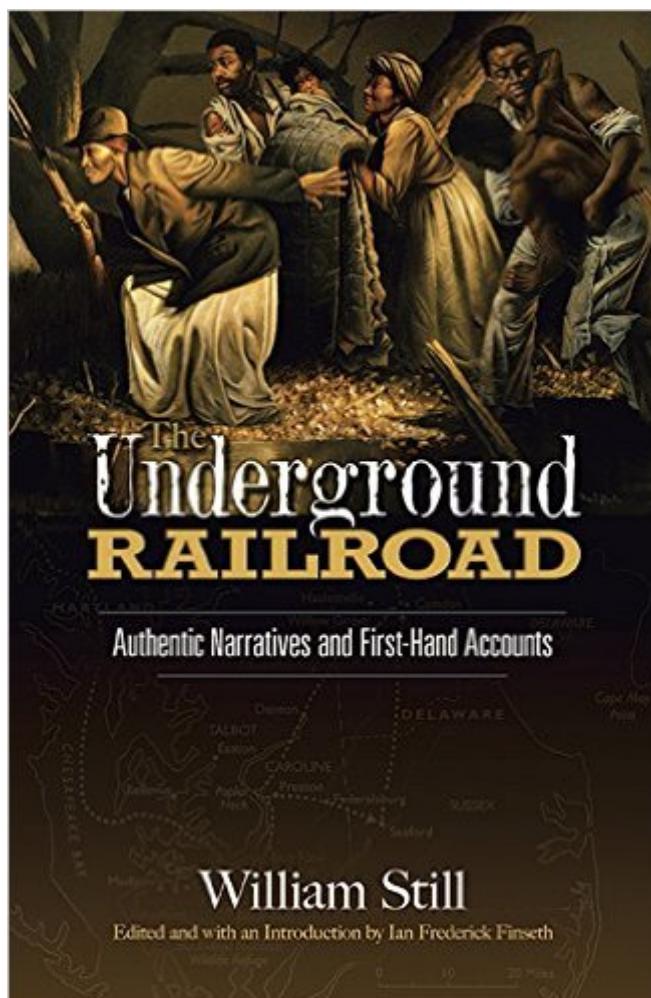


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# The Underground Railroad: Authentic Narratives And First-Hand Accounts (African American)



## **Synopsis**

In the winter of 1852, a group of Philadelphia abolitionists dedicated to assisting runaway slaves in their flight to freedom formed a new assistance group to be part of the Underground Railroad; the General Vigilance Committee. William Still, himself a son of slaves, was named its secretary and executive director. Deeply moved by the stories of the fugitive slaves he helped conduct northward, Still took his committee record-keeping to a higher level. He wrote down, in eloquent narrative form, every detail of their stirring, often heartbreakingly histories. Second only to the great Harriet Tubman in the number of freedom-seeking "passengers" he conducted through the Underground Railroad, Still let the words of former slaves speak for themselves. In his journals, he painstakingly reproduced vivid accounts he heard from their very lips. And he added excerpts from letters, newspapers, and legal documents to the already arresting biographical sketches, creating unforgettable portraits of the slaves' deadly struggles, brutal hardships, and narrow escapes. When the Civil War ended and slavery was abolished, William Still published his journals as *The Underground Railroad*. It is considered the most complete firsthand account ever written of the men, women, and children who rode the legendary "Railroad" to freedom. This edition includes a new Introduction and 20 illustrations from the original publication.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

William Still was very instrumental in helping slaves to run on the Underground RR. He wrote his

book in 1872. Anyone interested in Slaves Narratives should read this book. He gives comment on a lot of slaves that did not become famous but nevertheless escaped. Nothing can take the place of real live witnesses. This is an excellent book for any one's library of African American History.

The book is written from the experiences of a confirmed abolitionist who helped escort escaped slaves to freedom by means of the underground railroad. The descriptions he gives make one know of the desperation and panic the slaves felt in their dash for freedom from the lash. It also details the heroics of other persons who assisted the fugitives: such as the captain of a ship that happened to be carrying several slaves. The ship was stopped and searched by men trying to recapture the runaways. They thrust swords into hay that was stored on the boat but found nothing. Then they took an axe to several places on the deck but still found nothing. The captain of the vessel bluffed them by grabbing the axe and demanding they tell him where they wanted to search and he would use the axe. He then hit the deck with such force the men backed off and after making him pay the travel tax, let him go. When he arrived at his destination he freed his grateful cargo from their hiding place. The retelling of the horrors these people from their own mouths cannot be equaled by stories handed down from book to book. I prefer my historical research to be done from resources written as closely to the actual occurrences as possible because as so often happens, one present day author of a book will make an assumption and state it: then someone else perpetuates that inaccuracy because "they saw it in a book, so it must be true".... As an historical researcher, if I can't verify it for myself, I won't use it. This book is from the actual participants. It is a welcome addition to my research resources.

This little gem is exactly as its title says: FIRST HAND narratives. This book is a perfect read for anyone researching that time period whether sixth-grader or thesis writer. Naturally, the spelling and grammar are left as was originally written, spoken by men, women who despite a ban on education, often found the wherewithal to self-teach. Reads like you are THERE!

I purchased this book to use as research for a book I'm reading. I wanted to get a feel for what runaway slaves were facing and for the mood of the times. William Still's first hand accounts are moving and revealing.

William Still's meticulous account of escaping slaves is spellbinding. So much of the Underground Railroad could have lost if it had not been for William Still. He recorded every slave's name and

where they came from. He had to hide this information because it contained the name of slaves and conductors on the underground railroad. To read some of the horrors of slavery was just crushing to me. Read for yourself and be enlightened.

Another excellent book about the escape route to Canada of runaway slaves in the U.S prior to emancipation. Especially interesting because it includes first-hand accounts not widely known by most people. Very well-written. Do highly recommend.

This is a riveting read with descriptive details about people who broke away from their chains of slavery and made their way, often with help from people who were part of the elusive "underground railroad", to a life of freedom in Canada. It is both heart rending that any human being could be subjected to the horrors of slavery - sometimes with horrible brutality used to "keep them in line", and uplifting that so many managed to escape. It is incredible that anyone who is part of the human race could and would treat other humans in such despicable ways - and justify themselves in doing so. It is also heart warming that a segment of the northern states population were sympathetic to their cause, and enabled them to be free human beings for the rest of their lives.

Reading William Still's diary brings the plight of the slaves and those that would help them into focus. It was an easy book to read and hard to put down. It seems impossible that these things occurred in America, but they did!

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