

Chapter 1 : OurStory : Activities : Slave Live and the Underground Railroad

Slave Life and the Underground Railroad Between the American Revolution and the end of the Civil War, millions of Africans were brought to America as slaves. Men, women, and children from the west coast of Africa were captured and forced onto slave ships that sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to North America.

Political background[edit] At its peak, nearly 1, slaves per year escaped from slave-holding states using the Underground Railroad – more than 5, court cases for escaped slaves were recorded – many fewer than the natural increase of the enslaved population. The resulting economic impact was minuscule, but the psychological influence on slave holders was immense. Under the original Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, officials from free states were required to assist slaveholders or their agents who recaptured runaway slaves, but citizens and governments of many free states ignored the law, and the Underground Railroad thrived. With heavy lobbying by southern politicians, the Compromise of 1850 was passed by Congress after the Mexican–American War. It stipulated a more stringent Fugitive Slave Law ; ostensibly, the compromise addressed regional problems by compelling officials of free states to assist slave catchers, granting them immunity to operate in free states. Many Northerners who might have ignored slave issues in the South were confronted by local challenges that bound them to support slavery. This was a primary grievance cited by the Union during the American Civil War , [14] and the perception that Northern States ignored the fugitive slave law was a major justification for secession. Vigilance committee Harriet Tubman photo H. A worker on the Underground Railroad, Tubman made 13 trips to the South, helping to free over 70 people. She led people to the northern free states and Canada. The escape network was not literally underground nor a railroad. It was figuratively "underground" in the sense of being an underground resistance. It was known as a "railroad" by way of the use of rail terminology in the code. Participants generally organized in small, independent groups; this helped to maintain secrecy because individuals knew some connecting "stations" along the route but knew few details of their immediate area. Escaped slaves would move north along the route from one way station to the next. Without the presence and support of free black residents, there would have been almost no chance for fugitive slaves to pass into freedom unmolested. A conductor sometimes pretended to be a slave in order to enter a plantation. Once a part of a plantation, the conductor would direct the runaways to the North. They rested, and then a message was sent to the next station to let the station master know the runaways were on their way. They would stop at the so-called "stations" or "depots" during the day and rest. The stations were often located in barns, under church floors, or in hiding places in caves and hollowed-out riverbanks. The resting spots where the runaways could sleep and eat were given the code names "stations" and "depots", which were held by "station masters". Using biblical references, fugitives referred to Canada as the " Promised Land " or "Heaven" and the Ohio River as the " River Jordan ", which marked the boundary between slave states and free states. Some groups were considerably larger. Abolitionist Charles Turner Torrey and his colleagues rented horses and wagons and often transported as many as 15 or 20 slaves at a time. Most escapes were by individuals or small groups; occasionally, there were mass escapes, such as with the Pearl incident. The journey was often considered particularly difficult and dangerous for women or children. Children were sometimes hard to keep quiet or were unable to keep up with a group. In addition, enslaved women were rarely allowed to leave the plantation, making it harder for them to escape in the same ways that men could. One of the most famous and successful conductors people who secretly traveled into slave states to rescue those seeking freedom was Harriet Tubman , an escaped slave woman. Southern newspapers of the day were often filled with pages of notices soliciting information about escaped slaves and offering sizable rewards for their capture and return. Federal marshals and professional bounty hunters known as slave catchers pursued fugitives as far as the Canada–US border. With demand for slaves high in the Deep South as cotton was developed, strong, healthy blacks in their prime working and reproductive years were seen and treated as highly valuable commodities. Both former slaves and free blacks were sometimes kidnapped and sold into slavery, as was Solomon Northup of Saratoga Springs, New York. Some buildings, such as the Crenshaw House in far southeastern Illinois , are known sites where free blacks were sold into slavery, known as the "

Reverse Underground Railroad ". Under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, when suspected fugitives were seized and brought to a special magistrate known as a commissioner, they had no right to a jury trial and could not testify in their own behalf. Technically, they were guilty of no crime. The marshal or private slave-catcher needed only to swear an oath to acquire a writ of replevin for the return of property. Congress was dominated by southern Congressmen, as apportionment was based on three-fifths of the number of slaves being counted in population totals. They passed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 because of frustration at having fugitive slaves helped by the public and even official institutions outside the South. In some parts of the North, slave-catchers needed police protection to exercise their federal authority. Opposition to slavery did not mean that all states welcomed free blacks. For instance, Indiana, whose area along the Ohio River was settled by Southerners, passed a constitutional amendment that barred free blacks from settling in that state.

Terminology[edit] Members of the Underground Railroad often used specific terms, based on the metaphor of the railway. The Railroad was often known as the "freedom train" or "Gospel train", which headed towards "Heaven" or "the Promised Land", i. He kept careful records, including short biographies of the people, that contained frequent railway metaphors. He maintained correspondence with many of them, often acting as a middleman in communications between escaped slaves and those left behind. He later published these accounts in the book *The Underground Railroad: Authentic Narratives and First-Hand Accounts*, a valuable resource for historians to understand how the system worked and learn about individual ingenuity in escapes. According to Still, messages were often encoded so that they could be understood only by those active in the railroad. The additional word *via* indicated that the "passengers" were not sent on the usual train, but rather via Reading, Pennsylvania. In this case, the authorities were tricked into going to the regular location station in an attempt to intercept the runaways, while Still met them at the correct station and guided them to safety. They eventually escaped either to the North or to Canada, where slavery had been abolished during the 1830s. The National Park Service has designated many sites within the network, posted stories about people and places, sponsors an essay contest, and holds a national conference about the Underground Railroad in May or June each year. Quilts of the Underground Railroad and Songs of the Underground Railroad Since the 1970s, claims have arisen that quilt designs were used to signal and direct slaves to escape routes and assistance. According to advocates of the quilt theory, ten quilt patterns were used to direct slaves to take particular actions. The quilts were placed one at a time on a fence as a means of nonverbal communication to alert escaping slaves. The code had a dual meaning: In addition, Underground Railroad historian Giles Wright has published a pamphlet debunking the quilt code. Similarly, some popular, nonacademic sources claim that spirituals and other songs, such as "Steal Away" or " Follow the Drinking Gourd ", contained coded information and helped individuals navigate the railroad. They have offered little evidence to support their claims. Scholars tend to believe that while the slave songs may certainly have expressed hope for deliverance from the sorrows of this world, these songs did not present literal help for runaway slaves. For example, " Song of the Free ", written in 1845 about a man fleeing slavery in Tennessee by escaping to Canada, was composed to the tune of " Oh! Every stanza ends with a reference to Canada as the land "where colored men are free". Slavery in Upper Canada now Ontario was outlawed in 1793; in 1828, John Robinson, the Attorney General of Upper Canada, declared that by residing in Canada, black residents were set free, and that Canadian courts would [38] protect their freedom. Slavery in Canada as a whole had been in rapid decline after an court ruling, and was finally abolished outright in 1833. Legal and political[edit] When frictions between North and South culminated in the Civil War, many blacks, slave and free, fought for the Union Army. I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted what they call the Underground Railroad, but which I think, by their open declarations, has been made most emphatically the upperground railroad. He went on to say that, although he honors the movement, he feels that the efforts serve more to enlighten the slave-owners than the slaves, making them more watchful and making it more difficult for future slaves to escape. Estimates vary widely, but at least 30,000 slaves, and potentially more than 100,000, escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad. These were generally in the triangular region bounded by Niagara Falls, Toronto, and Windsor. Several rural villages made up mostly of ex-slaves were established in Kent and Essex counties. Fort Malden in Amherstburg, Ontario, was deemed the "chief place of entry" for slaves seeking to enter Canada. The

