

Learn More About It

General background information:

1. The Underground Railroad was not underground and it was not a railroad. Instead, it was a term used to describe a series of secret routes and safe houses used by runaway slaves. It was called "underground" because it was secret. It was called a "railroad" because words associated with trains were used to identify the persons who helped slaves to escape. Homes that welcomed runaways were called 'stations'; the families who lived in these homes were called 'station masters'. Station masters often provided a guide to help slaves to the next station; these guides were called 'conductors'. Slaves themselves were called 'passengers'.

There were many routes on the Underground Railroad. Most slaves chose eastern routes. Some went along the Atlantic Coast via Washington, DC, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont into Canada. Probably most chose the route through Pennsylvania and into New York City (some choosing this route went all the way to Canada). A smaller number of escapees went through southwestern Pennsylvania and northeastern Ohio, crossing Lake Erie into Canada (this is the route our travelers in this book have chosen). Some slaves escaped from Tennessee and Missouri through Illinois and Michigan. Kentucky slaves preferred the route through Ohio to Lake Erie and then on to Canada. Not all slaves chose to go north. Slaves in Texas fled to Mexico. Many slaves in South Carolina and Georgia fled south through Florida and into the Caribbean. The main objective of a runaway was to get to a "free state".

2. History of Slavery: Slavery in America is but one example of slavery in the world throughout history. There were slaves in ancient societies, going back as far as the 18th century BC - slaves in most countries around the Mediterranean Sea, in Slavic countries, in African nations, and in England.

Large towns, estates, or plantations needed cheap or free labor to do the necessary work to sustain them. Such was the condition for slavery. Slavery could be called "forced labor." People became enslaved in many ways. Wars between towns, tribes, or civilizations meant that there were winners and losers. The winners could take losers by force into slavery; typically, those taken were the ones thought to be strong workers. Criminals were enslaved. People who could not pay their bills were enslaved. Pirates captured people in order to sell them.

Enslaved people were first brought to America in 1619. The number of slaves increased each year until 1807 when the Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves was passed. Though the law prohibited slave trade, it was enforced poorly and some slave trade continued. The number of slaves traded, however, diminished rapidly. In 1790, there were 697,524 slaves in the United States. By 1850, the time period of *The Freedom Stone*, the population in the United States was 23,191,876, of which 3,204,313 were slaves, about 14% of the total population. The population of Virginia in 1850 was 1,119,348 of which 452,028 were slaves. There were more slaves in Virginia in 1850 than in any other state. There were 34,026 slave holding families in Virginia in 1850; 4880 of those held 20-49 slaves on their properties. The fictional slave holding family in *The Freedom Stone* owned 28 slaves.

The routes used by slave ships became known as Triangular Trade. Three regions are involved in Triangular Trade:

-One region had goods or commodities in excess of its needs. Examples are: fish, agricultural products, lumber, wine, rum, olive oil, copper, cloth, guns, ammunition, and luxury items such as silver, glassware, even furniture. These goods were shipped on the first leg to another location. Upon arrival at the second region, the goods were paid for or bartered for slaves.

-The next leg of the triangle occurred when slaves were loaded onto ships carrying them to the third location where they were sold. Ship owners benefitted from all three trips.

The Triangle Trade route bringing slaves to America started in the British Isles, sailed to Africa, where slaves were then brought to America. This was called The Middle Passage.

Slavery became illegal with the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and effectively ended with the end of the Civil War in 1865. The 13th amendment to the constitution legally ended slavery permanently.

3. Slave resistance: Becoming enslaved was not a choice. Slaves were brought to North America and sold as property to the highest bidder. Their work was coerced free labor. It is not surprising that slaves did not accept their situation willingly. Slaves found ways to resist. Some acts of resistance were aimed at ending their enslavement; others were intended to change, even slightly their daily living conditions. Listed here are various forms of slave resistance.

