



**STEPPINGSTONE
THEATRE**
For Youth Development

Study Guide for Almost to Freedom



February 3-26, 2012

**Adapted by Kim Hines
From the book *Almost to Freedom*
by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson**

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*This activity is made possible
by a grant provided by the
Minnesota State Arts Board,
through an appropriation by
the Minnesota State Legislature.
In addition, this activity is
supported by a grant
from the National
Endowment for the Arts.*



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Welcome to SteppingStone

A note to Teachers

Thanks for booking a SteppingStone show! In this guide, you will find a wide variety of activities, roughly geared to second through seventh grade ages. Please feel free to choose which activities would be most appropriate for your group. You may use and distribute these activities to your students, fellow staff and administrators.

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About SteppingStone Theatre

SteppingStone Theatre has been producing high-quality theatre for children and youth for 24 years.

The play you'll be seeing is the result of literally years of work. SteppingStone Theatre works with local playwrights to develop and write most of its plays, and premieres 3–4 shows each season.

The performers you'll see on stage are children and youth aged 9–19 who have been working in a professional setting with some of the Twin Cities' top theatre artists for six or more weeks.

They are chosen through an open audition process, and no previous experience is required. Please contact us if you'd like information about how your students can become involved.

Thoughts to Share With Your Group When Preparing For Your SteppingStone Experience

Attending a live theatre performance is different from attending a movie or watching television.

At a theatre performance, audiences are active participants. Their quiet attention, their applause, their laughter (both appropriate and inappropriate) are all heard by the young actors on stage and affects the performance in good or bad ways. Respect is the watchword of appropriate response—if laughter and other audible responses are respectful, we love to hear it!

Because the performance occurs at the very time the audience is watching, it is important to be sensitive to other audience members and performers, and refrain from behavior that may be distracting or disruptive.

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Box Office Staff

Before the Play

Almost to Freedom-Synopsis

Cast of Characters

Lindy - A young slave girl
Mary Kate - The Overseer's daughter
Rachel - Lindy's sister
Henry - Lindy's brother
Sally - The doll that Rachel makes for Lindy
Dan - A slave boy (boatman for the Underground Railroad)
Josias - The Overseer's son
Roy - A slave (slightly older than the rest)
Ruthie, Paul, and Inez - Slaves that work with Lindy and her siblings
Lily-Belle - The Master's daughter
Rose Walker - A daughter of an abolitionist family
William Walker - Rose's younger brother
Emily - A run-away slave
Anna - Emily's younger sister

Play Synopsis

Almost to Freedom tells the story of a young slave girl, Lindy, who works with her brother and sister on a cotton plantation. Her sister, Rachel, has made her a rag doll which she has named Sally, and who never leaves her side.

Her brother, Henry, makes plans with another slave

named Dan for the three siblings to escape in a few days.

Lindy often plays with Mary Kate, the Overseer's daughter who has been teaching Lindy how to write her letters. One day Mary Kate gives Lindy a book to borrow in exchange for her doll, Sally. Josias, the Overseer's son, discovers her with the book and decides to make an example of her by whipping her in front of all the other slaves.*

During the night, the boatman Dan signals to Henry, and the three of them get up quickly to leave that night. While packing, Lindy remembers Sally is still with Mary Kate and goes off to get the doll back.

Dan helps the three across the river and they are given shelter with the Walker Family (a white family of abolitionists). They sleep there until they must flee from slave catchers in the middle of the night. In the frantic scramble, Sally is left behind. The doll is lonely for her friend and worries for the safety of Lindy and her folks.

***NOTE:** the whipping is dealt with theatrically but is portrayed on stage. The audience sees the reactions of the crowd and Lindy. She is, however, across the stage from the Overseer during the scene.

History of the Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad was the name given to the system by which escaped slaves from the South were helped in their flight to the North. It is believed that the system started in 1787 when Isaac T. Hopper, a Quaker, began to organize a system for hiding and aiding fugitive slaves. Opponents of slavery allowed their homes, called stations, to be used as places where escaped slaves were provided with food, shelter and money.

The various routes went through 14 Northern states and Canada. It is estimated that by 1850 around 3,000 people worked on the Underground Railroad. Some of the best known of the people who provided help on the route included William Still, Thomas Garrett, William Purvis, Jane Grey Swisshelm, William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, Henry David Thoreau, Charles Langston, Levi Coffin and Susan B. Anthony.

The Underground Railroad had people known as conductors who went to the south and helped guide slaves to safety. One of the most important of these was the former slave, Harriet Tubman. She made 19 secret trips to the South, during which she led more than 300 slaves to freedom. Tubman was considered such a threat to the slave system that plantation owners offered a \$40,000 reward for her capture.

Stations were usually about twenty miles apart. Conductors used covered wagons or carts with false bottoms to carry slaves from one station to another. Runaway slaves usually hid during the day and travelled at night. Some of those involved notified runaways of their stations by brightly lit candles in a window or by lanterns positioned in the frontyard.

By the middle of the 19th century it was estimated that over 50,000 slaves had escaped from the South using the underground railroad. Plantation owners became concerned at the large number

of slaves escaping to the North and in 1850 managed to persuade Congress to pass the Fugitive Slave Act. Any federal marshal who did not arrest an alleged runaway slave could be fined \$1,000. Any person aiding a runaway slave by providing shelter, food or any other form of assistance was liable to a six month imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine.