abolitionist Levi Coffin supported this assessment, describing Fort Malden as "the great landing place, the principle terminus of the underground railroad of the west. Appleby, a celebrated mariner, facilitated the conveyance of several fugitive slaves from various Lake Erie ports to Fort Malden. Important black settlements also developed in other parts of British North America now parts of Canada. These included Lower Canada present-day Quebec and Vancouver Island , where Governor James Douglas encouraged black immigration because of his opposition to slavery. He also hoped a significant black community would form a bulwark against those who wished to unite the island with the United States. While the British colonies had no slavery after , discrimination was still common. Many of the new arrivals had to compete with mass European immigration for jobs, and overt racism was common. For example, in reaction to Black Loyalists being settled in eastern Canada by the Crown, the city of Saint John, New Brunswick , amended its charter in specifically to exclude blacks from practicing a trade, selling goods, fishing in the harbour, or becoming freemen; these provisions stood until While some later returned to Canada, many remained in the United States. Thousands of others returned to the American South after the war ended. The desire to reconnect with friends and family was strong, and most were hopeful about the changes emancipation and Reconstruction would bring.

Chapter 2 : Harriet Tubman - HISTORY

Learn about the life of a slave on a tobacco plantation in Kentucky. Kids can click on interactive picture to learn facts about slavery, view a slideshow, and listen to the story of an enslaved African American named Walter.

Harriet stepped between the slave and the overseer—the weight struck her head. I had no bed, no place to lie down on at all, and they laid me on the seat of the loom, and I stayed there all day and the next. She also started having vivid dreams and hallucinations which she often claimed were religious visions she was a staunch Christian. Her infirmity made her unattractive to potential slave buyers and renters. Around 1825, Harriet married John Tubman, a free black man, and changed her last name from Ross to Tubman. The marriage was not good, and John threatened to sell Harriet further south. The brothers, however, changed their minds and went back. With the help of the Underground Railroad, Harriet persevered and traveled 90 miles north to Pennsylvania and freedom. Fugitive Slave Act The Fugitive Slave Act allowed fugitive and free slaves in the north to be captured and enslaved. She often drugged babies and young children to prevent slave catchers from hearing their cries. Over the next ten years, Harriet befriended other abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Thomas Garrett and Martha Coffin Wright, and established her own Underground Railroad network. She was recruited to assist fugitive slaves at Fort Monroe and worked as a nurse, cook and laundress. Harriet used her knowledge of herbal medicines to help treat sick soldiers and fugitive slaves. In 1862, Harriet became head of an espionage and scout network for the Union Army. She provided crucial intelligence to Union commanders about Confederate Army supply routes and troops and helped liberate slaves to form black Union regiments. Though just over five feet tall, she was a force to be reckoned with, although it took over three decades for the government to recognize her military contributions and award her financially. She married former slave and Civil War veteran Nelson Davis in her husband John had died and they adopted a little girl named Gertie a few years later. Harriet had an open-door policy for anyone in need. She supported her philanthropy efforts by selling her home-grown produce, raising pigs and accepting donations and loans from friends. The head injury she suffered in her youth continued to plague her and she endured brain surgery to help relieve her symptoms. But her health continued to deteriorate and eventually forced her to move into her namesake rest home in Schools and museums bear her name and her story has been revisited in books, movies and documentaries.

Chapter 3 : Underground Railroad - Wikipedia

The Picture the Past series looks at the many kinds of communities in America's past. Each book describes what made each community different and what children and adults did each day. Life on the Underground Railroad In this book, discover what life was like for slaves escaping to freedom in the North.

