THE UNDERGROUND IS BORN



0. THE UNDERGROUND IS BORN - Story Preface

1. THE UNDERGROUND IS BORN

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Vintage postcard depicting the home of Rev. and Mrs. John Rankin in Ripley. Ohio. The Rankins opened their home to escaping slaves as a "stop" on the Underground Railroad. Image online, courtesy Flickr.

Tice reached the shore first that night, in 1831.

Although his pursuer knew the exact place where his slave had landed, Tice had vanished. The owner searched everywhere, to no avail. It was unbelievable, to him, that no one had seen his runaway.

Enraged, the empty-handed slave owner returned to Kentucky where he told others:

> *He must have gone on some underground road.*

Thereafter, legend has it, the already existing network of free blacks and white abolitionists who broke laws and risked much to help an enslaved people was called the “Underground Railroad.”

The first overnight stop on Tice Davids’ trip to freedom was likely the Ripley, Ohio home of Rev. and Mrs. John Rankin. There, Tice probably slipped (out of his master’s view) into the cellar of the home near the river. He would have stayed there until it was safe to move on.

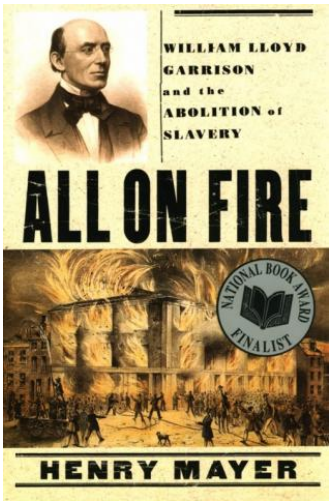
As states united edged closer to becoming states divided, more and more people fled America’s system of chattel slavery. By the time the war between the states was over, at least 100,000 people had exchanged bondage for freedom by making an arduous, risk-filled trip on one of the Underground Railroad’s routes.

Difficult as they were, however, such flights to freedom would have been no worse than journeys to slavery which kidnapped Africans endured until slave-trading was outlawed in the 19th century.

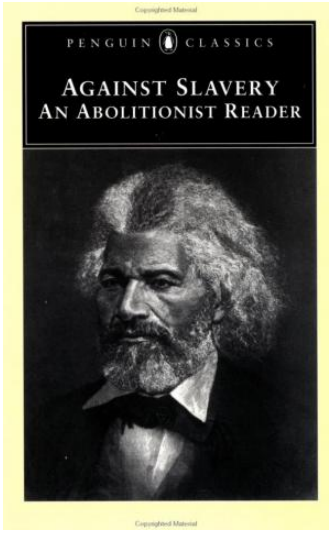
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Media Stream



All On Fire - by Henry Mayer
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Ripley, Ohio - Slave Haven
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Slave Protectors - Mr. and Mrs. John Rankin
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Rankin Home - Cellar Door

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Rankin Home - Area View

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Rankin Home - Cellar

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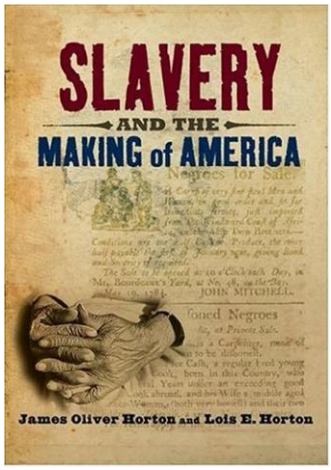
Rankin Home - Parlor

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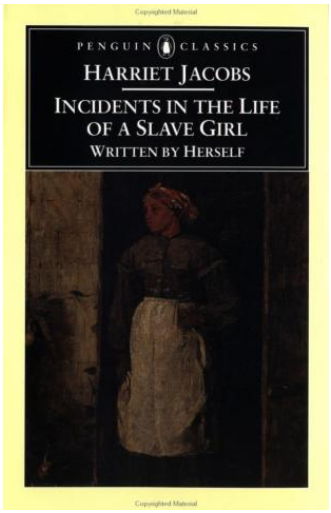
Ohio River - Near the Rankin Home

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