Enslaved people:

- slowed their work

- pretended to be ill

- broke the tools they needed to do their work

- stole from their masters (vegetables, fruit, liquor, money, guns)

- kept their African culture and traditions alive in their music and in their beliefs

- used their knowledge of herbs and plants to poison their masters or make them ill

- ran away

- organized rebellions

Because slave owners exercised control over their slaves, organized rebellion was rare. Slaves did not have access to guns. Their movement away from the owner's property was limited. And, severe methods were employed by their owners to deter resistance: public hangings, decapitation, burning slaves alive, and other brutal punishments. Whipping, or flogging, was the most common form of

punishment used by slaveholders to control the behavior of slaves. The number of lashes depended on the severity of the slaves' 'crime', decided by the overseer or the master. Typically, the number of lashes ranged from 10 to 30, but 100 or more lashes was not uncommon; rarely was a slave whipped to death, but it did occur occasionally. Men were whipped more frequently than women, but both women and children were whipped.

More severe punishments included shackling, hanging, burning, mutilation, branding and imprisonment. Wearing a metal collar around the neck was one form of punishment. The collars were thick and heavy, and often had protruding spikes which made the slaves' work very difficult, and it made lying down to sleep nearly impossible. When hangings occurred, the master hung the slave in the presence of the other slaves, believing that their witness would deter further resistance. Branding was not uncommon. Mutilation included knife slashing, particularly on the face, smashing of thumbs, and amputation of a finger or an ear.

4. Slaves' lives compared to the lives of indentured servants: Indentured servants willingly signed a contract to provide free labor in exchange for transportation, food, clothing, and lodging. The contracts were for a specified length of time, usually 4-7 years. Once the time period was complete, the indentured servant became a free member of society, giving him/her the right to own property, to hold a paying job, and to vote. Many indentured servants contracted in this way came from northern Europe, hoping to escape the poverty, sickness, and generally difficult situations in their home countries. Most were young, white men. In contrast, enslaved people did not choose to endure the horrible conditions of being transported to America. They were, instead, captured and brought across the ocean against their will. Slaves were considered the property of a slave owner, an asset; they could be sold and re-sold. As an asset, slaves were more valuable to their owners than indentured servants. However, they could not own property, could not earn money for services, and could not vote. Slaves were black men, women, and children.

Once in America, conditions for slaves and indentured servants were similar. Both worked for no pay and had no control of their lives. Living conditions were crude and the work was equally hard.

Indentured servants were assumed to be Christians while slaves were treated as pagans.

Being enslaved is a life condition; indentured servants knew that their indenture would end at a point in time.

Background information pertinent to each chapter of *The Freedom Stone*:

Chapter One:

1. Babies born to a slave mother became slaves too. Children took the legal status of the mother. Thus, even if the father was free, if the mother was a slave, the baby would be a slave. It is a fact that slave owners often forced themselves sexually on their female slaves. Babies born of such a situation thus increased the slave owners' assets. In that way, female slaves were more valuable to slave owners than male slaves because women could work and have children. A pregnant slave worked until the baby was delivered and returned to her work within days. Older women, no longer able to perform hard labor, were charged with the care of babies and toddlers. Generally, women sold for more money than a male field slave, although very strong men could bring a higher price.

Many slave owners believed that slave marriages were a good idea, even though slave marriages were not recognized by any law. They thought that married slaves would be less likely to be rebellious or to run away.

Most slave cabins had only one room. Some had two rooms and a sleeping loft. The entire size was typically about 14-16 feet by 14-16 feet. Though some were made of brick, typically they were made of wood, usually pine; sometimes they

used pine planks, and sometimes they actually used logs. There was one door and one window and a fireplace and chimney. Sometimes there was not a fireplace. Instead there would be a big fire pit in the common yard of the slave quarters. Most often there was a wood plank floor, but sometimes there was no floor, just the dirt on the ground. Slaves would put paper, straw, moss, or rags in the cracks in the walls to keep the wind out. The fireplace was used to keep the cabin warm in the winter and to keep the mosquitoes out in the summer. Cooking was done in the fireplace as well.