George Washington complained in that one of his runaway slaves was aided by "a society of Quakers, formed for such purposes. Their influence may have been part of the reason Pennsylvania, where many Quakers lived, was the first state to ban slavery. Two Quakers, Levi Coffin and his wife Catherine, are believed to have aided over 3, slaves to escape over a period of years. For this reason, Levi is sometimes called the president of the Underground Railroad. In keeping with that name for the system, homes and businesses that harbored runaways were known as "stations" or "depots" and were run by "stationmasters. Once the fugitives reached safe havens" or at least relatively safe ones" in the far northern areas of the United States, they would be given assistance finding lodging and work. Many went on to Canada, where they could not legally be retrieved by their owners. A trip on the Underground Railroad was fraught with danger. The slave or slaves had to make a getaway from their owners, usually by night. Conductors On The Railroad Sometimes a "conductor" pretending to be a slave would go to a plantation to guide the fugitives on their way. Among the best known "conductors" is Harriet Tubman, a former slave who returned to slave states 19 times and brought more than slaves to freedom" using her shotgun to threaten death to any who lost heart and wanted to turn back. Operators of the Underground Railroad faced their own dangers. If someone living in the North was convicted of helping fugitives to escape he or she could be fined hundreds or even thousands of dollars, a tremendous amount for the time; however, in areas where abolitionism was strong, the "secret" railroad operated quite openly. Myers became the most important leader of the Underground Railroad in the Albany area. In other eras of American history, the term "vigilance committee" often refers to citizens groups who took the law into their own hands, trying and lynching people accused of crimes, if no local authority existed or if they believed that authority was corrupt or insufficient. Being caught in a slave state while aiding runaways was much more dangerous than in the North; punishments included prison, whipping, or even hanging" assuming that the accused made it to court alive instead of perishing at the hands of an outraged mob. White men caught helping slaves to escape received harsher punishments than white women, but both could expect jail time at the very least. The harshest punishments" dozens of lashes with a whip, burning or hanging" were reserved for any blacks caught in the act of aiding fugitives. A damper was thrown, however, when Southern states began seceding in December , following the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency. Even some outspoken abolitionist newspaper cautioned against giving the remaining Southern states reason to secede. She escaped from her owner near Wheeling in the Virginia panhandle now the northern panhandle of West Virginia and made her way to Cleveland in far northern Ohio, where abolitionists helped her secure lodging and employment as a domestic servant. A Grand Jubilee in her honor was held in Cleveland on May 6, Black men and women, whether or not they had ever been slaves, were sometimes kidnapped in those states and hidden in homes, barns or other buildings until they could be taken into the South and sold as slaves. Arnold Gragston struggled against the current of the Ohio River and his own terror the first night he helped a slave escape to freedom. With a frightened young girl as his passenger, he rowed his boat toward a lighted house on the north side of the river. Gragston, a slave himself in Kentucky, understood all too well the risks he was running. But as the division between slave and free states hardened in the first half of the 19th century, abolitionists and their sympathizers developed a more methodical approach to assisting runaways. Above all else, the system depended on the courage and resourcefulness of African Americans who knew better than anyone the pain of slavery and the dangers involved in trying to escape. The elderly woman who lived there approached him with an extraordinary request: His master, a local Know-Nothing politician named Jack Tabb, alternated between benevolence and brutality in the treatment of his slaves. Gragston remembered that Tabb designated one slave to teach others how to read, write and do basic math. He used to beat us, sure; but not nearly so much as others did, some of his own kin people, even. But when the time came, Gragston resolved to proceed. A Presbyterian

minister, Rankin published an anti-slavery tract in and later founded the American Anti-Slavery Society. Rankin and his neighbors in Ripley provided shelter and safety for slaves fleeing bondage. After returning to Kentucky one night from a river crossing with 12 fugitives, he realized he had been discovered. The time had come for Gragston and his wife to make the journey themselves. The youngest of 18 children, Still was born in , moved to Philadelphia in the mids and went to work for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society as a mail clerk and janitor. Still was closely involved in the planning, coordinating and communicating required to keep the Underground Railroad active in the mid-Atlantic region. He became one of the most prominent African Americans involved in the long campaign to shelter and protect runaways. In *The Underground Rail Road*, a remarkable book published in , Still recounted the stories of escaped slaves whose experiences were characterized by courage, resourcefulness, pain at forced partings from family members and, above all, a desperate longing for freedom. For Still, aiding runaway slaves and helping to keep families intact was a deeply personal calling. Sydney and her family were returned to Maryland, but she escaped a second time to New Jersey. She changed her name to Charity to avoid detection and rejoined her husband, but their reunion was tarnished by the knowledge that she was forced to leave two boys behind. Her angry former owner promptly sold them to an Alabama slaveholder. William Still would eventually be united with one of his enslaved brothers, Peter, who escaped to freedom in the North—a miraculous event that after the war inspired William to compile his history, hoping it would promote similar reunions. The work of the Underground Railroad became the focal point of pro- and anti-slavery agitation after passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in . As the decade progressed, the Fugitive Slave Act gave the work of the Underground Railroad new urgency. Perhaps no one embodied the hunger for freedom more completely than John Henry Hill. After recovering from the shock of being told by his owner that he was to be sold at auction in Richmond, Hill arrived at the site of the public sale, where he mounted a desperate struggle to escape. Employing fists, feet and a knife, he turned away four or five would-be captors and bolted from the auction house. He hid from his baffled pursuers in the kitchen of a nearby merchant until he decided he wanted to go to Petersburg, Va. He stayed in Petersburg as long as he dared, leaving only when informed of a plot to capture him. Four days after departing Richmond on foot, he arrived in Norfolk and boarded ship—more than nine months after escaping from the auction. But other matters preoccupied him. Still, I have been looking and looking for my friends for several days, but have not seen nor heard of them. I hope and trust in the Lord Almighty that all things are well with them. My dear sir I could feel so much better satisfied if I could hear from my wife. In another letter, Hill fretted about the fate of his uncle, Hezekiah, who went into hiding after his escape and ultimately fled to freedom after 13 months. Despite enormous difficulties, some families managed to escape to freedom intact. My master was wanting to keep me in the dark about taking them, for fear that something might happen. Upon learning of his planned departure for Mississippi, quick-thinking Jackson gathered her children and headed for Pennsylvania. From Pennsylvania, the family continued north into Canada. The 40 or so years Jackson had spent in slavery were at an end. Jackson and her interesting family of seven children arrived safe and in good health and spirits at my house in St. Davidson, however, was a different story. Davidson assumed control of the farm and the slaves, Hammond remembered—and refused to complete the transaction Berry had arranged with her late husband. Hammond recalled that her father bribed the Anne Arundel sheriff for permits allowing him to travel to Baltimore with his wife and child. Davidson and one by the Anne Arundel sheriff, perhaps to protect himself from criticism for the role he played in aiding their escape in the first place. Coleman, who delivered merchandise to the towns between Baltimore and Hanover, Pa. Hammond attended school at a Quaker mission. When the war ended, her family returned to Baltimore. Hammond completed the seventh grade and, just like her mother, became a cook. Even as he mourned the loss of his son, Hill reflected on his contentment. Mitchell is the author of *Skirmisher*:

Chapter 4 : How the Underground Railroad Worked | HowStuffWorks

Subsequent chapters describe terrifying journeys on the "railroad," and how runaway slaves worked with underground conductors and stationmasters to outwit bounty hunters. A brief final section links the impact of the Underground Railroad experience on African-American military service for the Union and the events of Reconstruction.