Harriet Tubman as "Conductor" with escaped slaves at an Underground Rail Road station

The Fugitive Slave Act failed to stop the Underground Railroad. Thomas Garrett, the Delaware station-master, paid more than \$8,000 in fines and Calvin Fairbank served over seventeen years in prison for his anti-slavery activities. Whereas John Fairfield, one of the best known of the white conductors, was killed working for the underground railroad.

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

Predict

Almost to Freedom tells the stories of three African American children who try to escape on the underground railroad. What do you think a “ride” on the Underground Railroad was like?

Access Prior Knowledge

What was life like for slaves in America?

What were slaves allowed to do and what was forbidden?

What did they eat, where did they sleep, what was daily life like for them?

What were their hopes and dreams and what were their fears? What did it mean to be a slave?

Text-to-Self

In the play, Lindy, a ten-year-old slave girl, secretly learns to read with the help of her friend, Mary Kate. Was there ever a time you had to do something in secret?

How did it feel to have a secret?

What did you do to keep your secret from being discovered?



Make a Connection

Slavery is a significant aspect of American history. Even though it was abolished many years ago, it remains important to remember and study its impact.

Why do you think we take time to learn about and remember slavery in America and the people who suffered under it?

In what ways do you think our history of slavery affects American life today?

Post-Show Discussion Questions



Comprehension

Why is it problematic for Lindy and Mary Kate to play together?

Why does Lindy have to hide learning English?

What has happened to Henry, Lindy and Rachel's parents?

What happens between Mary Kate and Lindy? Why does Josias beat Lindy?

Inference

Why was Lindy so attached to Sally?

What do you think Henry and Rachel were thinking as they were escaping to freedom?

Analysis

What does it mean when Lindy says, "Just wantin' some freedom is dangerous"?

Why does Roy say, "We need to not be thinkin' nothin' 'bout tryin' to leave..."? Describe the tension between slaves that wanted to stay and slaves that wanted to escape.

Making Connections

During the play, Sally asks Lindy what freedom means and Lindy explains her definition. What does freedom mean to you?

Why did the slave masters want to keep the slaves from learning how to read and write?

What importance did singing play in the life of a slave?

Reading List and Resources

Websites

Cool interactive website from National Geographic about the Underground Railroad

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>

PBS website

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html>

Wikipedia entry for the Underground Railroad

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Underground_Railroad

Underground Railroad Museum

<http://www.undergroundrailroadmuseum.com/index.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/undergroundrr/>

This site provides a brief summary of information from the Underground Railroad Special Resource Study by the National Park Service in September 1995.

Websites By Kids For Kids

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

<http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman/tubman.html>

Created by a 2nd-grade class in New York.

An assortment of information and activities related to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. Excellent for showing children what other children have done -- and what they can do!

Websites for Teachers

http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/socialstd/MBD/Aunt_Harriet2.html Lesson plans to accompany the book Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky. Involves the study of simile.

Climb Aboard the Underground Railroad T.O.U.R! from Education World

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr195.shtml

An online curriculum project involving teachers and students studying the Underground Railroad.

Reading List



Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt,
by Deborah Hopkinson

A young slave stitches a quilt with a map pattern that guides her to freedom in the North. 32 pgs.

Now Let Me Fly, by Dolores Johnson

A fictionalized account of the life of Minna, kidnapped as a girl in Africa, as she endures the harsh life of a slave on a Southern plantation in the 1800's.

The Drinking Gourd, by F N. Monjo

A New England white boy helps a black family escape on the Underground Railroad. 62 pgs.

Meet Addy, by Connie Porter

Nine-year-old Addy Walker escapes from a cruel life of slavery in North Carolina to freedom during the Civil War. 69 pgs.

Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky, by Faith Ringgold

With Harriet Tubman as her guide, Cassie retraces the steps escaping slaves took on the Underground Railroad in order to reunite with her younger brother.

Follow the Drinking Gourd,
by Jeanette Winter

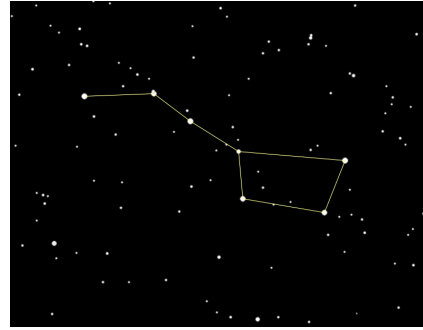
By following directions in the song, "Me Drinking Gourd," taught to them by an old sailor named Peg Leg Joe, runaway slaves journey north along the Underground Railroad to freedom.

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Background for Teachers

The American folksong Follow the Drinking Gourd was first published in 1928. The Drinking Gourd song was supposedly used by an Underground Railroad operative to encode escape instructions and a map. These directions then enabled fleeing slaves to make their way north from Mobile, Alabama to the Ohio River and freedom. Taken at face value, the "drinking gourd" refers to the hollowed out gourd used by slaves (and other rural Americans) as a water dipper. But here it is used as a code name for the Big Dipper star formation, which points to Polaris, the Pole Star, and North.



MN State Standards

I. U.S. HISTORY

B. Famous People and Events in U.S. History. The student will recognize people and events that made significant contributions to U.S. History.

1. Student will know individuals and groups associated with key turning points in U.S. History.

I. U.S. HISTORY

F. Civil War and Reconstruction, 1850s-1870s The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes of the Civil War.

1. Students will identify and analyze the main ideas of the debate over slavery, abolitionism, states' rights, and explain how they resulted in major political compromises.

2. Students will identify on a map the states that seceded from the Union, and those that remained in the Union.

MN State Standards

MN Language Arts Standards:

1.1.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

2.1.4.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

3.1.1.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

3.1.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language, including figurative language such as similes.

4.1.1.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

4.1.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

5.1.1.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

5.1.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

(adapted from http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/ntti/resources/lessons/h_catch/b.html)

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Learning Goals

Students will be able to...

- * Explore details and vocabulary in the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd"
- * Determine coded messages within the song that led slaves to freedom
- * Examine a map of the U.S. to determine routes of the Underground Railroad
- * Explain how the geography of the routes could have created difficulties for fleeing slaves
- * Make predictions of routes slaves may have taken along the Underground Railroad and the possible dangers they faced
- * Describe the role the Big Dipper played in slaves' road to freedom, and that constellations are patterns in the sky
- * Determine how the slaves found North at night
- * Locate the North Star in the night sky
- * Provide another name for the North Star

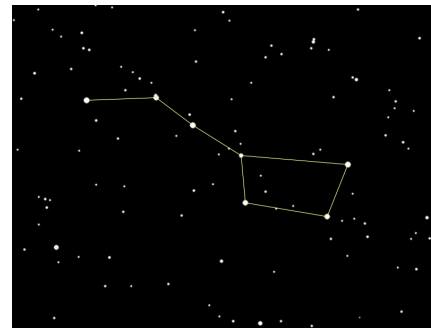
Materials Needed

- Computers
- Copies of data sheets
- Chart paper and markers
- Follow the Drinking Gourd lyrics
- Follow the Drinking Gourd by Jeanette Winter
- Follow the Drinking Gourd song recording (or use the link provided in this lesson)
- US Map with detail of Ohio and Tennessee Rivers)

Resources:

<http://www.followthedrinkinggourd.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoeVUYHooSw>



(adapted from http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/ntti/resources/lessons/h_catch/b.html)

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

Follow the Drinking Gourd-Activity Instructions

Step 1:

This lesson opens with the students constructing a graphic organizer: the KWL Chart. This activity is advised in order to assess, at the onset of the lesson, student understanding of the use and function of the Underground Railroad.

Tell your students that they are going to construct a KWL Chart. The K section will list "What Do I Know About The Underground Railroad?" The W section will list "What Do I Want To Know About The Underground Railroad?" At the end of the lesson, students will fill in under the "L" section, "What Have I Learned About The Underground Railroad?" (form on page 14).

Step 2:

Ask them to listen carefully to the song "Follow the Drinking Gourd." (you can find it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoeVUYHooSw>). Listen until you get to the lyric, "When the sun goes back and the first quail calls/Follow the drinking gourd/The old man is waitin' for to carry you to freedom/Follow the drinking gourd." Ask them to predict what this song is talking about. Then, read the book *Follow the Drinking Gourd* to your students. PAUSE reading the book when you get to this part of the song and discuss student ideas. What do you think the hidden messages in the song are? Either as a whole class or in groups, students can complete Data Sheet #1 (pages 11-12) to write their interpretation of the first part of the song.

Step 3:

Continue reading from the text until you come to the second part of the song, "The riverbank will make a very good road/The dead trees show you the way/Left foot, peg foot traveling on/Following the drinking gourd."

Again, PAUSE the reading of the story in order to give the students time to record their interpretations. or discuss as a whole group.

Step 4:

Continue to read the story until you get to the third part of the song, then ask students what they

think Peg Leg Joe means when he teaches the slave the third part of the song, "The river ends between two hills/Follow the drinking gourd/ There's another tree on the other side/Follow the drinking gourd." STOP reading the story when you reach the third part of the song and discuss student answers.

Step 5:

Read on until the last part of the song. Use a map of the region and ask the students to guess the name the great big river and the little river that the slaves followed north to freedom. "Where the great big river meets the little river/Follow the drinking gourd/The old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom/If you follow the drinking gourd." (Tennessee River and the very wide Ohio River)

Please note that the escape to freedom often took over a year to accomplish. Peg Leg Joe encouraged the slaves to begin their travel in the winter. This fact enabled the slaves to walk across the frozen waters of the Ohio River.

In open discussion, ask your students to consider the following questions relating to the flight and plight of the slaves. Students should record their answers on Data Sheet #2 (page 13) and be prepared to defend their answers.

What would be the advantages or disadvantages for slaves traveling at night?

Where would slaves take refuge during the daylight hours?

Step 6:

Tell your students they are now ready to go on a journey on the Underground Railroad. Have them go to computer stations and log onto National Geographic Webquest at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/j1.html>

Step 7:

Come together and complete your KWL chart, adding to the L column and reflecting on the experience of being a run away slave.

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

Follow the Drinking Gourd - Data Sheet #1

Follow the drinking gourd,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls,
Follow the drinking gourd,
For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the drinking gourd.

The riverbank will make a very good road,
The dead trees show you the way,
Left foot, peg foot traveling on,
Following the drinking gourd.

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

Follow the Drinking Gourd - Data Sheet #1 (cont.)

The river ends between two hills,
Follow the drinking gourd,
There's another tree on the other side,
Follow the drinking gourd.

Where the great big river meets the little river,
Follow the drinking gourd,
The old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom,
If you follow the drinking gourd.

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

Follow the Drinking Gourd - Data Sheet #2

1. What would be the advantages or disadvantages for slaves traveling at night?

2. Where would slaves take refuge during the daylight hours?

3. Consider the advantages or disadvantages weather and geographical conditions had on the rate slaves could travel from one region to another? Consider the possibility that some slaves may have been traveling with family.

Going In Depth: The Underground Railroad (cont.)

K	W	L
What Do I KNOW About The Underground Railroad?	What Do I WANT To Know About The Underground Railroad?	What Have I LEARNED About The Underground Railroad?

Enrichment Extensions

Enrichment Extension #1 - Museum Box: Artifacts from Life on a Slave Plantation (cont.)

MN State Standards

IV. HISTORICAL SKILLS

C. Historical Inquiry

The student will analyze historical evidence and draw conclusions.

The student will apply research skills by investigating a topic in U.S. history.

IV. HISTORICAL SKILLS

B. Historical Resources

The student will understand that we can learn about the past from different sorts of evidence.

I. U.S. HISTORY

C. Many Peoples and Cultures Meet in the Making of North America

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the people who settled in North America.

I. U.S. HISTORY

A. Family Life Today and In The Past

The student will understand how families live today and in earlier times, recognizing that some aspects change over time while others stay the same.

F. Civil War and Reconstruction, 1850s-1870s

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes of the Civil War.

Learning Goals

Students will be able to...

- explore life as a slave on a plantation
- practice conducting online research
- identify artifacts and analyze their connection to slave life
- justify inclusion of key artifacts
- apply and develop computer skills by using online tools
- articulate details of artifacts based on research to paint a picture of life on a plantation

Materials Needed

- shoe boxes
- card-stock
- glue
- scissors
- computers and printer
- research handouts
- index card

Enrichment Extension #1

Enrichment Extension #1 - Museum Box: Artifacts from Life on a Slave Plantation (cont.)

Activity Instructions

1. Show students the museum box by going to <http://museumbox.e2bn.org/>. You could also use this page to demo the concept of a museum box if you are going to have students use shoe boxes to make their museum box.

2. Explain to the students that they will be finding artifacts to place in their boxes to show what daily life would have been like as a slave on a plantation.

3. Read the book **The Strength of These Arms: Life in the Slave Quarters** by Raymond Bial, or choose a few pages to highlight and share with students. Model completing a row in the fact finding graphic organizer (attached to this study guide). Explain to students that they will be going on a fact finding journey to discover what artifacts they will want to place in their museum boxes.

4. Have the students go to

computer stations and give them the list of resources below (or create bookmark links) to begin their investigations:

5. After students have identified their eight items for their museum box, there are a couple of ways to create their museum box. (cont. on p. 17)

Website Resources

http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/underground_railroad/plantation.htm

http://americanabolitionist.liberalarts.iupui.edu/plantation_life.htm

<http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0215086/dailylife.htm>

<http://www.bristolandslavery.4t.com/plantations.htm>

http://www.floatingclassroom.com/documents/lp_SS_slave_life_000.pdf

<http://library.thinkquest.org/03oct/00394/life.htm>

<http://www.stratfordhall.org/learn/slavery.php>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAslavery.htm>

http://www.history.org/history/clothing/intro/aa_cover.cfm

<http://www.history.com/photos/slavery-slave-life/photo1>

Enrichment Extension #1

Enrichment Extension #1 - Museum Box:

Artifacts from Life on a Slave Plantation (cont.)

(cont. from p. 16)

a. Model using the online tool at <http://museumbox.e2bn.org/>. Students must create a log-in name and password, which is free. They then can begin to download jpegs, videos, or hyperlinks quite easily using the icons at the bottom of the screen. Instructions for teachers are also included on the website.

b. Alternatively, model setting up their shoe boxes by gluing cardstock to create eight compartments. Next you will want to model how to print pictures from the websites where they did their research.

6. Ask your students to describe the artifact in their box. If using the online tool, there is an option to include a title and a caption for their object. If using shoe boxes, give students index cards to write the title and caption. Emphasize that the caption should explain how the artifact was used in daily life on a plantation.

7. You may want to create a virtual museum tour of the online boxes or have students set up their museum boxes and invite an audience of parents or peers to come view the artifacts while students describe each item. Alternatively, students can “tour” their museum boxes for each other, taking turns presenting.



Thomas Clarkson's Box
Taken from: museumbox.e2bn.org/

Enrichment Extension #1

Artifact Research Organizer

Name of Artifact:	Description of Artifact:	How was the artifact used by slaves?	Website where the artifact was found:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

Enrichment Extension #2

Enrichment #2 - Underground Railroad Quilt

Introduction

The Underground Railroad is an important part of American history—yet it is difficult for children to understand what the Underground Railroad was and how African slaves, known as fugitives, “rode” it to freedom. This quilt poster and guide is packed with ideas for helping children study the Underground Railroad by learning about the quilts—and the secret escape codes quilters stitched into them to guide their people to freedom.

Background Information

Prior to 1860, America captured and enslaved about four million black people from Africa. Slavery came about because Americans needed workers to do the difficult labor on the sprawling plantations that stretched across the South, and because slave-traders saw an opportunity to make a great deal of money buying and selling slaves. From the beginning, slaves tried to escape from owners. But attempting an escape, or helping someone else to escape, was dangerous and could result in severe punishment or death. The Underground Railroad is the name for the secret route fugitives took to escape to freedom. It was so named because fugitives who traveled on it just seemed to vanish as if traveling underground. It was, of course, not a real railroad, but rather a series of safe hiding places called “stations.” The people who helped the fugitives travel from one station to the next were known as “railroad conductors.” The people who helped fugitives get food and places to sleep were known as “station masters.” People who worked and traveled on the Railroad used secret codes to learn the routes from one safe place to the next. Researchers recently learned that an Underground Railroad Quilt Code existed to guide fugitives to freedom. Because it was illegal in slave-holding states to teach slaves to read, slaves could not communicate with each other in writing. But, because slaves of all backgrounds shared an oral history of storytelling coupled with a knowledge of textile production and African art—an art form which embodies African symbolic systems and

MN State Standards

I. U.S. HISTORY

A. Family Life Today and In The Past

The student will understand how families live today and in earlier times, recognizing that some aspects change over time while others stay the same.

I. U.S. HISTORY

F. Civil War and Reconstruction, 1850s-1870s

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes of the Civil War.

designs—they discovered they were able to communicate complex messages in the stitches, patterns, designs, colors and fabrics of the American quilt. To memorize the code, researchers believe fugitives used a sampler quilt, with blocks arranged in order of the code. The patterns told slaves how to get ready to escape, what to do on the trip, and where to go. Once stitched, the coded quilts were “aired” out the windows of slave cabins, acting as secret maps for slaves brave and desperate enough to make the dangerous trek from South to North, from slavery to freedom. Researchers today are excited about unraveling the mysteries behind the Underground Railroad Quilt codes. And your students will be excited to use this kit to help design their own coded quilt squares. Twelve quilt patterns were used to direct the slaves to take particular action.

Taken directly from http://www.singinwidasword.com/hidden_in_plain_view-teacher_guide.pdf

Enrichment Extension #2

Enrichment #2 - Underground Railroad Quilt Instructions

1. Begin by sharing background information about the Underground Railroad and pictures of coded quilts with your class. Here are some resources to consider exploring:

- *The Secret To Freedom* by Marcia Vaughan (Lee & Low Books, 2001). A young slave girl and her older brother, in the days before the Civil War, help slaves escape to freedom using the Underground Railroad quilt code.
- *The Patchwork Path* by Bettye Stroud (Candlewick Press, 2005). This book tells how Hannah and her Papa escaped from slavery along the Underground Railroad. The quilt that Hannah and her late mother made together offers clues in the quilt blocks.
- *Almost To Freedom* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson (Carolrhoda Books, 2003). A tattered rag doll named Sally relates how a young girl and her parents embark on the dangerous journey along the Underground Railroad in their quest for freedom.

2. Copy a supply of quilt square patterns (some are included in this study guide, pages 26-28). These represent some of the most common quilt blocks used in coded quilts.

(Tip: To make squares more sturdy, mount squares on construction paper before cutting apart .)

3. After reading together the information about each quilt block:

- Offer children art supplies (crayons, markers, assorted paper, wrapping paper, fabric scraps and scissors).
- Have them trim the squares along the lines, then fill in the squares with color, patterns and textures.

- Tell children to create quilt squares with hidden meanings. Remind them that colors, patterns, textures, “stitches” and “knots” (drawn on with a fine line marker), can each indicate a coded symbol.

Directions for Creating a Coded Quilt Map

- Children can create individual squares which may be taped or quilted together as a class quilt, or they may create individual quilts by gluing a number of completed squares to lengths of craft paper which can then be displayed on walls and hallways.

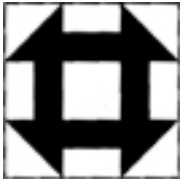
4. Invite children to write essays describing the symbolism present in their quilt square(s).



Example of an Underground Railroad Quilt. Taken from: villagequilters.com/events/railroad.html

Enrichment Extension #2

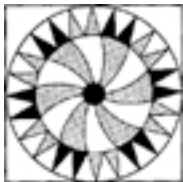
Enrichment #2 - Underground Railroad Quilt Quilt Patterns and their Meaning



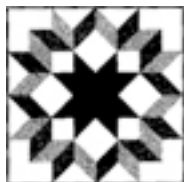
Monkey Wrench

This meant the slaves were to gather all the tools they might need on the journey to freedom. Tools meant: something with which to build shelters, compasses for determining direction, or tools to serve as weapons for defending themselves.

Wagon Wheel



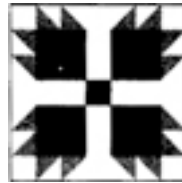
This was the second pattern to be displayed, which signaled the slaves to pack all the things that would go in a wagon or that would be used during their journey. This was a signal for the slaves to think about what essentials they needed to survive the trip.



Carpenter's Wheel

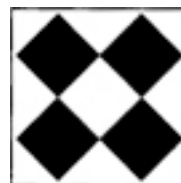
(Wagon Wheel variation)

This pattern would have particular significance to slaves skilled in a craft—such as carpentry. (Other such patterns might be: an Anvil, Circular Saw, Square and Compass.) It was also a symbol to “steal away”—a visual equivalent to the popular spiritual “Steal Away”, which many slaves knew and sang. The pattern told slaves to “run with faith” to the west— northwest territories.



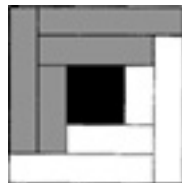
Bear's Paw

It's believed that this pattern was sometimes used to help fugitives follow the path of the bear, and to identify landmarks on the edge of the plantation.



Crossroads

Once through the mountains, slaves were to travel to the crossroads. The main crossroad was Cleveland, Ohio. Any quilt hung before this one would have given directions to Ohio.

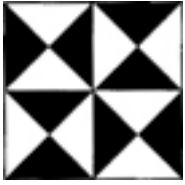


Log Cabin

This pattern was used to let the slaves know the location of the safe houses. People who helped the Underground Railroad may have identified themselves as friends to slaves on the run by tracing this pattern in dirt as a signal. This quilt told slaves to look for this symbol on their journey to freedom. It was also a symbol to set up a “home” in a free state.

Enrichment Extension #2

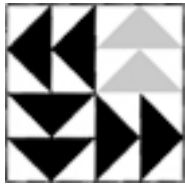
Enrichment #2 - Underground Railroad Quilt Quilt Patterns and their Meaning (Cont.)



Bow Ties

Slaves' clothes were often tattered and easy to spot. This pattern meant that someone would bring the

slave nice clothes to help them blend in with the free blacks.



Flying Geese

This pattern told the slaves to follow migrating geese north towards Canada and to freedom. This pattern was used as directions as well as

the best season for slaves to escape. Geese fly north in the spring and summer. Flying geese pointed to the direction, north, for the slaves to move.

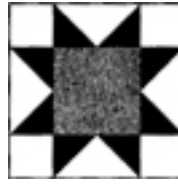
Also, geese would have to stop at waterways along their journey in order to rest and eat. Slaves were to take their cues on direction, timing and behavior from the migrating geese.



Drunkard's Path

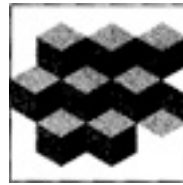
This was a clear warning for the slaves to move in a staggering fashion so as to elude any following slave hunters. It was suggested

that slaves even double back to elude their pursuers.



North Star (Evening Star/Star)

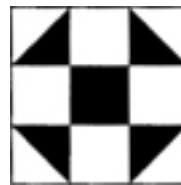
This instructed the slaves to follow the North Star to Canada and to freedom.



Tumbling Blocks (Boxes)

This signaled to the slaves—by the number of boxes and knots—the time to “box up” all one’s belongings in preparation to

escape.



Shoofly

Little is known about this pattern. It is believed that Shoofly refers to an actual person who might have

aided escaping slaves.

Enrichment Extension #3

A Rag Doll like Sally: Seeing the Underground Railroad Through a Doll's Eyes

Learning Goals:

Students will be able to...

Make inferences about life as a slave based on the history of rag dolls

Comprehend the circumstances under which the dolls were made.

Create a black rag doll and analyze its perspective as a character in *Almost to Freedom*.

Sequence events in Sally's life as a rag doll on the Underground Railroad

Background Information

Almost to Freedom tells the story of a small family who attempt to escape slavery from the perspective of the youngest daughter's doll, Sally. In this enrichment extension, students will look more deeply into the history of African American rag dolls, create their own doll, and then create a timeline of events from Sally's perspective to practice sequencing.

MN State Standards

I. U.S. HISTORY

A. Family Life Today and In The Past

The student will understand how families live today and in earlier times, recognizing that some aspects change over time while others stay the same.

ELA

1.1.6.6 Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

2.1.6.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

1.1.2.2. Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

2.1.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

1.1.6.6 Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.

2.1.6.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

4.1.3.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

5.1.3.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Enrichment Extension #3

A Rag Doll like Sally: Seeing the Underground Railroad Through a Doll's Eyes (cont.)

Activity Directions

1. Begin by showing students a real black rag doll (if possible), or pass out the picture along with the Background on Black Rag Dolls (included with this study guide). Read the handout together and discuss the information with students: What would it have been like to not be allowed to play with white dolls? How would a young child of slavery have felt about her doll? Why? What would the dolls have been made out of? How do they look compared with dolls today?

2. Tell students today they will be making a doll like the one in *Almost to Freedom*. Ask them to recall Sally from the play or book. What was she like? What did she do in the story? How did she feel throughout the play?

3. Pass out the materials and then model for students each step of the process to assemble the doll, with students (as a whole class) completing each step as you model.

- Form the cotton stuffing into a nice round ball and wrap the fabric smoothly around it.
- Wrap the yarn around and tie to hold the cotton in place and form the head and neck
- Make sure the 4 points are equally hanging down.
- Make a knot in the two opposite points as hands.
- Don't make the arms too long!
- Optional: with a marker you can (lightly) make the eyes and mouth (just two dots and one stripe); you can also choose to use a small scrap to form a kerchief over the head (in the play, the children do not have yarn to make Sally's hair)
- When playing with the doll, provide the child with some extra rags so she can use these in her play.

Materials Needed

- Soft unbleached cotton fabric - 24 inches square
- A golf ball sized piece of cotton stuffing or Polyester Fiberfill
- Strong yarn
- Handouts on history of dolls
- Paper strips for writing timelines

4. Once the dolls are complete, model for students creating a timeline of what happened in the story from Sally's perspective. Hand out timeline strips and ask them to do a think pair share, telling their partner everything that happened to Sally from her creation until the end of the play/story.

Differentiation for Depth and Complexity: Have students summarize Sally's journey from her perspective and in her voice. Have students write an "Autobiography of a Doll" to retell the story, adding key details such as Sally's opinions on actions other characters took and her hopes and fears. Students could also include an account of what happened to Sally after being left in the hiding place by drawing on knowledge of the Underground Railroad.

5. Time lines/ autobiographies and dolls can be displayed together on a special shelf in the classroom, or students can take them home to share their experience and understanding with families.



Enrichment Extension #3

Background on Black Rag Dolls

Dolls have been created for children in nearly every culture. Handmade cloth rag dolls would have been popular in the early American colonies since porcelain dolls from Europe were very costly.

Slave children in the southern plantations were not allowed to play with white dolls so their mothers or other relatives made black dolls from scraps of cloth available to them, more than likely from worn-out clothing. Surviving black rag dolls have been found in “Underground Railroad” hideouts where black slaves hid on their escape routes to the north for freedom. A child would not have been able to carry much and, in a hurry, could have dropped or misplaced a doll in the dark.

Since there is not much history written on handmade black cloth dolls, much information is relied on from oral history that has been passed down or from the actual dolls that were found. After the Civil War, black women had few opportunities available to them, except dressmaking, so some of them became very skilled seamstresses. They would use the leftover scraps from the beautiful clothes they made for their customers to make elaborately dressed dolls.

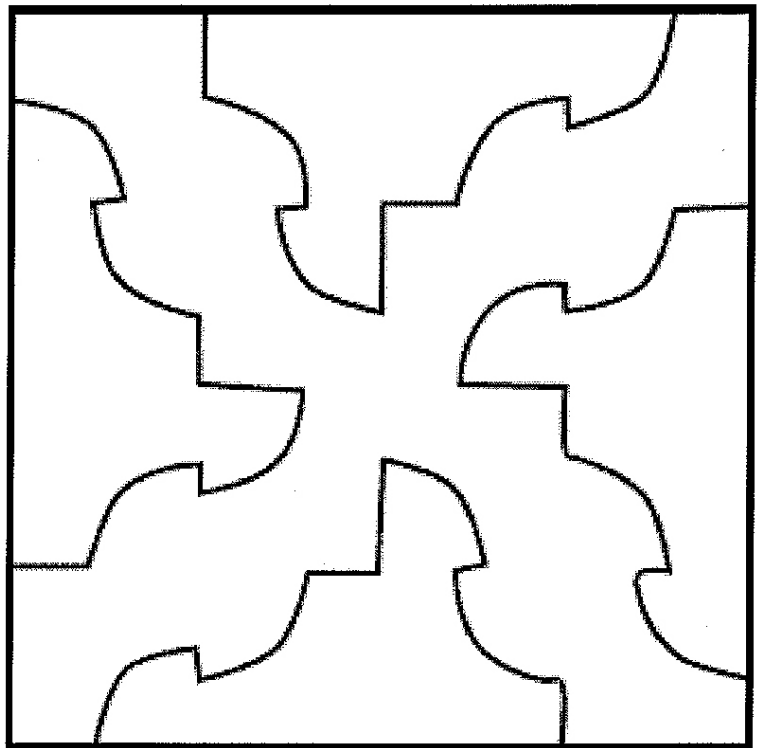
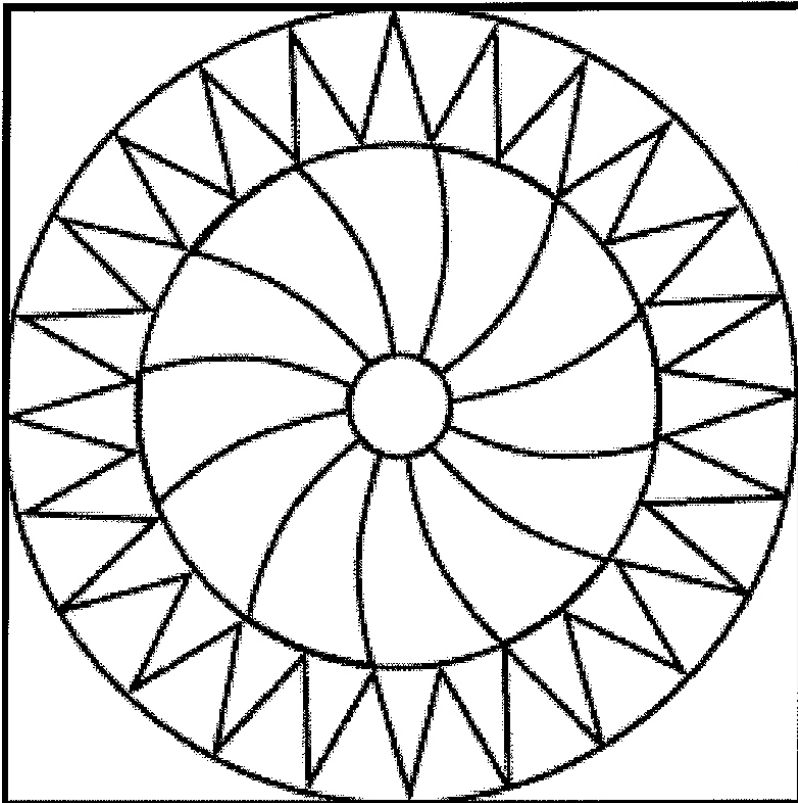
Beginning in 1893, the E.I. Horseman Company manufactured a black Babyland Rag Doll named “Dinah.” This doll was featured on a U.S. 32-cent stamp in 1997. A “Black Mammy” cloth doll was produced around 1900 by the Babyland Rag Company, which also made black dolls with lithographed faces. Patterns for black dolls were produced during the first half of the 1900s. Some of these vintage patterns are still available.



