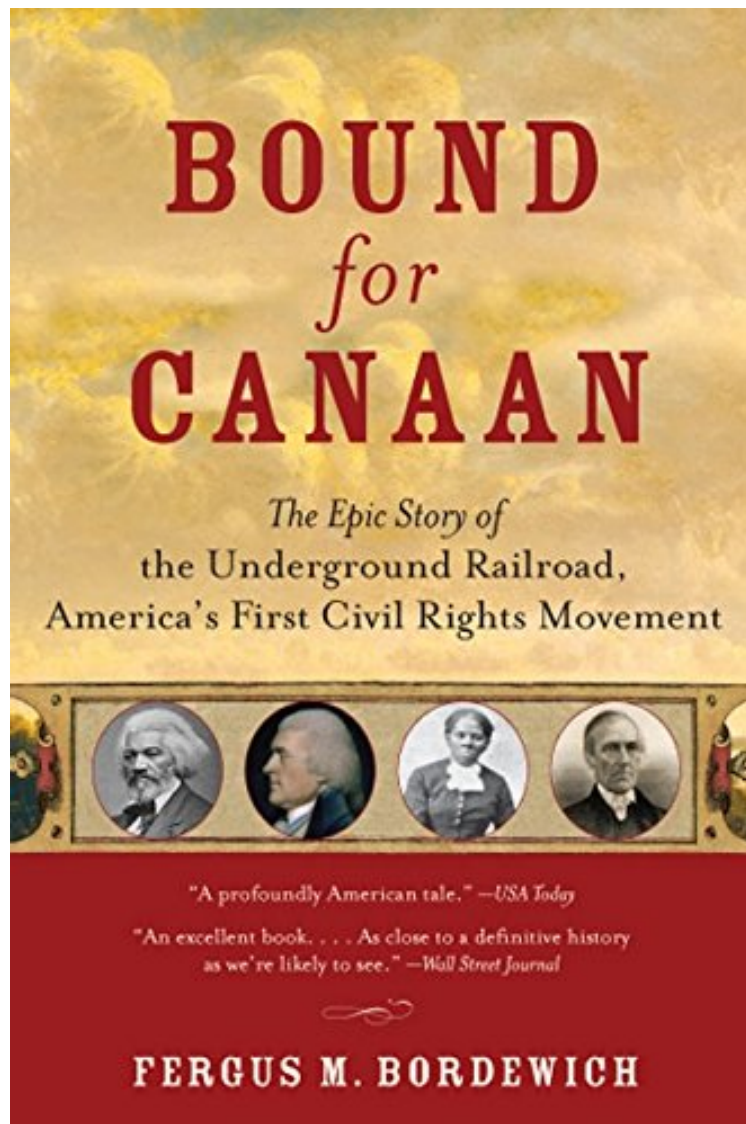


(Download) Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement

## Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement

*Fergus M. Bordewich*

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**Fergus M. Bordewich : Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Showing how every individual can make a difference By Green

PenFergus Bordewich has written an immensely readable and gripping history of the underground railroad, bringing to life the most famous of its "conductors" and many of its unsung heroes as well. This book made me realize how little I knew about the railroad and the years before the Civil War. "In an age when self-interest has been elevated in our culture to a public and political virtue," Bordewich writes in the Feb. 2, 2007 issue of the New York Times, "the Underground Railroad still has something to teach: that every individual, no matter how humble, can make a difference in the world, and that the importance of one's life lies not in money or celebrity, but in doing the right thing, even in silence or secrecy, and without reward." After reading this book, I couldn't agree more. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. but the author does an excellent job of collecting the available material. By Ken Wenger

Bound for Canaan is a remarkable history of the Underground Railroad. Those involved in the railroad tended not to keep written records of their activities, but the author does an excellent job of collecting the available material. Although the book is well-written, I don't consider it to be easy reading. For one thing the book is long--as mentioned, the author did his research. In some cases, the individuals are hard to follow. The story is generally told by chronology and themes--a person might appear in one chapter, disappear for a while in the narrative, and then reappear later. I sometimes had trouble remembering where I had heard that name before. As one might suspect at the outset, a book dealing with slavery is not dealing with a pleasant subject. The book is a very significant. As the author notes, with the exception of Harriet Tubman, those involved with the Underground Railroad are largely unknown today. This book recognizes the accomplishments of many of these heroes, both black and white. I mentioned above that it was sometimes difficult to remember where a name came up before. I think some of this was because I hadn't heard the name before reading this book. As a teacher, I also was impressed with the value the ex-slaves placed upon educating themselves and their children. We too often take our freedoms and ability to acquire education for granted--these people valued both. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent. By Matt FWell

written, easy to read, coherent story of the underground railroad. The only gripe I'd have with this book is that the author probably takes some liberties in describing the emotions or possible actions of actors where they aren't clear from primary sources but the language he uses almost always makes it clear where speculation exists. The author does an excellent job of weaving the overall story around the lives of several frequently recurring individual making the themes apparent through anecdotes involving the main players. Worth reading.