There were different categories of slaves. A house slave was one who worked in the Master's house, called the Big House. Men, women, and children were house slaves, depending on the size of the plantation and the number of slaves owned by the plantation master. Sometimes house slaves lived in the Big House, but sometimes they lived in cabins in the slaves' quarters. Field slaves worked in the fields. Some slaves were called 'skilled'; they had jobs like carpenter or blacksmith.

2. Overseers were men hired by the plantation owner to watch over the work of the slaves. The overseer was usually paid a portion of the profit from the sales of the crops, so it was in his best interests to make the slaves work harder and harder so that there would be more crops to sell. Overseers were often mean-spirited people who enforced the rules with a whip. Overseers of black slaves were typically white, but not always; occasionally there was a black overseer. President Thomas Jefferson had a black overseer at his home in Virginia, Monticello. White overseers belonged to a poor rank in society and they often hated black slaves because they believed that the black slaves had taken the jobs that, in their opinion, should have gone to them. This is but one example of slavery being about the supremacy of whiteness.

Slaves belonged to the poorest, lowest rank in society. Laws ensured that they would stay that way. In many states, slaves could not earn wages for performing a trade or labor. They were not allowed to own property. Slaves could not go outside after dark. They could not gather in groups of three or more. They could not own weapons. Most slave owners believed that slaves were less smart, less

capable than white people. Slave owners could sell any slave at any time, and in many cases, they sold one or more slaves in a family, but not the others. Slaves were always afraid of having their families separated.

Chapter Two:

1. An abolitionist was a person who believed in immediately abolishing the practice of slavery. Some abolitionists began advocating for the elimination of slavery as early as the late 1600s and by 1804 all northern states had abolished it. But in the 1860 census, the slave population in the United States was four million. The abolitionist movement was based in the North. Most were white and many were Quakers who opposed slavery on religious grounds. One of the most famous abolitionists was William Lloyd Garrison, who began publishing a newspaper in Boston called *The Liberator* in 1831. The newspaper, supported by free African Americans, led to the establishment of the American Anti-Slavery Society. A famous African American abolitionist was Frederick Douglass, whose powerful speaking style helped to spread the word of the abolitionist movement. His newspaper *The North Star* was published from 1838-1851.

2. Songs were important to slaves. Their lives were harsh; music seemed to help them to endure. Singing while working on a difficult task helped to make the time go faster. Some songs came from their African roots; however, most slaves had become Christian and many of their songs were religious. What was interesting about their singing was that the words had secret meanings, that neither the overseer nor the Master figured out. For example, in the words to “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, when the slaves sang ‘coming for to carry me home’, ‘home’ meant ‘freedom’ whereas the slave owner just thought it meant ‘heaven’. In the song, “Sweet Canaan’s Happy Land”, the slaves meant Canada. Slaves also sang songs simply to cheer themselves and they often did so on Sundays to the accompaniment of a banjo and rhythm instruments improvised out of sticks, pans, etc.

Chapter Three:

1. Slaves learned about what was going on outside of the plantation by listening. House slaves always kept their ears open and their mouths closed in order to overhear conversations among family members, or between the overseer and the master. Some slaves were asked to take a wagon pulled by a mule into town to get the mail or to purchase rations or supplies. These were good times to listen in on conversations in the post office or in the general stores. There were a few slaves who could read; if they were in town they could glance at newspapers or on flyers posted on public bulletin boards. Occasionally field slaves learned about slave uprisings or about runaways when the overseer used that information as a threat as to what might happen if the field slaves did not work hard or fast enough to please the overseer. Slaves passed on information to each other during private times in their cabins, gatherings in the slave quarters' yard, or by singing certain songs which cleverly provided news.