This booklet will provide a window into the past through a variety of primary sources regarding the Underground Railroad. These primary sources consist of broadsides, reward posters, newspaper clippings, historical documents, sheet music, photographs and narratives pertaining to the Underground Railroad. These items are found within the digitized collections of the Library of Congress. The Underground Railroad was a secret system developed to aid fugitive slaves on their escape to freedom. Involvement with the Underground Railroad was not only dangerous, but it was also illegal. So, to help protect themselves and their mission secret codes were created. The term Underground Railroad referred to the entire system, which consisted of many routes called lines. The free individuals who helped runaway slaves travel toward freedom were called conductors, and the fugitive slaves were referred to as cargo. The safe houses used as hiding places along the lines of the Underground Railroad were called stations. A lit lantern hung outside would identify these stations. A Dangerous Path to Freedom Traveling along the Underground Railroad was a long a perilous journey for fugitive slaves to reach their freedom. Runaway slaves had to travel great distances, many times on foot, in a short amount of time. They did this with little or no food and no protection from the slave catchers chasing them. Slave owners were not the only pursuers of fugitive slaves. In order to entice others to assist in the capture of these slaves, their owners would post reward posters offering payment for the capture of their property. If they were caught, any number of terrible things could happen to them. Many captured fugitive slaves were flogged, branded, jailed, sold back into slavery, or even killed. Not only did fugitive slaves have the fear of starvation and capture, but there were also threats presented by their surroundings. While traveling for long periods of time in the wilderness, they would have to fend off animals wanting to kill and eat them, cross treacherous terrain, and survive severe temperatures. For the slaves traveling north on the Underground Railroad, they were still in danger once they entered northern states. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 allowed and encouraged the capture of fugitive slaves due to the fact that they were seen as stolen property, rather than abused human beings. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 also outlawed the abetting of fugitive slaves. Their safety and freedom would not be reached until they entered into Canada. Not all slaves traveled north. There were also Underground Railroad lines that lead south en route for Mexico and the Caribbean. He was taken from his northern residence, arrested, and tried under this law in Boston, Massachusetts. His arrest spurred black and white abolitionists and citizens of Boston to riot and protest. After the trial, Burns was taken back to cruelty of the south which he thought he had escaped from. While he was enduring his return to slavery, abolitionists were working to raise funds and within a year of his trial they had enough money to buy his freedom. He escaped not on the Underground Railroad, but on a real train. He disguised himself as a sailor, but this was not enough. Luckily, the train conductor did not look closely at the papers, and Douglass gained his passage to freedom. Unfortunately, not all runaway slaves made it to freedom. But, many of those who did manage to escape went on to tell their stories of flight from slavery and to help other slaves not yet free. He shipped himself in a three foot long by two and a half foot deep by two foot wide box, from Richmond, Virginia to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When he was removed from the box, he came out singing. Conductors helped runaway slaves by providing them with safe passage to and from stations. They did this under the cover of darkness with slave catchers hot on their heels. Many times these stations would be located within their own homes and businesses. The act of harboring fugitive slaves put these conductors in grave danger; yet, they persisted because they believed in a cause greater than themselves, which was the freeing of thousands of enslaved human beings. These conductors were comprised of a diverse group of people. They included people of different races, occupations and income levels. There were also former slaves who had escaped using the Underground Railroad and voluntarily returned to the lands of slavery, as conductors, to help free those still enslaved. If a conductor was caught helping free slaves they would be fined, imprisoned, branded, or even

hanged. Jonathan Walker was a sea captain caught off the shore of Florida trying to transport fugitive slaves to freedom in the Bahamas. She never lost one of them along the way. As a fugitive slave herself, she was helped along the Underground Railroad by another famous conductor—William Still. He went on to write *The Underground Railroad*: John Parker is yet another former slave who escaped and ventured back into slave states to help free others. He conducted one of the busiest sections of the Underground Railroad, transporting fugitive slaves across the Ohio River. His neighbor and fellow conductor, Reverend John Rankin, worked with him on the Underground Railroad. Both of their homes served as Underground Railroad stations. Conductors of the Underground Railroad undoubtedly opposed slavery, and they were not alone. Abolitionists took action against slavery as well. The organization created the Declaration of Anti-Slavery in which they gave reasons for the construction of the society and its goals. The society distributed an annual almanac that included poems, drawings, essays and other abolitionist material. Frederick Douglass was an escaped slave who became a famous abolitionist. He published a newspaper called the *North Star* in which he voiced his goals for the abolishment of slavery. Anthony was another well known abolitionist who spoke and wrote for the efforts to abolish slavery. Much of her book was based on the experiences of fugitive slave Josiah Henson. *Efforts of Abolitionists Telling Their Story*: He made many failed attempts to escape slavery; yet, he still had the courage and perseverance to continue in his fight for freedom after every capture and punishment. His perseverance paid off when he made a successful and much anticipated escape to the northern states and then on to Canada with the help of the Underground Railroad. The following is an excerpt from his narrative in which he discussed one of his many escapes and the challenges he had to overcome. I commenced from that hour making preparations for the dangerous experiment of breaching the chains that bound me as a slave. My preparation for this voyage consisted in the accumulation of a little money, perhaps not exceeding two dollars and fifty cents, and a suit which I had never been seen or known to wear before; this last was to avoid detection. On the twenty-fifth of December, , my long anticipated time had arrived when I was to put into operation my former resolution, which was to bolt for Liberty or consent to die a Slave. I acted upon the former, although I confess it to be one of the most self-defying acts of my whole life, to take leave of an affectionate wife, who stood before me on my departure, with dear little Frances in her arms, and with tears of sorrow in her eyes as she bid me a long farewell. It required all the moral courage that I was master of to suppress my feelings while taking leave of my little family. Had Matilda known my intention at the time, it would not have been possible for me to have got away, and I might have this day been a slave. My strong attachments to friends and relatives, with all the love of home and birth-place which is so natural among the human family, twined about my heart and were hard to break away from. And withal, the fear of being killed, or captured and taken to the extreme South, to linger out my days in hopeless bondage on some cotton or sugar plantation, all combined to deter me. But I had counted the cost, and was fully prepared to make the sacrifice. The time for fulfilling my pledge was then at hand. I must forsake friends and neighbors, wife and child, or consent to live and die a slave. This was the commencement of what was called the underground railroad to Canada. I walked with bold courage, trusting in the arm of Omnipotence; guided by the unchangeable *North Star* by night, and inspired by an elevated thought that I was fleeing from a land of slavery and oppression, bidding farewell to handcuffs, whips, thumb-screws and chains. I travelled on until I had arrived at the place where I was directed to call on an Abolitionist, but I made no stop: I prosecuted my journey vigorously for nearly forty-eight hours without food or rest, struggling against external difficulties such as no one can imagine who has never experienced the same: Another former slave who was well known for her efforts to end slavery was Sojourner Truth. She too along with Josiah Henson, J. Green and many others wrote narratives that shared their experiences. Their stories of strength and freedom provide much insight to the time in which they lived. Perhaps, so many fugitive slaves chose to write down their experiences to help others understand their trials and tribulations; or maybe they did this to help individuals learn from the mistakes of the past, in hopes of creating a better future.

Chapter 5 : Life After Escape | HowStuffWorks

Life on the Underground Railroad has 3 ratings and 0 reviews. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, between nearly , African Americans who es.

Everyone attends the feast except those who have taken extra work. Lovey is a simple young woman who enjoys dancing at the celebration days—birthdays, harvests, and Christmas. Mabel used to tell Cora about her difficult delivery, in which Mabel almost bled to death. The celebration days play a complex role in life on the plantation. On one level, they provide rare moments of happiness for the enslaved population. Lovey is happy to buy into this excuse for a celebration and seize whatever joy she can through dance. Cora, however, has a different relationship to the celebration days. Active Themes With or without a feast, Cora spends every Sunday afternoon tending to her garden. Ajarry used to tend to it, before Randall plantation became as prosperous as it is now. Ajarry had been well-respected among the enslaved population at Randall, but now everyone who knew Ajarry is dead, leaving Cora to fend for herself. Eventually, another woman named Ava grows resentful of Cora and strikes a deal to have Cora placed in Hob. Plants and gardens often symbolize hope and the possibilities that come with new beginnings. After all, there is little hope that Cora will ever escape the plantation and experience freedom and happiness for herself. Rather, the garden is more a symbol of survival, inheritance, and endurance. At first men lived in Hob, but now it is women, many of whom call out the names of their dead children in the night. One morning, Cora wakes up to find her growing cabbages destroyed. The whole community watches to see how she will react. Blake approaches her and at first it seems like there will be a conflict. However, the breakfast bell sounds and everyone disperses, not wanting to miss out. Cora is an exile within the enslaved population of Randall plantation, making her exiled in a double sense: Furthermore, with her grandmother dead and her mother gone, Cora has no one around to look out for her. It also highlights the way in which slavery can drive enslaved people to treat one another in a selfish and vicious way. While other Hob women are sold or commit suicide, Cora remains. Soon after Cora goes through puberty, she is gang-raped by four of the enslaved men on Randall. Three weeks prior, Blake had run away, but then he was caught. Cora does not enjoy the protection or friendship of other members of the enslaved community at Randall save the women of Hob, who are themselves exceptionally vulnerable. Where James is content with the stable profits produced by the plantation, Terrance is always scheming to find ways to make more money, including by growing more and more brutal toward the slaves. She looks out for a boy called Chester, who is also a stray. Cora assures Chester that he almost won. The social dynamics of the enslaved community on Randall are far from simple. Each person looks out for their own interests, as well as for those they prioritize for one reason or another. While in another context such social dynamics might seem superficial or frivolous, for enslaved people they are essential to survival. This is because, lurking in the background of the lives of the enslaved population are the sinister designs of the Randall brothers and the other bosses. As is made clear in this passage, the behavior of both James and Terrance Randall is motivated by economic interests. Although the brothers possess different attitudes about running their respective halves of the plantation, both choose their approach on financial grounds. Active Themes Related Quotes with Explanations Cora asks Jockey how old he is, recalling that at his last birthday he claimed to be a hundred. In fact he is only about fifty, but he is still the oldest enslaved person that anyone on Randall has ever met. Cora thinks she must be 16 or Cora reflects on the fact that it might be her own birthday today without her realizing. While the rest of the crowd drifts off to eat, Caesar lingers and asks if he can talk to Cora. James Randall bought Caesar a year and a half ago; Cora has seen him carving wood and spending time with one of the housemaids. Clearly, Caesar believes that it is better to risk death than to live a long life as an enslaved man. Wrestling matches take place, and Lovey comments that she would like to wrestle with a young man named Major. Following the wrestling comes the dancing, during which time the tensions of the community are eased. Through dance, members of the enslaved population are able to reconnect with one another as people, momentarily disregarding the disputes that arise as a result of the brutality to which they are subjected. She is anxious about the possibility of being touched by a man, even one with kind intentions. Sometimes

