

[PDF] Bound For Canaan: The Epic Story Of The Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement

Fergus M. Bordewich - pdf download free book

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Description:

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*.

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From 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.

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