

# THE UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD.

A RECORD OF FACTS, AUTHENTIC NARRATIVES, LETTERS, &c.

NARRATING THE

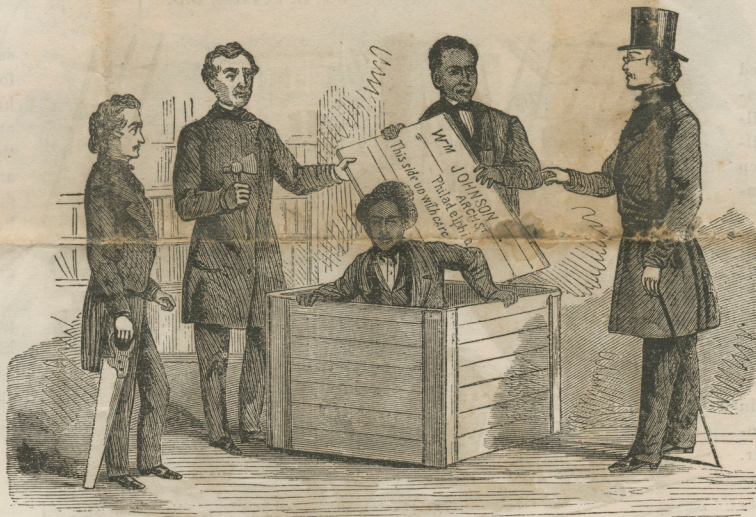
## Hardships, Hair-breadth Escapes, and Death Struggles

OF THE

## SLAVES IN THEIR EFFORTS FOR FREEDOM.

TOGETHER WITH

SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE LARGEST STOCKHOLDERS, AND MOST LIBERAL AIDERS  
AND ADVISERS, OF THE ROAD.



RESURRECTION OF HENRY BOX BROWN.

Witnesses present—J. M. McKim, Prof. C. D. Cleveland, Lewis Thompson, and William Still.

By WILLIAM STILL,

*For many years connected with the Anti-Slavery Office in Philadelphia, and Chairman of the Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of the Underground Railroad.*

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WILLIAM STILL, PUBLISHER,

No. 244 South Twelfth Street, Philadelphia.



# ENDORSEMENTS OF PROMINENT MEN.

WASHINGTON, March 1, 1872.

DEAR SIR:—Your book will certainly be an extremely interesting one. No one probably has had equal opportunities with yourself of listening to the narratives of fugitive slaves. No one will repeat them more truthfully, and no stories can be more fraught with interest than theirs. Let us rejoice, that, in our country, such narratives can never be heard again.

Yours truly,  
S. P. CHASE,  
Chief Justice U. S. Supreme Court.

MR. WILLIAM STILL.

SENATE CHAMBER, March 2, 1872.

MY DEAR MR. STILL:—I have glanced over a few pages of your History of the Underground Railroad, and I most earnestly commend it. You have done a good work. This story of the heroic conduct of fugitives of oppression, and of the devotion of their friends, will be read with deep interest, especially by the old friends of the slave in the stern struggle through which we have passed. I hope your labors will be rewarded by a grateful public.

Yours truly,  
HENRY WILSON,  
U. S. Senator from Massachusetts.

ROXBURY, April 7, 1872.

DEAR MR. STILL:—I have already delayed too long in thanking you for your presentation to me of your voluminous and well-executed work, "The Underground Railroad." I have examined it with a deep and thrilling interest. It is a most important portion of anti-slavery history, which, but for your industry, research, and personal experience and knowledge, might nearly all have been lost to posterity. Its reliableness, moreover, cannot be called in question. It is, therefore, not "fiction founded upon fact," and embellished by a lively imagination, but fact without a particle of fiction, narrated in a simple, ingenuous, straightforward manner, and needing no coloring whatever. What a revelation it makes of the barbarities of the slave system; of the formidable obstacles which interposed to prevent a successful exodus from the house of bondage; of the terrible exposures and sufferings to which the fugitive slaves were subjected in their attempts to be free; of the daring and heroism required to run the risk of betrayal, recapture, starvation in the swamp and drowning in the river, suffocation in trunk or box, seizure by two-legged and four-legged blood-hounds in hot pursuit, and a thousand other perils! How it illustrates, too, the abject subserviency of the nation to the slave power, so that even in Boston the atrocious fugitive slave law was as effectually enforced as it could have been in New Orleans; and in all our broad domains none could give shelter or assistance to the hunted and famishing victim, except at the peril of fine and imprisonment! And yet, numerous as are the instances you have recorded, they are only samples of thousands of others which can never be chronicled, running through six generations. May we trust our senses that there is an end of all this wickedness—that a final and marvellous deliverance has been wrought for all in bondage? Yes, it is true; and there has been the same Divine interposition as of old. And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are

in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." . . . "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy!"