enslaved people can lose themselves in a temporary zone of freedom, such as while dancing, before being jerked back to reality. There are several reasons why Cora does not like to dance. As the narrator mentions in this passage, her vulnerability as an unprotected teenage girl and the trauma of her rape make her uneasy about physical contact with men, even in the happy context of dance. Perhaps more fundamentally, however, Cora refuses to participate in an activity that can, however briefly, convince enslaved people that they are free. Terrance, however, makes a point of interacting with the slaves and he rapes the women from his half of the plantation, boasting: Although Terrance is far crueler than James, the behavior of both brothers toward the slave population is governed by perversion. He takes sadistic pleasure in raping enslaved women and treating them as objects of his possession. James, meanwhile, seems to be ashamed by or at least uninterested in the reality of plantation life. This shame manifests itself in his masochistic desire to be whipped by prostitutes, just as the enslaved people on Randall are also whipped. Moses, one of the bosses, informs the brothers that the boy in question, Michael, is dead. Michael had been taught by a former master to recite long passages of text. The master showed Michael off to guests, who would then discuss the unintelligence of black people. When Michael arrived on Randall, he had been mentally incapacitated by some unknown torture, and Connelly beat him to death. He turns to go, but Terrance insists on one more song. Terrance demands that the slaves dance, which they do, performing with vigor and joy that they do not really feel. Suddenly, Terrance roars in anger; Chester has bumped into him and splashed wine on his shirt. Terrance lifts his cane to beat Chester, and at that momentâ€”despite all the unimaginable brutality she has been forced to passively witness over the yearsâ€”Cora feels a sudden urge to bend over to shield Chester. Terrance beats both of them viciously. This passage illustrates multiple different myths that define life during the slavery era. Furthermore, the fact that it Terrance requests to hear the Declaration of Independence is significant. The Declaration is famous as a statement on human rights, which emphasizes equality and liberty. These ideas were directly contradicted, however, by the reality of slavery, which seriously undermines the idea that America is a country founded on freedom and equality for all. The final myth is the performance of happiness the slaves are forced to make while dancing for Terrance. Active Themes There are 7 women in Hob that year. One of them is prone to fits, and another two have been traumatized into a state of mental instability. Another two never speak; one of them has had her tongue cut out. Two other women have recently committed suicide, which is not unusual. This leaves Nag and Cora. He was interrupted in the middle of raping an enslaved woman, and he whipped both Chester and Cora three days in a row, ordering that their wounds be doused in pepper water in between whippings. After this incident, Chester never speaks to Cora again. Cora collapses at the end of each work day, crippled by her injuries. This passage explores what it actually means to endure the brutality of slavery. While rebellion means sadistic punishment and often death, endurance can mean the same thing. The woman of Hob have all been broken in various ways by the violence and trauma of slavery. Due to the intensity of this brutality, enslaved people often have little choice but to turn away from one another, such as Chester does from Cora. Once Connelly lost interest in Nag, she was moved to Hob. Cora suffers from dizziness and a terrible pain in her head. That night, Cora sits outside, reflecting on the prospect of running away. Mabel never set foot outside Randall until the day she disappeared, never to return. An aggressive search effort was launched, but it came to nothing. Mabel was the only person to escape Randall successfully. When Connelly rejects her, though, she becomes an exile and must live with the other outcasts in Hob. This passage also illustrates the way in which the traumatic separation of families under slavery creates new forms of attachment between enslaved people. When Nag looks after Cora, Cora becomes a substitute for the children that have been taken from Nag, and Nag becomes a substitute for Mabel, who abandoned Cora on the plantation. He returned two years later to apologize for his inability to catch Mabel and to let Old Randall know that there were rumors that the underground railroad was being extended into this part of the state, which Old Randall dismissed as nonsense. When Mabel left, she packed useful items like a machete, flint, and tinder. Cora tries to hide from him in the fields, but he sees her and tips his cane at her. Two days later, James dies. However, a few details in this passage disprove this myth of control. Not only does Mabel escape without being noticed or apprehended, but after a two year search Ridgeway is forced to admit that she has escaped his grasp completely. Although Old Randall is dismissive of the news, his nonchalance cannot change

reality. Active Themes The fact that Terrance is taking over the entire plantation seems as good a reason as any to attempt an escape, and an enslaved man called Big Anthony seizes the moment to do so. He is the first person to run away since Mabel, and he makes it 26 miles before being caught and returned in an iron cage.

Chapter 6 : NPR Choice page

Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a network of people, African American as well as white, offering shelter and aid to escaped slaves from the South.

Visit Website Vigilance Committeesâ€”created to protect escaped slaves from bounty hunters in New York in and Philadelphia in â€”soon expanded their activities to guide slaves on the run. By the s, the term Underground Railroad was part of the American vernacular. In the deep South, the Fugitive Slave Act of made capturing escaped slaves a lucrative business, and there were fewer hiding places for them. Fugitive slaves were typically on their own until they got to certain points farther north. Hiding places included private homes, churches and schoolhouses. Others headed north through Pennsylvania and into New England or through Detroit on their way to Canada. The first act, passed in , allowed local governments to apprehend and extradite escaped slaves from within the borders of free states back to their point of origin, and to punish anyone helping the fugitives. Some Northern states tried to combat this with Personal Liberty Laws, which were struck down by the Supreme Court in . The Fugitive Slave Act of was designed to strengthen the previous law, which was felt by southern states to be inadequately enforced. This update created harsher penalties and set up a system of commissioners that promoted favoritism towards slave owners and led to some freed slaves being recaptured. For an escaped slave, the northern states were still considered a risk. Meanwhile, Canada offered blacks the freedom to live where they wanted, sit on juries, run for public office and more, and efforts at extradition had largely failed. Some Underground Railroad operators based themselves in Canada and worked to help the arriving fugitives settle in. Born a slave named Araminta Ross, she took the name Harriet Tubman was her married name when, in , she escaped a plantation in Maryland with two of her brothers. They returned a couple of weeks later, but Tubman left again on her own shortly after, making her way to Pennsylvania. Tubman later returned to the plantation on several occasions to rescue family members and others. On her third trip, she tried to rescue her husband, but he had remarried and refused to leave. Distraught, Tubman reported a vision of God, after which she joined the Underground Railroad and began guiding other escaped slaves to Maryland. Tubman regularly took groups of escapees to Canada, distrusting the United States to treat them well. Frederick Douglass Former slave and famed writer Frederick Douglass hid fugitives in his home in Rochester, New York, helping escaped slaves make their way to Canada. Former fugitive Reverend Jermain Loguen, who lived in neighboring Syracuse, helped 1, slaves go north. Robert Purvis, an escaped slave turned Philadelphia merchant, formed the Vigilance Committee there in . Former slave and railroad operator Josiah Henson created the Dawn Institute in in Ontario to help escaped slaves who made their way to Canada learn needed work skills. John Parker was a free black man in Ohio, a foundry owner who took a rowboat across the Ohio River to help fugitives cross. He was also known to make his way into Kentucky and enter plantations to help slaves escape. William Still was a prominent Philadelphia citizen who had been born to fugitive slave parents in New Jersey. Who Ran the Underground Railroad? Most Underground Railroad operators were ordinary people, farmers and business owners, as well as ministers. Some wealthy people were involved, such as Gerrit Smith, a millionaire who twice ran for president. In , Smith purchased an entire family of slaves from Kentucky and set them free. One of the earliest known people to help fugitive slaves was Levi Coffin, a Quaker from North Carolina. He started around when he was 15 years old. Coffin said that he learned their hiding places and sought them out to help them move along. Eventually, they began to find their way to him. Coffin later moved to Indiana and then Ohio, and continued to help escaped slaves wherever he lived. John Brown Abolitionist John Brown was a conductor on the Underground Railroad, during which time he established the League of Gileadites, devoted to helping fugitive slaves get to Canada. In he partnered with Vermont schoolteacher Delia Webster and was arrested for helping an escaped slave and her child. He was pardoned in , but was arrested again and spent another 12 years in jail. Charles Torrey was sent to prison for six years in Maryland for helping a slave family escape through Virginia. He operated out of Washington, D. Massachusetts sea captain Jonathan Walker was arrested in after he was caught with a boatload of escaped slaves that he was trying to help get north. John Fairfield of Virginia

rejected his slave-holding family to help rescue the left-behind families of slaves who made it north. He broke out of jail twice. He died in in Tennessee during a slave rebellion. In reality, its work moved aboveground as part of the Union effort against the Confederacy. Harriet Tubman once again played a significant part by leading intelligence operations and fulfilling a command role in Union Army operations to rescue the emancipated slaves. The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad. The Road To Freedom. Who Really Ran the Underground Railroad? The Perilous Lure of the Underground Railroad.

