



The Underground Railroad

By Raymond Bial

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By ones, twos, and threes, in the years before the Civil War thousands of enslaved people slipped through the night on their way to freedom, riding the Underground Railroad. Hidden and hunted, the escape of southern slaves to the North remains a compelling event in American history. Within the pages of this book are documented, in prose and elegantly articulate photographs, examples of "stations" on the Railroad, along with images of the routes, lives, and hardships of both the "passengers" and "conductors."

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"Advantageously reproducing first-hand accounts and Bial's arresting photographs," said PW in a starred review, "the book's most impressive quality is the way it encourages readers to put themselves in the place of the slaves and those who helped them escape." Ages 8-12. (Sept.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 4-8?Bial's simple, eloquent text explains how the Underground Railroad worked and why it was necessary, as well as the hardships involved in the journey north. The black-and-white period reproductions are good, but Bial's full-color photographs are what make this title outstanding. Many of them show historical sites, including houses that served as stations along the escape route. Several of them were taken at night, and so readers see the places as the fugitives themselves might have viewed them. The simple picture of a child's abandoned doll is a wonderful example of Bial's talent. Although some background knowledge of the Civil War and the institution of slavery is helpful in understanding this book, it can still be read and appreciated without that background. This title could be effectively combined with Charles L. Blockson's *The Underground Railroad* (Berkley, 1994) to add insight into the harrowing experiences of slaves during the Civil War. Elizabeth M. Reardon, McCallie School, Chattanooga, TN

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4⁺-7. As Bial says in his introduction, photography was not yet invented when many of the daring escapes on the Underground Railroad occurred, and because everything had to be kept so secret, few documentary records have survived. In his simple photo-essay, he tries to re-create the experience of the brave runaways and conductors. He has photographed the places and objects that tell the story: the rivers the people crossed, the plantations they ran from, the homes that sheltered them with a lit window to signal a safe haven, the secret passages and trapdoors, and the courthouse yard where the slave auctions took place. He also includes drawings and prints from the times and a wanted poster for runaway "property." The text provides a brief historical overview, with quotes from some of the leaders, such as Tubman and Douglass. The book design is handsome, with thick paper, clear type, and fine reproductions; there's also a chronology and bibliography. Like a museum exhibit, the stirring photographs help us imagine what it must have been like for those who found the courage to run and to help others. *Hazel Rochman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ronald Moffatt:

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Fay Harris:

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