Chapter Four:

In most southern states, it was illegal to teach a slave to read or write. Slave owners feared that if slaves could read and write, they would be more likely to learn about abolitionist activities, would run away, would rebel, and they might question the authority of the overseer and the Master. Each state, therefore, passed its own laws about teaching slaves to read and write, and each state had its own penalties for doing so. In some states, a fine was imposed on slave owners who violated the law; in others the slave owner would receive no penalty, but the slave participating in such education would be whipped, incarcerated, or sold. In some states, it was written into the law that any person teaching a slave to read or write could be imprisoned. Some slave owner Mistresses did teach the slave children to read and write in spite of the stiff rules and punishments spelled out in the law.

Chapter Five:

1. Slave holders provided food rations to their slaves once a week. Typically, rations were distributed at the end of the work day on Saturday as slaves usually did not work on Sunday. On some plantations, slaves worked seven days a week. The food rations commonly included corn meal, flour, meat (usually bacon or ham, very seldom beef), corn, and molasses. Slaves met at the smoke house or

at the corn crib to receive their rations, or the overseer delivered their rations on a large wagon pulled by a pair of mules. Each slave owner made his own decision about what provisions to give the slaves. Occasionally, perhaps at Christmas, sugar, coffee, and salt would be added to the weekly rations. Most slave holders allowed their slaves to have a small garden in the slave quarters for the purpose of growing vegetables to supplement their diets. Some slave owners allowed their slaves to raise chickens. Slaves fished where and when they could and also killed squirrels or rabbits. Some resourceful slaves dug root cellars underneath their cabins to store potatoes and other vegetables. These root cellars also proved to be good hiding places if they wanted to hide something from the overseer or the slave holder.

2. Slaves occasionally were allowed to leave the plantation, but only with permission from the slave master. They had to carry a written pass explaining the reason for their presence outside the plantation. The reasons given for such passes were usually to get supplies, rations, telegrams, etc. for the Master and his family.

3. Every southern state had its own set of laws regarding the identification, capture, and jailing of runaway slaves. Each state also had a set of laws about returning and/or selling runaway slaves. State legislatures granted local officials, including county judges, authority as patrols. They operated similarly to the military, with captains, sergeants, and patrollers, whose rank was similar to privates. They had legal authority to search anywhere they wished. They could come onto anyone's property, search any building or home. Some thought they had the right to shoot and kill any runaway they found.

4. Slave catchers were somewhat different from patrollers and were more effective. Slave catchers were men who owned so-called 'negro dogs' trained to follow a runaway slave's scent. They were hired by slave owners and they were paid by the day and the mile. It was possible to earn about ten to fifty dollars for the capture and return of a runaway. Usually slave catchers travelled on horses, but some did their hunting by foot.

5. Most slaves adapted to the doctrines of Christianity, but some rejected Christianity and continued to hold to their traditional African beliefs or to a belief in Islam. Some slave owners required their slaves to go to the slave owners' church where they had to sit in the back or in a seating area in a loft. At the time of the telling of *The Freedom Stone*, it would have been unusual for slaves to have their own churches and preachers. Instead, informal prayer meetings were held quietly in the slave cabins or in secluded places such as the woods or ravines. Some slave owners allowed slaves to have prayer meetings, but most did not, so slaves had to attend in secret for fear of being punished if they were discovered. Slaves tried various methods to keep their religious meetings secret. One method was to form a circle around the slave preacher; all would be on their knees. The preacher would bend forward and speak over a big pot of water to drown out the sound of his voice. Another common method was to thoroughly soak quilts or other large pieces of cloth; the wet cloths were then hung from tree branches to form a little room into which the slaves gathered. Again, the wetness on the quilts drowned out their voices.

6. Prayer meetings were very important to the slaves. It was a time when they could forget all their suffering and dream about a time when they would be free. Slaves worshipped with great enthusiasm, dancing, singing, clapping hands, foot-stomping, and head-shaking.