I hope that the sale of your work will be widely extended, not only that the large expense incurred in its preparation and printing may be liberally covered, but for the enlightenment of the rising generation as to the inherent cruelty of the defunct slave system, and to perpetuate such an abhorrence of it as to prevent all further injustice towards the colored population of our land. It is a book for every household.

Yours, with best wishes,  
WILLIAM STILL. WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 23, 1872.

Having read this record of "The Underground Railroad," I can only say that it is a work of extraordinary interest and of great value as an illustration of the terrible despotism, which a little while ago reigned over us all, and which is now (thank heaven!) no more.

WM. H. FURNESS, D.D.

LLEWELLYN PARK, March 15, 1872.

DEAR WILLIAM:—I received your book last evening, and have since been reading it with feelings of mingled pleasure and pride; pleasure at the valuable contribution which it furnishes to anti-slavery history and anti-slavery literature, and pride that you are the author of it.

But the chief value of the book will be found in its main narratives, which illustrate to the life the character of slavery, the spirit and temper of the men engaged for its overthrow, and the difficulties which had to be overcome by these men in the accomplishment of their purpose.

A book so unique in kind, so startling in interest, and so trustworthy in its statements, cannot fail to command a large reading now, and in generations yet to come. That you—my long tried friend and associate—are the author of this book, is to me a matter of great pride and delight.

Yours truly,  
J. M. McKIM.



THE MAYOR OF NORFOLK SEARCHING CAPTAIN FOUNTAIN'S VESSEL FOR "RUNAWAYS."

Twenty-one being secreted thereon at the time, but all escaped detection.

SENATE CHAMBER, 3d March, 1872.

MY DEAR SIR:—The Underground Railroad has performed its part, but it must always be remembered gratefully as one of the peculiar institutions of our country. I cannot think of it without a throbbing heart.

You do well to commemorate those associated with it by service or by benefit—the saviours and the saved. The army of the late war has had its "Roll of Honor." You will give us two other rolls, worthy of equal honor—the roll of fugitives from slavery, helped on their way to freedom, and also the roll of their self-sacrificing benefactors. I always hesitated which to honor most, the fugitive slave or the citizen who helped him, in defiance of unjust laws. Your book will teach us to honor both.

Accept my best wishes, and believe me, my dear sir,  
Very faithfully yours,

CHARLES SUMNER,  
U. S. Senator from Massachusetts.

OFFICE "THE PRESS," Philadelphia, Pa.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have read most of the proof sheets of your forthcoming book, entitled "The Underground Railroad," and have just examined the letter-press preparatory to its publication, and the accompanying engravings, and I cannot refrain from stating, that I believe it to be a consummate work of its kind. Its chief merit, of course, consists in its extraordinary revelations of the injustice and cruelty of the dead system of slavery, but it is gratifying to notice that it will be printed and sent forth to the world in so complete and admirable a style. I commend it most cheerfully as a book that every citizen should have in his library.

Very truly, yours,  
WM. STILL, Esq. J. W. FORNEY.

Prominent Members of the Anti-Slavery Society.

LCRETIA MOTT,  
J. MILLER McKIM,  
ROBERT PURVIS,  
MARY GREW,  
E. M. DAVIS,  
SARAH PUGH,  
DILLWYN PARRISH,  
JOSHUA L. HALLOWELL,  
HENRY M. LAING,  
MARGARET J. BURLEIGH,  
EDWARD HOPPER,  
CHARLES WISE,  
JOHN LONGSTRETH,  
J. K. WILDMAN,  
JAMES A. WRIGHT,



AMESBURY, 10th, 3d mo., 1872.

I have looked over the advance sheets of my friend William Still's History of the "Underground Railroad," and judge, from a hasty examination, that he has done justice to his deeply interesting subject. The story of the escaped fugitives—the perils, the terrors of pursuit and recapture—the shrewdness which baffled the human blood-hounds—the untiring zeal and devotion of the friends of the slave in the free States, are well described.

The book is more interesting than any romance. It will be of permanent value to the historian of the country, during the anti-slavery struggle.

I cheerfully commend it to the public favor.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

NEW YORK, Feb. 22, 1872.

DEAR SIR:—For most of the years I have lived, the escape of fugitives from slavery, and their efforts to baffle the human and other blood-hounds who tracked them, formed the romance of American history. That romance is now ended, and our grandchildren will hardly believe its leading incidents, except on *irresistible testimony*. I rejoice that you are collecting and presenting that testimony, and heartily wish you a great success.

Yours,

MR. WM. STILL

HORACE GREELEY.

CINCINNATI, 5th Month, 6th, 1872.

WM. STILL, My Dear Friend:—Thy interesting book, the Underground Railroad, arrived safely last 7th day,

the 4th inst., by Express. I have examined it pretty thoroughly, and am much pleased with it. I thank thee most heartily for this very valuable present, and will gladly promote the sale of it in any way that I can.

I have long and often been solicited to write a history of my labors, and the many incidents in my experience in Underground Railroad matters in the West, . . . but have never felt quite ready or willing to accept them. I was rejoiced to hear that thy book was coming out, knowing that thou hadst much experience in the Eastern branch of the Underground Railroad. . . .

I may never finish it, or have it published; but if I should, it will not come in conflict or operate in the least against the sale of thy book. . . .

With much respect, thy friend,

LEVI COFFIN.

## ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PRESS.

From the "North American and United States Gazette," Phila.

"The interest of the volume lies in the precise knowledge, furnished by a competent authority, of a peculiar epoch that was not understood by most who lived in it and that is now buried beyond the trumpet of any possible resurrection. Never more in any event can this evil be revived. Still its existence is woven into the web of our national history in such a way that the figure will stand in high relief centuries hence. Then, when posterity is as far removed from the great war for the Union as we from Runnymede and the revolt of the Barons, men will ask the causes of the Proclamation of Emancipation, and the battles following, as they now do the motives of the habeas corpus and the instrumentalities by which it was won. Authorities will differ. Here is an authority that cannot be questioned, competent and correct by many endorsements, that shows without argument after the true pattern of Herodotus and the Chroniclers, what slavery in America was in the decade instantly preceding its overthrow, and how the free sympathies of the free States were always for freedom, and how great the sacrifices of many, both bond and free, were to secure it for only a few of the enslaved. . . . It is chiefly narrative, and its accuracy is carried in the dates, figures, names, numbers and incidents it contains."

From "The Philadelphia Inquirer."

"Never before has the working of the Underground Railroad been so thoroughly explained. Here we have in complete detail the various methods adopted for circumventing the enemies of freedom, and told, as it is, with great simplicity and natural feeling, the narrative is one which cannot but make a deep impression. Thrilling incidents, heroic adventures and noble deeds of self-sacrifice light up every page, and will enlist the heartiest sympathies of all generous souls. It was eminently just that such a record of one of the most remarkable phases of the struggle against slavery should be prepared, that the memory of the noble originators and supporters of the railroad might be kept green, and pos-



A DESPERATE CONFLICT ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.

terity enabled to form a true conception of the necessity that called it into existence, and of the difficulties under which its work was performed. The labor of compiling could not have fallen into more appropriate or better qualified hands."

From "The Nation," New York.

"The Personal Liberty Laws of that period; the Jerry rescue; the rescue of Shadrach; the Oberlin 'riot'; the carrying off of Sims and Burns; the imprisonment of Passmore Williamson; the bloody sacrifice of Margaret Garner; ruffians fit for the penitentiary, but openly justified by the clergy and the press, stalking our streets in search of fugitives to reclaim or freemen to kidnap, filling peaceful communities with mingled terror and indignation, and calling to their aid all the resources of the State and of the Government; judges making haste to consign their victims to slavery on testimony that would not have sufficed to convict for theft; the warning placards of the Vigilance Committee; mass-meetings to denounce the decision of the court; the sometimes tumultuous, sometime funeral aspect of the streets through which the military escorted the fugitive and his captors—all of this, we repeat, has vanished not only out of sight, but almost out of mind.

It is, nevertheless, a chapter in our history which cannot be skipped or obliterated, inasmuch as it marks one stage of the disease of which the crisis was passed at Gettysburg. It is one, too, for which we ought not to be dependent on tradition; and, all things considered, no one was so well qualified as Mr. Still to reproduce that phase of it with which he was so intimately concerned, as chairman of the Acting Committee of the Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia.