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. Life is hellish for all the slaves but especially bad for Cora; an outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is coming into womanhood - where even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground.

Ajarry dies of a brain hemorrhage while working in the cotton field. Cora spends every Sunday tending to her garden, which she inherited from Mabel who inherited it from Ajarry. Soon after, she was gang-raped by four enslaved men. One day, the enslaved population on Randall is preparing a birthday feast for Jockey, an enslaved man who picks random days on which to celebrate his birthday. Before the feast, Cora talks to her friend Lovey, a kind and simple young woman who "unlike Cora" enjoys dancing. Just before the feast, a young man named Caesar pulls Cora aside and asks her to run away with him, an idea Cora dismisses as ludicrous. As Terrance is about to hit Chester, Cora defends him, and both of them are brutally whipped as a result. This causes a man named Big Anthony to run away, though Big Anthony is soon captured and tortured to death over a gruesome three-day period. After this, Cora agrees to run away with Caesar; he tells her that he is being assisted by Fletcher, a local shopkeeper who works for the underground railroad. The two set off in the night, and they soon realize that they are being followed by Lovey. They do not get far from the plantation before running into hog farmers who manage to capture Lovey. Cora is tackled by a young boy and she kills him with a rock. After Cora and Caesar find Fletcher, Fletcher introduces them to Lumbly, who houses an underground railroad station beneath his farm. They travel in a rickety car to South Carolina. When Mabel disappeared, she gave no indication to Cora that she was leaving. Old Randall hired Ridgeway, a notorious slave catcher, to find Mabel, but he was unable to do so. Ridgeway is the son of a blacksmith, Ridgeway Sr. As a teenager, Ridgeway becomes a patroller, terrorizing and abusing black people, before deciding to become a professional slave catcher. Ridgeway is tortured by his failure to capture Mabel and he swears he will track down Cora in her place. Anderson are a couple living in South Carolina with their two children, who are cared for by a black nanny called Bessie. Bessie sometimes takes the children to visit their father at his office in the Griffin Building, a story building with an elevator. Bessie lives in dormitories supervised by white proctors, including Miss Lucy. It is eventually revealed that Bessie is, in fact, Cora, who along with Caesar assumed a fake identity in South Carolina with the assistance of a white saloon owner and underground railroad agent named Sam. Cora takes classes in literacy with Miss Handler, and she undergoes medical examinations at the local hospital. One night, there is a dormitory social at which Cora wears a pretty new dress and chats happily with Caesar. Although there is an underground railroad train coming in a few days, they decide to stay in South Carolina. She poses in three different scenes representing different stages in the transatlantic slave trade: Stevens suggests that Cora undergo sterilization, which horrifies her. Meanwhile, other residents are being forcibly sterilized in order to cull the black population. Shortly after, Cora has an interaction with Miss Lucy that causes her to fear that her true identity as a runaway slave may have been revealed. She goes to warn Sam, who tells Cora that Ridgeway is after her and hides her down on the underground railroad platform. Cora is brought to North Carolina by a teenage engineer on the underground railroad. Once there, Martin Wells discovers her on the platform and he is alarmed by her arrival, as the station is supposed to be closed. Martin shows Cora the Freedom Trail, a seemingly endless line of lynched black bodies left hanging on display, and he explains that black people are not allowed in North Carolina anymore. Martin lives with his wife, Ethel, and they hide Cora in their attic. Through a crack in the attic wall, Cora watches the Friday Festival, an event at which the local townspeople watch a minstrel show and then publically lynch a black person. The heat in the attic is so intense that Cora sometimes passes out, and she is given only very small amounts of water and food. Soon after, patrollers arrive at the house and storm straight up to the attic. Among them is Ridgeway, who grabs Cora by the ankles and throws her down the stairs. Ridgeway takes Cora with him. As they drive away Martin and Ethel are stoned to death by the townspeople. Boseman, meanwhile, has been traveling with Ridgeway for three years and he wears a necklace of shriveled ears. They travel through towns struck by wildfires and yellow fever. One evening, Ridgeway gives Cora a new dress to wear and takes her out for

dinner. He informs Cora that Caesar was killed by a mob in South Carolina. After the dinner, Boseman attempts to rape Cora but is interrupted by Royal, Justin, and Red, three free black men who shoot Boseman and rescue Cora. Cora kicks Ridgway three times in the face before fleeing. The narrative jumps into the future, with Cora now living on Valentine farm, a free black community in Indiana. The farm is run by John Valentine, a white-passing freeborn black man, and his wife, Gloria. Visitors often come to the farm, including abolitionists, musicians, and poets. Cora, meanwhile, is being courted by Royal, who shows her a nearby underground railroad station. The residents are about to debate whether the community should move west or stay put and expel the runaways who live there. John tells Cora that he feels a sense of duty to help all black people, who he believes must look out for one another. Elijah Lander, a biracial abolitionist and rhetorician, gives the next speech. They shoot Lander and Royal and drag off many others. Ridgeway captures Cora and demands that she lead him to the railroad station. When Cora was born, Mabel was repeatedly raped by Moses, one of the black bosses on Randall. When Mabel runs away, she is thrilled by the taste of freedom but she immediately decides that she must go back for Cora. However, on her way back to Randall she is bitten by a snake and dies, her body swallowed up by the swamp. Cora takes Ridgeway and Homer to the station. As he lies dying from his injuries, Ridgeway asks that Homer write down his last words. Cora, meanwhile, steps onto the handcar waiting in the station and begins slowly conveying herself to freedom, swinging at the tunnel with a pickax as she goes. After a while she grows too tired and, in between sleeps, continues her journey on foot. Eventually, she reaches the mouth of the tunnel and she can tell from the sun that she has made it north.