Chapter Six:

1. Once a year, usually at Christmas time, slaves were given clothing meant to last them through the entire year. The clothes were purchased by the slave owners, or they were sewn by slave girls and women. Though each slave owner provided clothing in his own way, typically men were given 2 shirts, 2 pairs of summer pants, 2 pairs of winter pants, a coat made out of blankets, 1 pair of shoes and a hat. Women usually were given 2 dresses, 2 cotton slippers, a blanket coat, and cloth for a turban. On many plantations children wore no clothing or shoes until they were eight or nine years old, then they were given a few pants or dresses and a coat. Boys were given a hat and girls were given a cloth for a turban.

Chapter Seven:

1. Growing tobacco was almost a year-round job. It was hard on the soil, so the acreage devoted to tobacco had to change often. In January, slaves made seed beds in which they would plant the tiny tobacco seeds. When the seeds grew large enough, they would be transplanted to fields that they had themselves prepared. Transplanting the seedlings occurred in April or May. In June and July, the plants were primed and topped. Tobacco plants were ready to harvest in August or September. After cutting the plant, the leaves were left on the ground to wilt for a few hours before hanging on lines, sticks, or fence rails in the tobacco barns. Heat was necessary to cure tobacco. Fire boxes made of rock were inside the barns and the smoke from the fires warmed the tobacco so that it would dry. After curing, tobacco was taken to processing centers; then it could be sold.

2. The law did not give slaves any protection from their masters. Slaves could not testify in court against their masters. So, Masters and their overseers felt safe when whipping their slaves because they knew that they would not themselves get into any trouble for so cruelly treating the slaves. Many Masters and their overseers believed that bullying the slaves with the fear of the whip would encourage the slaves to work harder and faster to produce more of the crops, tobacco or cotton primarily. Whipping was the main method used to control slaves. The number of lashes depended on the seriousness of the offence, ranging from five to over 200.

3. Slaves prayed and dreamed about the day that they would be free, but most died as slaves. They believed that in their death, they were set free. Some believed that the person who died went to heaven where there was no slavery. Some believed that the deceased was returned to Africa. Singing and dancing was common at slave funerals.

4. Funerals often took place on Sundays to allow for slaves from other plantations to attend; they were also conducted in the evening because slaves could not miss work during the day.

Slaves were often buried with their faces toward the east. Some thought that in this way the deceased person would see the sun each day as it rose in the east.

Others who could read the Bible thought that the angel Gabriel would blow his trumpet from the east and in this way, the deceased would not have to turn around to see Gabriel.

Graves were often decorated with broken pieces of pottery to symbolize the broken body of the slave. Personal items belonging to the dead person (clocks, cups, bowls, clothing, etc.) were sometimes placed on the grave. Seashells or white pebbles found in streams and rivers usually marked the burial site as a reminder that slaves were transported to America via the sea.

Slave funerals ended as celebrations with singing, dancing, eating, and drinking, often throughout the night.

5. Nat Turner was a lonely, intelligent Virginia slave who spent much of his time praying. He believed in spirits and he often had visions about things to come. The visions he saw made him believe that he should fight against all things evil in order that he could go to heaven. One day the sun appeared blue-green, an unusual sight. Turner decided that this was a sign that he should follow through with his plan to get rid of evil. He and several other rebels went on an assault stabbing, shooting and clubbing at least 55 white people. He was captured, tried in court, and sentenced to execution. He was hanged. Following the rebellion, slaveholders were hysterical and they then murdered about 200 black people, most of whom had nothing to do with the rebellion. Also, slaves who lived in neighboring states were also accused of having a connection to the rebellion even though they did not. They were also killed.

Chapter Eight:

1. The Underground Railroad was *not* 'under ground' and it was *not* a 'railroad.' Underground simply meant that it was secret. It was a system of helping runaway slaves to escape to the 'free' northern states of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. Once they reached a free state, many slaves continued on to Canada. Words associated with trains were used to define how people helped

slaves to escape. Homes that welcomed runaways were called 'stations'; the families who lived in these homes were called 'station masters'. Station masters often provided a guide to help slaves to the next station; these guides were called 'conductors'. Slaves themselves were called 'passengers'.