"Of all the Border States, Pennsylvania was the most accessible to fugitives from slavery; and as the organization just named was probably the most perfect and efficient of its kind, and served as a distributor to the branches in other States, its record doubtless covers the larger part of the field of operations of the Underground Railroad; or, in other words, of the systematic but secret efforts to promote

the escape of slaves (commonly to the British provinces). . . . Mr. Still's book is not crammed with horrors, but, on the contrary, exhibits a scrupulous restraint in introducing them, or expatiating upon them, it nevertheless contains narratives that would properly supplement the 'Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin.' . . .

"In view of the sameness of the experiences of these hundreds of slaves, it was no easy task to make the notices readable; but we must award high praise to the literary sense, not to say the literary skill, which has contrived to tell the old story again and again without staleness, almost without repetition, and with a pleasant humor predominating the seriousness of the subject in hand."

From the "New York Daily Tribune."

"Mr. Still has presented a graphic record of the struggles of the Southern slaves in their attempts at escape from bondage previous to the war of the Rebellion. It is filled with narratives of audacious and almost hopeless enterprise, romantic adventure, and wonderful incidents occurring in the pursuit of freedom. The work possesses a high degree of interest, not only as the history of a remarkable series of events in the



## ENDORSEMENTS OF THE PRESS.—CONTINUED.

progress of American society, but as an illustration of the character of a peculiar race manifested under rare and exceptional circumstances, and adapted to enlist the strongest sympathies of the reader. The methods adopted by the slaves for the attainment of freedom often show not a little fertility of resource, as well as an heroic courage that afterward became conspicuous on the battle-field. The copious details which he presents afford a pregnant illustration of the condition of Southern society before the Rebellion, and will furnish the future historian of American emancipation with invaluable materials for the accomplishment of his task."

From Henry Ward Beecher's "Christian Union."

"The narratives themselves, told with the simplicity and directness of obvious truth, are full of terror, of pathos, the shame of human baseness and the glory of human virtue; and though the time is not yet sufficiently distant from the date of their occurrence to give to this record the universal acceptance it deserves, there are few, we think, even now, who can read it without amazement that such things could be in our very day, and be regarded with such general apathy. When the question, still so momentous and exciting, of the relations of the two races in this country, shall have passed from the vortex of political strife and social prejudice, and taken its place among the ethical axioms of a Christian civilization, then this faithful account of some of the darkest and some of the brightest incidents in our history—this cyclopædia of all the virtues and all the vices of humanity—will be accepted as a most valuable contribution to the annals of one of the important eras of the world."

From the "Lutheran Observer," Philadelphia.

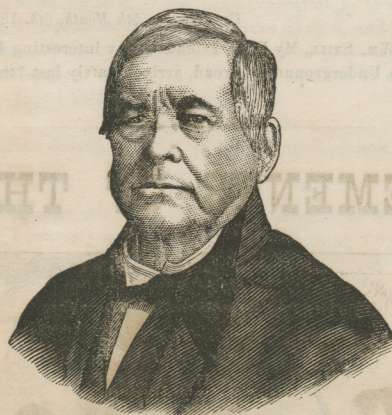
"It is a remarkable book in many respects. Like the 'Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,' by Mrs. Stowe, it reveals many of the most thrilling personal dramas and tragedies in the entire history of slavery. That 'truth is stranger than fiction' has hundreds of striking illustrations in this volume, which is a narrative of facts, the records of which were kept by Mr. Still, and are the only records in existence of the famous organization known as the Underground Railroad. It was established for the purpose of aiding slaves to escape from their masters in the South, but its operations were so mysterious and secret that, although everybody knew and spoke vaguely of its existence during the time of slavery, yet none but the initiated knew the secrets of its management and operations. These are now revealed for the first time in this work, and are as strange and wonderful as the most absorbing pictures of romance."

From the "Morning Star," Dover, N. H.

"The work is intensely interesting. Many of the narratives thrill the reader through and through. Some of them awaken an indignation, a horror, or a sense of humiliation and shame that makes the blood curdle or the cheek flush, or the breathing difficult. The best and the worst sides of human nature are successively exhibited. Here heroism and patience stand out transfigured; there selfishness and brutality hold carnival till it seems as though justice had been exiled and God had forgotten his own. The number of cases reported is very large, and the method in which the author has done his work is commendable. There is no rhetorical ambition. The narratives are embodied in plain language. The facts are left to make their own impression, without an attempt to embellish them by the aid of imagination. And the work is timely."