Cite This Page Choose citation style: Retrieved November 11,

Underground Railroad summary: The Underground Railroad was the term used to describe a network of meeting places, secret routes, passageways and safe houses used by slaves in the U.S. to escape slave holding states to northern states and Canada.

The Underground Railroad covers five primary periods in the life of Cora: When a young slave named Chester is beaten by plantation owner Terrance Randall, Cora intervenes and is beaten. Her fellow slave Caesar, recognizing her independent spirit, asks her to run away with him. Although she refuses at first, she accepts his invitation a few weeks later. The two run away in the middle of the night and are unexpectedly joined by a young girl named Lovey. They are nearly caught by a group of white hog hunters; Lovey is captured, and Cora kills a white boy in order to escape. Cora and Caesar reach the house of Mr. Fletcher drives them in his cart, covered by a blanket, to the home of the station agent, Lumbly. They are given forged papers with false identities so that they can safely live in South Carolina until another train arrives to take them farther north. However, Cora enjoys South Carolina so much that she is reluctant to leave, and she and Caesar let three trains come and go without boarding them. Cora lives in a dormitory with other young black women. After her doctor encourages her to be medically sterilized, she realizes that some of the women she lives with are being sterilized against their will as part of a eugenics project to reduce the black population. Ridgeway, a slave catcher who has been chasing Cora and Caesar, discovers the dormitory where Cora lives. Unable to find Caesar, Cora goes to Sam, who advises her to hide in the railroad station underneath his house. Cora waits there, but neither Sam nor Caesar joins her. A station agent named Martin finally arrives. Still, he has no choice but to take her with him and hide her in a tiny room above his attic—much to the dismay of his wife, Ethel. Cora stays hidden for months, watching through an attic window each Friday as the town holds a festival to execute captured runaways. Eventually Cora becomes feverish; Martin and Ethel give their maid, Fiona, a week off so that they can bring Cora downstairs and nurse her back to health. Ethel, who once dreamed of being a missionary in Africa, seizes the opportunity to read to Cora from the Bible. Fiona becomes suspicious and alerts the authorities, who search the house during a weekly festival and capture Cora. As Cora is carried off by Ridgeway, she sees Martin and Ethel being stoned to death. Journey through Tennessee Instead of taking Cora directly back to Georgia, Ridgeway and his cronies Homer and Boseman bring her through Tennessee on their way to capture another fugitive slave. Many of the towns they pass through have been ravaged by natural disasters. Ridgeway enjoys talking to Cora, especially to tell her the gruesome fates of Lovey who was executed by Terrance Randall and Caesar who was ripped to pieces by an angry South Carolina mob. In one town where they stop, Cora makes eye contact with a young black man named Royal. Ridgeway catches him in the act and knocks him down. While the two are fighting and away from their weapons, Royal and two of his companions rescue Cora. They shoot Boseman and overpower Ridgeway and Homer, chaining them to their own wagon. They take Cora to an underground railroad station and travel with her to Indiana. Life in Indiana and Beyond Cora starts a new life on the Valentine farm, a community of free black people and former slaves. Although most fugitives only stay at Valentine temporarily, Cora is reluctant to leave, just as she was reluctant to leave South Carolina. She falls in love with Royal, who offers to take her to Canada, but she delays giving him an answer. While he is courting her, he takes her to an abandoned underground railroad station with a small track only big enough for a handcar. Tension rises in the Valentine community over whether or not fugitive slaves should be allowed to remain there. A legally freed slave named Mingo argues that protecting fugitives puts them all in danger by angering white people. While the issue is being debated, a group of whites raids the farm, killing Royal and a number of others. Cora is captured by Ridgeway and Homer. She leads them to the abandoned underground railroad station, where she escapes by throwing both herself and Ridgeway down the stairs leading to the track. She follows the track until it ends in a cave. A passing wagon offers her a ride: The driver is going to Missouri and then traveling to California. Cora accepts the ride.

Chapter 9 : Life on the Underground Railroad by Stuart A. Kallen

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early to mid-19th century, and used by African-American slaves to escape into free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause.

I had an interesting relationship with *The Intuitionist*, having read it in college and not quite grasped it then came back to it later and enjoyed it more. I love everything that Colson Whitehead is about and I hope to read *Zone One* soon, but this particular foray into his work turned out to be a little less than a love affair for me. *The Underground Railroad* starts on the Randall plantation in Georgia around 1853. Slaves are beaten and raped for amusement, even on display for the entertainment of guests sipping lemonade; attempts at fleeing from bondage or bucking the system are often arbitrarily met with public displays of execution, from being strung up and castrated to a good ole-fashioned tarring and feathering. Life on the plantation is as rough for women—who are used as breeders for more slaves, hence more money, and are constantly at the mercy of male appetites, both from those in the ivory tower and those in the fields—as it is for the laboring men. But the untold horrors that she will face ahead of her on this trek will sometimes rival those that she left behind. Here, the Underground Railroad is not an actual train or a single, rickety locomotive, but you get the point, complete with a conductor. At times that term is more allegorical than actual, but even the conductors have their own pasts that, at times, ensnare Cora in their trap-like grasp. Human sterilization to control the growth of the Negro population which, in some states, "problematically" rivals the numbers of the white population, blackface, and the Tuskegee Project are all touched on here, are all experienced by our heroine in some periphery of her journey. Those are the goodie takeaways. Now for my qualms. This is a harrowing journey, a terrifying trek into the unknown for a young woman who has never been outside of the confines of the Randall Plantation for her entire life. We want to see, touch and taste every moment of what she feels. We want to quiver when she quivers and scream when she hurts. We want to experience these truths re-imagined for ourselves, because this is a remarkable journey set in a harrowing past that our country would rather keep hushed and obscured. Perhaps that comes down to being a matter of personal preference. I found his writing style, as was the case in his *The Intuitionist* as well, to be talented but, yes, just a tad by the way of clinician. And finesse—oh, finesse, thou art an allusive thing! I had to re-read several passages, because segues from one event to the next were often non-existent. Suddenly, you were in a saloon, or in the middle of an attack by rogue outlaws, then learning letters in a schoolhouse. Literally, a person could go from alive to dead in a single, four-sentence paragraph! What just happened now? Still, Colson Whitehead managed to touch on the justifications and absolutions that the antebellum South.