2. Harriet Tubman (born 1820, named Araminta Ross) was a Maryland slave who escaped in 1849 to Philadelphia. She returned to Maryland to free her sister and her sister's two children. Later she returned to rescue her brother. Tubman made trip after trip bringing slaves to freedom, traveling by night and in extreme secrecy. Though no one knows for sure, it is estimated that she made 19 trips helping about three hundred slaves escape slavery. Nicknamed 'Moses', Harriet Tubman used the Underground Railroad and she was known as its most famous 'conductor'. She became friends with many of the abolitionists and she took part in antislavery meetings. Tubman was never captured and neither were any of the runaway slaves she guided. Tubman commented, "I was a conductor on the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say – I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger." Tubman and Frederick Douglass were friends.

Chapter Nine:

1. There were many reasons why slaves chose to run away: fear of being sold, transferred or traded to another plantation, dissatisfaction with the Master or the overseer, ill-treatment, food allotments, clothing, housing, Sunday work, excessive drinking by the Master, arguments and violence in the Master's household.

2. The largest majority of runaways were young men in their teens and twenties. Stronger, healthier, and with more energy than older slaves, these young men were more willing to defy their Masters and overseers. Slave women were more reluctant to run away as they usually had children. Runaways usually travelled alone. Often a man would escape and hope to send for his family later. Occasionally family members would run together. It was extremely rare for a group of more than three people to run away together.

3. Some runaways carried guns; most did not. It was more common for a runaway to carry a knife or an ax.

4. Runaways sometimes stole things from their Master as they began their journey. Slaves, of course, looked at the property of their Master differently than the Master himself. They felt that the Master's riches were earned from their labor, so they felt they were taking what was due them. Clothing was the most common thing stolen. Horses were stolen as well. Corn, meat, coffee, or sugar were stolen by a few runaways. Missus Porter, in *The Freedom Stone*, was a kind mistress. Not all were so nice.

Chapter Ten:

1. When a slave ran away, the slave owner would post flyers in public places advertising rewards for the capture and return of the slave. Such advertisements were found in taverns, post offices, court houses, and newspapers. Seeking the return of a runaway, a master or an overseer might write out thousands of these ads. The notices were quite descriptive including details about the slave's appearance, dress, speech, character, skills, intellectual capacity, how dark or light their skin was, gender, and age.

2. Most slaves ran away at night. Some did not travel as far as Moses and his family. Some were content to get to a free state like Pennsylvania or Ohio. They would then go to the larger cities where there were 'free' slaves allowing them to pass more easily as 'free'.

Courageous steps were taken by runaways. They sneaked onto trains. They camped out in the woods or in swamps. They hid in steamboats. Some carried forged papers identifying them as 'free'. Some tried to purchase train tickets. Some changed their names. Some wore disguises. Some obtained 'passes' saying that they should be permitted to travel to a certain place.

Chapter Eleven:

1. Quakers are members of a religious group called *The Society of Friends*. One of their beliefs is that all human beings are equal. Quakers wanted to rid slavery from the United States. They worked in two different ways: 1) they created a public awareness campaign, speaking anywhere they could about the evils of slavery and writing articles for publication in important newspapers; 2) they supported escaping slaves by hiding them in their homes and connecting them with other anti-slavery citizens who shared their beliefs. Therefore, Quakers played a major role in the Underground Railroad.

2. Quakers were not the only helpers along the Underground Railroad. Pennsylvania and Ohio were home to many free blacks who also participated in aiding the runaway slave in his/her path to freedom.

3. Frederick Douglass, the son of a slave woman and an unknown white man, lived with his grandmother as a child. His mother, whom he did not see often, died when he was quite young; some reports say that he was seven when she died, others say he was ten. Shortly after his mother's death, he was sent to Baltimore where he lived with a ship carpenter, Hugh Auld and his wife Sophia. Sophia taught Douglas to read and write even though her husband forbade it. He tried to escape twice before he finally succeeded. Always wanting to better himself, Douglass read everything he could get his hands on and he soon became quite an educated man, giving lectures in northern states and in the Midwest. After meeting William Lloyd Garrison, a noted abolitionist and publisher of the weekly journal *The Liberator*, Douglass started making speeches about slavery. Some years later, he began publishing his own weekly, *The North Star*. He met with Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War and recruited northern blacks to fight on the side of the North.

Chapter Twelve:

1. Those helping slaves in their passage to freedom risked great danger for themselves and for their families. Fines and imprisonment were imposed on those who were caught aiding runaways. Still, many, believing it was the right

thing to do, were willing to take those risks. Some important people that you may wish to study include: Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, William Still, Levi Coffin, and Thomas Garrett.

2. Railroads had come into existence by the time the Underground Railroad started. Railroad language was used to develop secret codes to help slaves escape. Here are the most common codes and their meanings:

-baggage	fugitive slaves
-bundles of wood	slaves that were expected
-Canaan	Canada
-conductor	person who directly transported slaves
-drinking gourd	the Big Dipper and the North Star
-Freedom train	the Underground Railroad
-Gospel train	the Underground Railroad
-heaven	Canada, freedom
-load of potatoes produce in a wagon	escaping slaves hidden under farm
-Moses	Harriet Tubman
-Promised Land	Canada
-River Jordan	Ohio River
-station	safe house
-station master	owner of a safe house

3. Henry 'Box' Brown, born in 1815 or 1816 in Louisa County, Virginia, was a slave whose pregnant wife and their three children were sold to a master in North Carolina, separating his family forever. He mourned their loss for quite some time before deciding that he wanted to escape slavery. Brown and a fellow choir member of the First African Baptist Church, James Smith, dreamed up an idea of how he would escape. James Smith knew a shoemaker and sympathizer, Samuel Smith, who agreed for a price to ship 'Box' Brown in a wooden crate from Richmond to Philadelphia. The box measured 3 feet long by 2 feet 8 inches deep by 2 feet wide and sent labeled 'dry goods'. The box was lined with wool cloth and had one small hole for air. Brown only carried a small amount of water and a few biscuits. During the train journey,

the box was turned upside down many times and was handled quite roughly. When the box arrived in Philadelphia, it was received by members of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. When the box was opened, Henry Brown stepped out and said, "How do you do, gentlemen?" Then he sang a psalm, "I waited patiently on the Lord and He heard my prayer. From then on, he was known as Henry 'Box' Brown. He traveled around the northeast telling his story. He created a stage show, called a panorama, about slavery where he re-created his climbing out of the box. There is no information about his death.

4. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was an act of Congress, signed by President George Washington, himself a slave owner, guaranteeing the right of the slave owner to recapture runaways. The act called runaway slaves 'fugitives from justice'. The Act was made even stronger in 1850 after the slave states of the South fought for the passage of the Compromise of 1850 which required that even the governments and residents of free states had to enforce the capture and return runaway slaves. The enforcement of this act made anti-slavery Northerners angry as it fined any person aiding a runaway slave \$500 in addition to a six-month prison sentence. The people who captured a slave were paid a fee for doing so. This actually encouraged some unscrupulous (not honest or fair) people to capture free black men and sell them to slave owners.

Chapter Thirteen:

1. Dr. Edmundson is a fictional character. His home and his family in the story are fictional. However, there is a National Historic Landmark in Washington, Pennsylvania named for a Dr. F. Julius LeMoyne. Dr. LeMoyne and his wife Madelaine had eight children, three sons and five daughters. As a young doctor, LeMoyne was shown the constitution of the Anti-Slavery Society, an organization founded by William Lloyd Garrison and Arthur Tappan. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, was a leader of this society and often spoke at its meetings. The constitution of the organization was basically a discussion about the rights of man. From the moment of reading it, Dr.

LeMoyne became committed to the anti-slavery movement. He, his wife, and all of their children were active in the Underground Railroad.

2. In southwest Pennsylvania, there was a close group of people, both white and free blacks, who helped slaves escape. Together they established an elaborate network of other activists who relied on one another to help slaves on their journey to freedom.

Chapter Fourteen:

1. It was the custom to require a free colored person to have with him/her a document that was called 'free papers', or a 'certificate of freedom'. The papers had to be renewed very often for a fee. The papers outlined the person's name, age, color, height, and mention of any scars or other identifying marks on the person's skin. Though technically free, 'free people of color' were in constant fear of being kidnapped and sold into slavery. It was important, therefore, for a free person of color to carry his/her papers at all times. Without such a document, it would have been impossible for a free person of color to obtain a job.

The type of document described in *The Freedom Stone* is typical. Other samples of typical documents follow here:

*Certificate of Emancipation of Moses Porter
State of Virginia
Culpeper County*

I hereby certify to all whom it doth or may concern, that it hath been proved to my satisfaction that the bearer hereof, Moses Porter, aged about fourteen years of light complexion, five feet eight inches tall with no scars or other identifying marks on his person, was born free and raised free in the State of Virginia.

In Testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand and affixed the seal of Culpeper County this tenth day of September in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty two.

*William Johnston, Clerk
Culpeper County*

-or-

Know all Men by these Presents that I, Catharine Thompson of Culpeper County for an in consideration of the services which I have received from Moses Porter, my slave, do now release and forever set free the said Moses Porter from all claim or claims which I ever had or now have and from all manner of claim or claims to servitude which by me my heirs or assigns or which any other person or persons might or could be made in virtue of his being my former property I do release him. In witness, whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and affixed my Seal this tenth day of September in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty two.

*Signed and sealed in the presence of William Johnston, Clerk
Culpeper County, State of Virginia*

These documents were written in formal, legal English, barely understandable by anyone. It is likely that those requesting to see the papers, patrollers, slave catchers, train conductors, steamship captains, store owners, etc. may not have been able to read them at all. A slave acting comfortably and normally and carrying a forged document could often pass for 'free'.

Chapter Fifteen:

1. During the mid-1800's, steamboats were common on the Great Lakes as lumber, coal, iron and agricultural products were hauled back and forth from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois. These boats

helped to build some of the major cities in these states as it was easier to get goods from one place to another. However, traveling by steamboat was also dangerous. The boats were made of wood. They had huge boilers fueled by wood fires. There were often dangerous storms, especially in the month of November. The biggest danger was boiler explosions and the second most common danger was fire. One steamboat caught fire after somebody tamped (to press something down by tapping it lightly) out his smoking pipe on the wood deck of the boat.

There were so many steamboats on Lake Erie in the 1850's that today we would call it a traffic jam. Many of the steamboats were called passenger and package freight steamers as they carried both people and goods.

Epilogue:

The beginning of railroad traffic in the US dates back to the early 1800's. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad began service in 1827 connecting Baltimore with Washington, DC. By 1831 there was rail service in New York. By the 1840's there were about 3000 miles of track going up and down the east coast. As larger cities grew in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, railroads extended service to these cities by 1860.

At the end of the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment ended slavery. But people still had a lot of questions about what would happen to those who had just gained their freedom. In 1868, the 14th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified (made official by signing it or voting for it). This amendment granted citizenship and all of its benefits to "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" – a right that had been denied to slaves. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified. This amendment granted African American men the right to vote by declaring that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

However, Southern states found ways through the use of poll taxes, literacy tests and other means to deny African Americans the right to vote for almost another one hundred years. (Poll taxes had to be paid by each adult before they could vote in an election. Poll taxes are now illegal.) The Voting Rights Act of 1965 allowed African Americans to register to vote as any other American citizen.