From the "Friends' Review," Philadelphia.

"We are glad to see this volume. We anticipate for it a large circulation, and a permanent rank in a peculiar and painful department of history. The writer is one among very many who are entitled to the hearty thanks of philanthropists for their services rendered, often at considerable sacrifices and imminent peril, for the rescue and aid of those who were wickedly held in bondage. . . . The Underground Railroad should have a place in every comprehensive library, private or public."



THOMAS GARRETT.

"But few transcend that auction block where the sheriff was selling all Garrett's goods for the crime (?) of giving a breakfast to a family of fugitive slaves. As the sale closed, the officer turns to Garrett, saying: 'Thomas, I hope you'll never be caught at this again.' 'Friend,' was the reply, 'I haven't a dollar in the world, but if thee knows a fugitive who needs a breakfast send him to me.'"



WILMINGTON, 11th mo. 21, 1858.

DEAR FRIENDS, McKim and STILL:—I write to inform you that on the 16th of this month we passed on four able-bodied men to Pennsylvania, and they were followed last night by a woman and her six children, from three or four years of age up to sixteen years; I believe the whole belonged to the same estate, and they were to have been sold at public sale, I was informed yesterday, but preferred seeking their own master. We had some trouble in getting those last safe along, as they could not travel far on foot, and could not safely cross any of the bridges on the canal, either on foot or in carriage. A man left here two days since, with carriage to meet them this side of the canal, but owing to spies they did not reach him till ten o'clock last night. This morning he returned, having seen them about one or two o'clock this morning in a second carriage, on the border of Chester County, where I think they are all safe, if they can be kept from Philadelphia. If you see them they can tell their own tales, as I have seen one of them. May He, who feeds the ravens, care for them.

Yours,

THOMAS GARRETT.

From the "Christian Recorder," Philadelphia.

"There has been no such work produced by any colored man in the country. 'My Bondage and my Freedom,' by Douglass, was a remarkable book, and was very justly appreciated by the liberty-loving people of the North and of England; but it was the story of a single hero. Comparatively, the same may be said of the lives of Jermain Loguen and others. But all these were but the exploits of individuals. The work of Mr. Still, however, takes a broader scope. It is the story of scores of heroes—heroes that equalled Douglass in nerve, and Loguen in tact, and excelled either in thrilling adventure."

From "Zion's Herald," Boston.

"It is a big book in manner, matter, and spirit; the biggest book America has yet written. It is our 'Book of Martyrs,' and William Still is our Fox the Chronicler. It is the 'thousand witnesses' of Theodore Weld, enlarged and intensified. It is more than Uncle Tom, Wilson's 'History of the Anti-slavery War,' or the hundred histories of the war itself. . . .

"The book is well illustrated with portraits of the railroad managers, and with scenes taken from life, and is far the most entertaining and instructive story ever issued from the American press. Everybody should buy, read, and transmit to his children these annals of our heroic age, the proofs not only of the equality, but the superiority of the enslaved race to their enslavers. No one can read, and not feel that as the Jews were the superior of the Egyptians and Babylonians, as the English and Goths were greater than the Romans that held them captives, so those who could project and execute such deeds of daring, men and women by the thousands and thousands, will yet prove themselves the equals, if not masters of the race that bound them down. The last shall be first."

From the "Daily Evening Bulletin," San Francisco.

"We have often longed to know how the drab-coated philanthropists of Philadelphia managed to furnish systematic assistance to the slave fugitives, and the desire is now gratified. William Still (colored), for many years connected with the anti-slavery office in Philadelphia, and chairman of the Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of the Underground Railroad, has written a ponderous volume, entitled 'The Underground Railroad.' . . . He has performed his work well. The volume before us, though containing nearly 800 pages, is not elaborated beyond necessity, and fairly teems with interesting sketches. The author modestly disclaims any literary ability, but he tells his stories in a clear, crisp style, which others, more pretentious, might imitate with profit."

From "The Press," Philadelphia.

"The vivid truth of the records in this volume throws into the shade the sensational imaginings of the mere novelist. Byron's emphatic declaration that 'Truth is strange, stranger than fiction,' is fully justified by the real events recorded here—events so well described that the reader must be equally pleased with the author's ability and veracity. . . . The closing two hundred pages are devoted to grateful recollections and memorials of the helpers and sympathizers, not in Philadelphia only, but in many other parts of this vast empire, who helped and sympathized with heart, hand and purse in this great and successful evasion and breach of laws against human freedom."