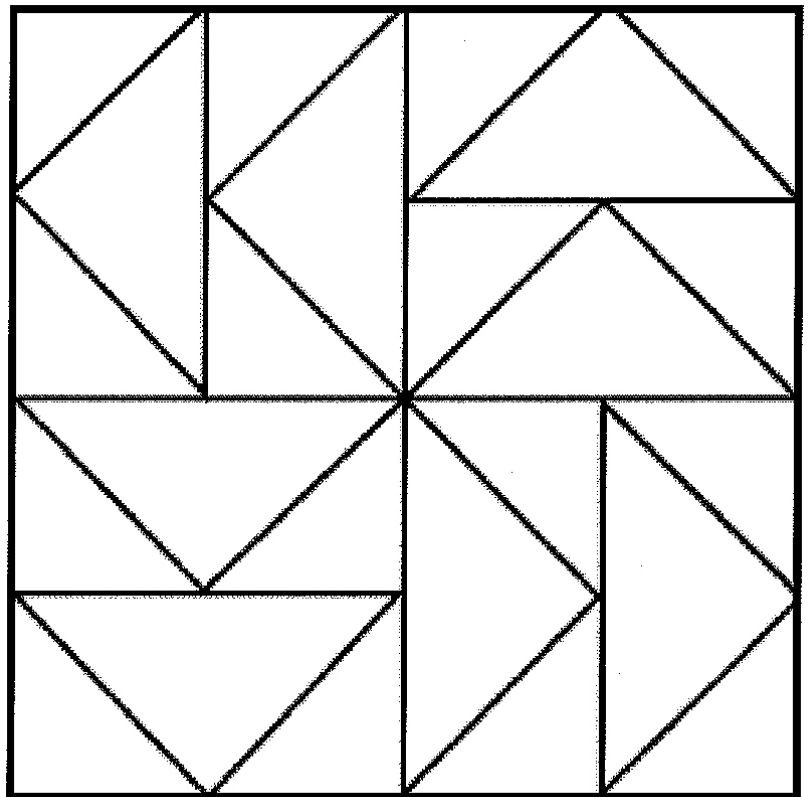
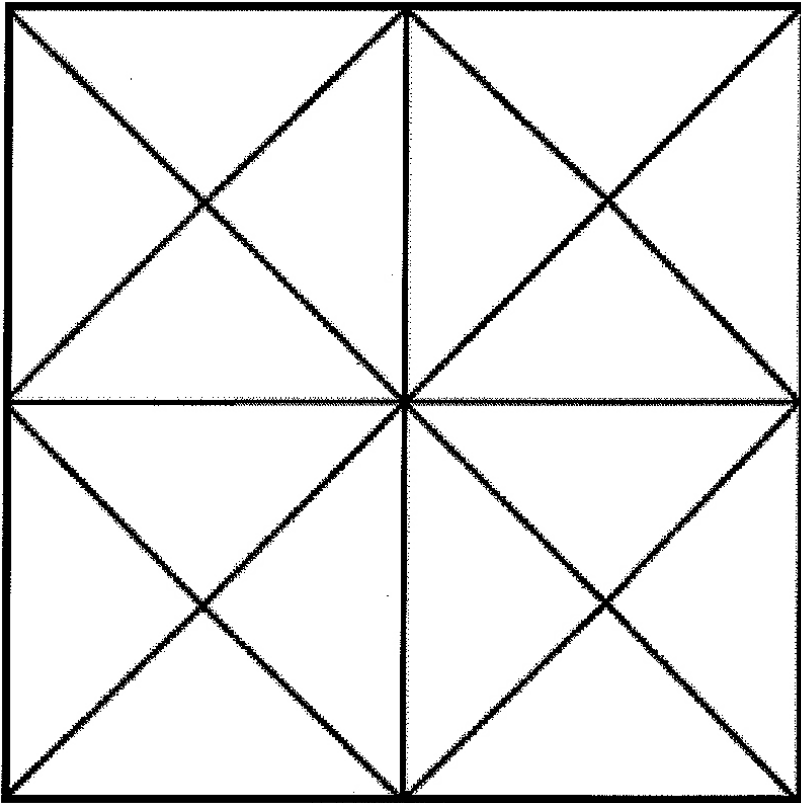
After the Civil Rights movement, black dolls became less popular, but there is a resurgence in their interest today. Most of these dolls are the cherished possessions of individuals, and some are even featured in museums. Many of these dolls have become collectibles and are considered to be valuable folk art.

From: <http://www.historicalfolktoys.com/catcont/4717.html>

Appendix-Underground Railroad Quilts



Appendix-Underground Railroad Quilts



Appendix-Underground Railroad Quilts

