

# The underground railroad assignment

[History](#)



The term “ Underground Railroad” refers to a verbal code used to describe the Steps to where slaves were disappearing and taking off. When referencing the Underground Railroad, slaves were known as “ freight”, abolitionists were known as “ conductors”, safe-houses were “ stations”, and the routes they used were known as “ lines”. The terminology used regarding this network was incorporated as if they were on an actual railroad journey. Between 1830 and 1865, the Underground Railroad would reach its high as an outstanding amount of abolitionists’ assisted large numbers of slaves to freedom.

There were many reasons for slaves to seek freedom. Slaves were sold to whoever wanted one regardless if they were separating them from their families or not. The really unfortunate slaves were treated very harsh and sometimes so acidulous that they couldB?? owe died or come close. This kind of treatment and heartache was the reason why so many slaves risk their lives and well-being. Others that were considered “ freed slaves” risked the chance of getting kidnapped and sold back as slaves while helping others on the journey.

The majority of runaway laves consisted of men but some women and children were able to make it out as well despite having a higher risk of being captured. One woman that was able to break away was Harriet Tuba. She was born into slavery and planned her entire life to escaping. When she did escape, she found work in Philadelphia and saved money so she could help others find freedom. Making over nineteen trips back and forth to the South to help slaves escape, she was able to free over two hundred

individuals throughout her life. Many states participated in the Underground Railroad and there was no specific route to allow.

From the southern states like Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, the route curved all over heading north using the Ohio River crossing as a known “safe haven” into the northern territories. From there, they either found a home or continued north to Canada to escape possible re-capture.

Conductors put up signs and used codes to get the runaways from one station to the next. Since there were so many different routes, the signs that they left for the runaways were merely ways of telling them that they were going in the right direction.

Life on the run meant having to be able to travel efferent ways like running in zigzags to confuse tracking dogs, or use alternate means of transportation when necessary. Some individuals even traveled along actual railroads hiding in box cars or in crates. Along the way, the people that helped the runaways would leave markings on nearby trees or use specific details to describe the next safe-house like what color the steps were on the porch or if there was a crack in the side window of another house.

When arriving at a station, they would use ways to identify themselves as needing help but be careful as to not give themselves up if they arrived at he wrong place. Some examples would be to make animal noises outside the house or to have a specific knock on the door. At these stations, whether it be a cellar, house, basement, or barn, the fugitives were provided shelter, warmth, navigation, and food. In between safe-houses, the danger of being caught would weigh heavily on the escapees.

To keep hidden when trying to get to the next checkpoint is very hard especially when you have to go days at a time without food. Some slaves would have to hide in bushes or in culverts for days before they were able to risk continuing on their quest. Along this long journey, conductors and slaves would also use Songs or spirituals to help remember the way to the next stop. From southern United States to Canada, the expedition to freedom could range hundreds or even thousands of miles for the fugitive slaves and they were to travel almost every bit of it on foot.

Many people perished due to lack of food, water, and the travel wearing their bodies out. The conditions they had to face was more than just a struggle through weather. They had to encounter and overcome some rough terrain such as mountains and had to be on the lookout for wild animals especially since most of the traveling was performed at night. Some slaves have described the conditions as harsh and physically exhausting. These conditions were another reason why men were able to make the journey over women who usually were accompanied by children, and the elderly who was unable to move quickly.

When the lucky and few runaways finally made it to Canada or other safe countries and states, they then had to learn to adjust to the very different climate that Canada and other places had. While most fell ill to the poor living conditions in the new weather they were having to adjust to, many still survived and learn to prosper and utilize their surroundings. When the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution unshackled more than four million enslaved African Americans, activity for the Underground Railroad ceased.

The operation was responsible for helping approximately seventy thousand slaves escape into Canada and freedom. With help from the abolitionists and previous freed slaves, the Underground Railroad was a successful contribution to the end of slavery. When Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, it ended slavery for good and gave rights and quality to everyone no matter what the color Of their skin was. Works Cited Blackest, R. J. M.. Making freedom: the Underground Railroad and the politics of slavery.