An important book of epic scope on America's first racially integrated, religiously inspired movement for change. The civil war brought to a climax the country's bitter division. But the beginnings of slavery's denouement can be traced to a courageous band of ordinary Americans, black and white, slave and free, who joined forces to create what would come to be known as the Underground Railroad, a movement that occupies as romantic a place in the nation's imagination as the Lewis and Clark expedition. The true story of the Underground Railroad is much more morally complex and politically divisive than even the myths suggest. Against a backdrop of the country's westward expansion arose a fierce clash of values that was nothing less than a war for the country's soul. Not since the American Revolution had the country engaged in an act of such vast and profound civil disobedience that not only challenged prevailing mores but also subverted federal law. Bound for Canaan tells the stories of men and women like David Ruggles, who invented the black underground in New York City; bold Quakers like Isaac Hopper and Levi Coffin, who risked their lives to build the Underground Railroad; and the inimitable Harriet Tubman. Interweaving thrilling personal stories with the politics of slavery and abolition, Bound for Canaan shows how the Underground Railroad gave birth to this country's first racially integrated, religiously inspired movement for social change.

From Publishers Weekly Though the Underground Railroad is one of the touchstones of American collective memory, there's been no comprehensive, accessible history of the secret movement that delivered more than 100,000 runaway slaves to freedom in the Northern states and Canada. Journalist Bordewich (*Killing the White Man's Indian*) fills this gap with a clear, utterly compelling survey of the Railroad from its earliest days in Revolution-era America through the Civil War and the extension of the vote to African Americans in 1870. Using an impressive array of archival and contemporary sources (letters, autobiographies, tax records and slave narratives, as well as new scholarship), Bordewich reveals the Railroad to be much more complicated--and much more remarkable--than is usually understood. As a progressive movement that integrated people across races and was underwritten by secular political theories but carried out by fervently religious citizens in the midst of a national spiritual awakening, the clandestine network was among the most fascinatingly diverse groups ever to unite behind a common American cause. What makes Bordewich's work transcend the confines of detached social history is his emphasis on the real lives and stories of the Railroad's participants. Religious extremists, left-wing radicals and virulent racists all emerge as fully realized characters, flawed but determined people doing what they believed was right, and every chapter has at least one moment--a detail, a vignette, a description--that will transport readers to the world Bordewich describes. The men and women of this remarkable account will remain with readers for a long time to come. Illus. not seen by PW. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* In the first years of the nineteenth century, most runaway slaves didn't get very far: "Slave holders sought to impress their slaves with a

belief in the boundlessness of slave territory," Frederick Douglass wrote, and, given the reach of fugitive slave laws, "the real distance was great enough." Those who did make it almost always had the help of Quakers, free blacks, and other opponents of slavery, who composed what Bordewich calls a "national geography of freedom." This engrossing account of the Underground Railroad describes how scattered "experimental, impulsive" acts (for instance, defending a fugitive from a patrol) became an organized operation involving thousands of stationmasters, conductors, and spies. Some of the less known, and more remarkable, stories here involve the black workers on the Railroad, such as Arnold Gragston, who, while remaining a slave, ferried hundreds of runaways across the Ohio River until 1863, when he became his own last passenger. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker From Bookmarks Magazine The Underground Railroad was, by its very nature, a silent, loose-limbed organization. This fog of anonymity may explain why, despite its critical role in American history, historians have attempted so few chronicles of it. Bordewich, author of *My Mother's Ghost* (2000) and *Killing the White Man's Indian* (1997), was undeterred by the challenge. If he can't rescue all names from anonymity, he succeeds in laying bare the heroic spirit of the escapees' struggle. He also breaks "the hard sheen of myth" and shows how some of the movements' white leaders embraced racial equality. Critics applaud the thrilling depictions of escapes and the furtive strategies in use along the railroad. Even more, they appreciate how he places the railroad in context as the fountainhead for the abolitionist movement and, further down the road, the civil rights movement. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc.