



The Underground Railroad

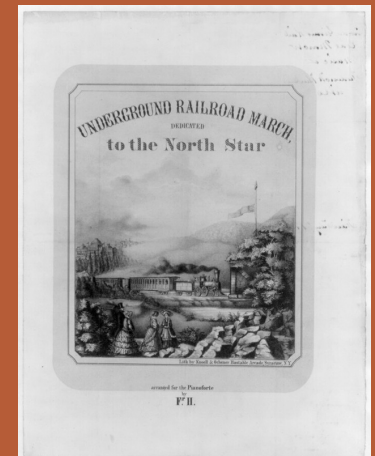


The Underground Railroad was the name for a way of helping enslaved people escape and get to a safe place where they would be free. It was not a real railroad but many of the words used in the railroad system came to be code words for those helping the slaves and the slaves themselves. "Tracks" were the paths that the slave would take. A "depot" was a safe place to stop or hide. "Conductors" helped show slaves the correct path to take. Many more train words were used as code.

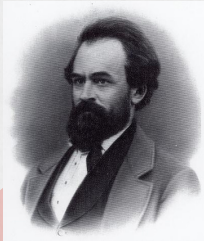


This painting by Charles T. Webber shows a group of people helping enslaved people into a shelter. It has snowed and is cold. The Levi Coffin family is helping them to a warm building. There are also supplies that are being carried by both the runaways and the family.

This song, Underground Railroad March, was written in 1855 by a group of abolitionists and slaves. The march style song has a dedication to the North Star. This star was used as a guide by many slaves as they would travel at night. If they were lost they could use the star to know what direction to travel.



THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN THE WAKARUSA RIVER VALLEY



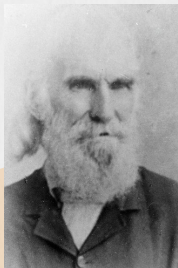
Joseph Gardner came to Kansas to support those who wanted Kansas as a free state. He settled in the area with his family. He helped to rescue a man named John Doy from Missouri. He was arrested for helping enslaved people escape. The plan was a hard one to do but they got him out! Gardner was also known for having some hired men who were runaways. One of them, Napoleon Simpson, was killed helping guard the Gardner cabin from pro-slavery men when they came to attack.



This is the cabin that the Gardner family lived in. He and his wife Eliza had three children, Mary, Lyman and Theodore. Eliza and Joseph helped people on the Underground Railroad. Joseph often had to be away from the house to be part of the free state cause. He could be gone for weeks at a time. For example, he walked to see Abraham Lincoln become president. He was gone for six weeks. Eliza was alone on the prairie with her little kids!



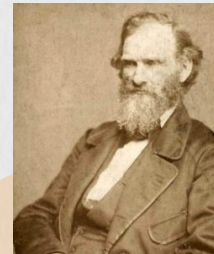
John Doy was part of a group trying to move thirteen runaways north. He was captured and thrown in jail for taking the people away from their owners. Joseph Gardner was part of a group of men who rescued John Doy from his jail in Missouri. The plan to rescue him had lots of parts to it but they were able to get him free. They brought him back to Lawrence where there were cheers for his release.



Dr. Eliab Macy was another settler who helped in the Underground Railroad. He was a cousin of Joseph Gardner. Macy and his wife would shelter and feed enslaved people. Once a proslavery group burned down two cabins that belonged to the couple. It was because they had heard the Macys were helping these groups of people make their way to freedom. Helping in this way was against the law and was dangerous to do. Some people died helping them.

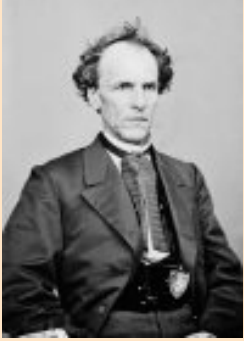


George Washington came from Missouri where he was enslaved. He joined the army during the Civil War. He was part of the first black troops who saw combat in the war. After the war he settled near Bloomington. He married a local woman, Amanda Simpson. They had seven children. Two of those children died when they were babies. Mr. Washington liked to talk to people about his story of escaping slavery, serving in the war and living free.

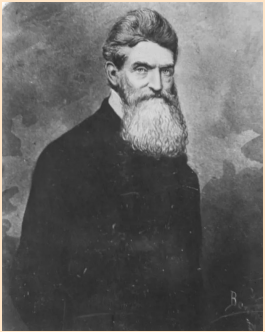


Augustus Wattles was a huge supporter of the Underground Railroad effort. He was a friend of John Brown and helped hide and move freedom seekers. Wattles was part of a group that planned a way to get John Brown out of jail. Brown was part of a plot to take over a weapon's storage unit in West Virginia. The plan was never carried out though. Wattles ended up selling his claim and moving to Linn County after his resources became depleted helping with the cause.

The Underground Railroad Across Kansas



The Lane Trail was named after this free state leader James H. Lane. Mr. Lane helped develop the trail to allow freedom seekers to keep away from pro-slavery towns in Kansas. There were rocks piled up along the trail. These were known as "Lane's chimneys" and would be a sign for freedom seekers and their helpers to follow. This trail helped many find a way to leave slavery forever.



John Brown came to Kansas to help it become a free state. He was a major "conductor" for the Underground Railroad. Mr. Brown was not afraid to use violence as part of making Kansas free. Not everyone liked his way of doing things. Brown thought having many weapons would help the cause. He led a group of men to a federal storage unit and tried to steal the weapons. The plan went badly and Brown was arrested and hung for his part in the plan.



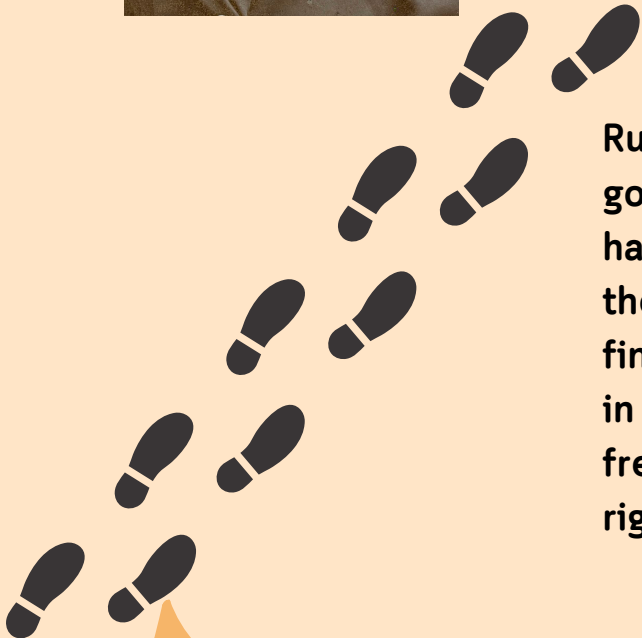
Quindaro, Kansas was a townsite on the Missouri River. The place was chosen because it had a natural area for steamboats to land. This small town was a route for runaways. Stories passed down through families over the years tell of this route for people to make their way to freedom. This statue was placed in the town later to honor John Brown.



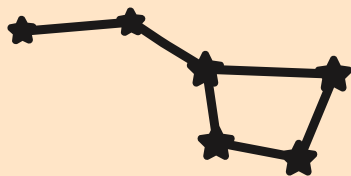
The Underground Railroad Across the United States



Harriet Tubman is one of the most well known "conductors" on the Underground Railroad. She got her freedom by escaping to a free state. She helped close to 300 people escape to a free area. Some went to Canada and some stayed in free states in our country. Slave owners once offered a \$40,000 reward for the capture of Tubman. She was never caught.

