book's contents helpful and inspiring.
A good book for the researcher and enthusiast.

Donald says

A series of real memoirs that show the harsh reality and brutality of slavery in the United States, this collection does an excellent job of telling the stories of runaways you probably haven't heard of.

Joanne says

First Hand Accounts - excellent reading.

Susan says

I was very glad to make an acquaintance with this huge collection of slave escape narratives, in first-hand accounts. It's not an easy read. It took me a concentrated couple of hours just to figure out how it is organized. And the sheer number of human stories is overwhelming!

William Still was an excellent writer for his time and a very literate writer for any time. That said, his sentence structure is in the formal Victorian style that makes reading George Eliot or Henry James challenging.

What really struck me is that the heroes and heroines of the Underground Railroad are those African Americans who worked so hard, in such great danger, to achieve their freedom. The people who assisted them were often blacks who had already escaped successfully, as well as the white abolitionists we learned about through American History textbooks. This book documents so well the full impact of the Fugitive Slave Act. It includes narratives of those who were recaptured and some who died in resisting the slave hunters.

Jaylee says

It was a very good story about the different slaves that had followed the Underground Railroad to freedom. I

thoroughly enjoyed it, except for where it was all in old English... that got tiring after a little while.

Monique says

This book is FREE on kindle right now

Sarah says

(extensive!) Notes written by a member of the Vigilance Committee as he welcomed each runaway slave to Philadelphia and sent them on to Canada. Much more effective than all the fiction I've read about slavery in communicating the absolute inhumanity of this period. But also, heart-warming to read about the people, mostly white, who put themselves in danger to help runaways.' Always look for the people helping '.

Mary says

Very good book. Not an easy read because the subject matter is so difficult. Love a book that makes you think and feel!!

Melodee says

An excellent history of the Underground Railroad, with details of slaves' escapes.

Peter Michael says

This 1972 book, still in print, contains a large portion of all known first-hand accounts of Underground Railroad freedom seekers and is invaluable in research.

Lauralee Darou says

It's hard to imagine the minds of these slave owners— how they could be that deluded into believing they were somehow superior based on the color of their skin. How those few could turn a blind eye on humanity and commit these hateful acts against other humans is absolutely incomprehensible to me.

**I'm going to leave it at that for now.

Roberta says

My homeschooled daughter is interested in the Underground Railroad, so we checked this book out of the public library to use for "real life" discussions. The letters and stories are so fascinating, and so sad, at times. What bravery extended for the welfare of another soul!