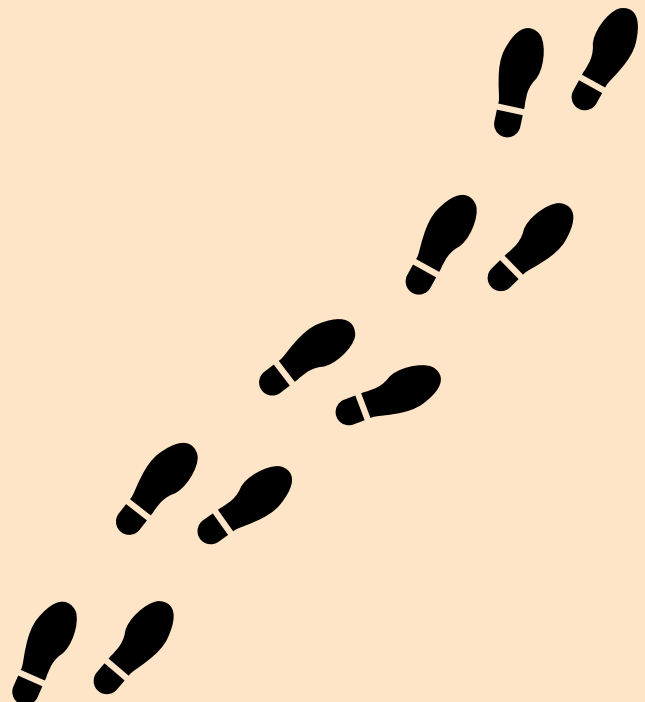
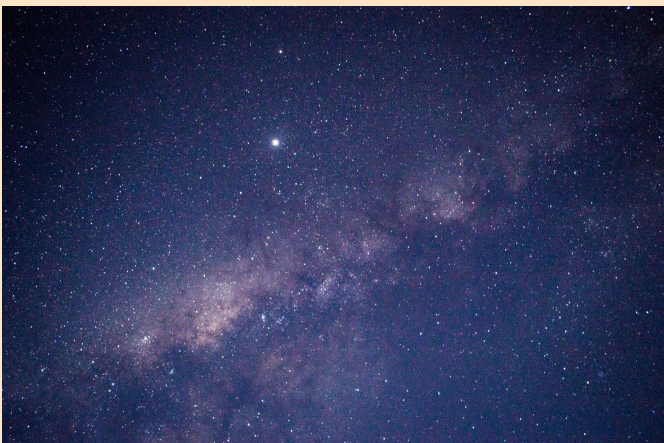


Runaways were told to "remember the drinking gourd". A gourd was made into a cup with a handle. These looked like the Big Dipper up in the sky. By finding the Big Dipper they could find the Small Dipper. This had the North Star in it. By always heading towards that star the freedom seekers knew they were headed in the right direction.



Activity

1. Make a picture on your tagboard. Your picture may be of anything you like.
2. Roll your paper into a tube shape. Make the circle the size of your eye.
3. Tape or glue one side to the other. Tape works best if you have it.
4. Ask an adult to take you outside at night. Use your telescope and see if you can find the Big Dipper. Move up from the cup of the Big Dipper. The bright star you see in the Little Dipper will be the North Star.
5. Remember, this is a pretend telescope. It won't make things closer. It will help your eye focus, though.
6. Write six sentences about looking for the North Star. Did you find it? What kept you from finding it? Did you like looking at the stars? How were stars important to the Underground Railroad?
7. Bring your telescope and sentences to the museum. Now you can pick your prize. Your name will be put in the raffle for bigger prizes at the end of the summer!



Underground Railroad Quiz for Online Users
Send the words "Wakarusa-Underground Railroad"
and your answers to cpreut@watkinsmuseum.org.

Students who miss one or less than one will receive a prize and be entered into a raffle.

- 1. What did a conductor do for the Underground Railroad?**
 - a. ran the train**
 - b. helped enslaved people get to freedom**
 - c. punched tickets for those traveling**
 - d. made sure coal was burning so the engine would run**
- 2. What was the Underground Railroad?**
 - a. trains that would take enslaved people away from their owner**
 - b. a system of moving enslaved people to the North**
 - c. a train that runs under a city**
 - d. a system of moving pioneers to Oregon**
- 3. What former slave is well known for helping others get to freedom?**
 - a. Harriet Tubman**
 - b. Betsy Ross**
 - c. Grandma Moses**
 - d. Sara Robinson**
- 4. What small town on the Missouri River did many enslaved people pass through on their way to freedom?**
 - a. Wyandotte**
 - b. Quindaro**
 - c. Lawrence**
 - d. Leavenworth**
- 5. Which Underground Railroad helper would you like to meet?**
 - a. John Brown**
 - b. Harriet Tubman**
 - c. Joseph Gardner**
 - d. Dr. Eliab Macy**