

Beyond the River: The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad, by Ann Hagedorn. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. x, 333 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$25.00 cloth.

Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America, by Fergus M. Bordewich. New York: HarperCollins, 2005: xv, 540 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$27.95 cloth.

Reviewer G. Galin Berrier is adjunct instructor in history at Des Moines Area Community College. He is the author of the chapter, "The Underground Railroad in Iowa," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (2001).

One indication of renewed popular interest in the dramatic story of the Underground Railroad is the recent appearance of two books from major publishers intended for general readers. Although neither author is a professional historian, both books are solidly based on autobiographical and historical sources, and both were alternate selections of the History Book Club.

Ann Hagedorn's account of the adventures of abolitionist John Rankin and his sons in and around Ripley and Brown County, Ohio, is subtitled "The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad," but, of course, the story of the white abolitionists involved has been told before, as Hagedorn's own extensive use of the Rankins' memoirs makes clear. What she has in fact done is retell this once familiar tale in such a way as to engage the interest of today's reader.

Hagedorn, a journalist by training, immersed herself in her topic to such an extent that she relocated from New York to Ripley to be close to her sources. She places the story of the escape of the freedom seeker Tice Davids from his Kentucky master, which is said to have given the Underground Railroad its name, at Ripley in 1831 (12, 60). She also argues plausibly that the improbable story of Eliza fleeing across the Ohio River in winter on ice floes, made famous by Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851-52), was based on the experience of an unnamed woman and her child who were aided by John Rankin and others at Ripley in 1838 (136-39).

Hagedorn's narrative is very much the story of the white abolitionists of Ripley and Brown County. Many of her pages are long passages quoted rather uncritically from their letters and diaries. Despite her assertion that black and white abolitionists worked together better in Brown County than elsewhere (88), she offers little evidence of such cooperation. The major instance is former slave and Ripley businessman John P. Parker, although even he incurred the disapproval of Rankin and other white abolitionists for the risks he took in repeatedly venturing south of the Ohio River to guide freedom seekers north (256).

There are no exact Iowa counterparts to the activities of John Rankin and his associates in Ohio. Perhaps the closest analogy is the work of Rev. John Todd and his fellow antislavery Congregationalists, who came from Oberlin, Ohio, in the early 1850s and founded Tabor in southeast Iowa. It seems likely that the "Free Presbyterians" led by Rev. Thomas Merrill and Richard Sherer, who came from Ohio in 1853 to establish the Wittenberg Church and Manual Arts College north of Newton in Jasper County, were associates of John Rankin, who started the Free Presbyterian Church in southern Ohio in the fall of 1846. "Eventually, there would be seventy-two congregations in the Free Church, most notably in southern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, some as far away as Iowa and New York" (262).

Fergus Bordewich is also more of a journalist than a historian, but as his "Note about Sources" makes clear, he is thoroughly versed in the historiography of the Underground Railroad from the immediate post-Civil War period to the present. But one source he makes little use of is Larry Gara's *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (1961), except to credit Gara with being one of the first to point out that "the central figures in the history of the underground were the fugitive slaves themselves" (502). Bordewich himself also seeks to restore African Americans to "their rightful place at the center of the story" (4) and "to show that the Underground Railroad was much more than a picturesque legend, but a movement with far-reaching political and moral consequences" (8).

Where Hagedorn gives us the detailed story of one family of Underground Railroad agents and conductors in a single locality, Bordewich paints a broad canvas, beginning in the early 1800s and extending to the early years of the Civil War. His lively narrative makes extensive use of the published memoirs of the participants themselves, especially those of African Americans. We hear the familiar voices of Josiah Henson, William Still, and Frederick Douglass, as well as lesser-known freedom seekers such as David Ruggles, George DeBaptiste, and Jermain Loguen. White abolitionists also receive their due, including Calvin Fairbank, Levi Coffin, and, of course, John Rankin.

One of the African American voices absent from *Bound for Canaan* is that of John Rankin's Ripley colleague, John P. Parker, even though a new edition of Parker's autobiography, *His Promised Land*, edited by Stuart Seely Sprague, was published in 1996. Bordewich also locates the origin of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Eliza" story at Ripley (371-72), but is much more skeptical about the railroad metaphor having originated there, calling the story of Tice Davids (whom he does not name) a "persistent but almost certainly apocryphal legend" (237). He is cer-

tainly right to dismiss the notion of the Underground Railroad "as a fixed system that, once established, was rarely altered. In actuality, routes were always in flux" (230), and modern attempts to "map" the Underground Railroad seek to reflect this.

One of the strengths of *Bound for Canaan* is that Bordewich follows freedom seekers such as Josiah Henson all the way to Canada. Canadian census data is incomplete, but his estimate that "by the early 1840s, there may have been as many as twelve thousand former slaves living in Canada" (260) is a reasonable guess, as is his estimate that as many as 100,000 freedom seekers in all may have traveled on the Underground Railroad (437).

Bordewich refers to John Brown and his men traveling east "along an established underground route through Iowa" in the winter of 1859 with twelve freedom seekers from Missouri (419). He credits Josiah B. Grinnell with securing the boxcar that carried them from West Liberty to Chicago, although Iowa City publisher William Penn Clarke seems to have made the actual arrangements. There is no other mention of Iowa, and other "western" states such as Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin fare no better. Bordewich maintains, no doubt correctly, that "it was for the most part in the river towns of Ohio, Indiana, and to a much lesser extent Illinois, where the Underground Railroad's main western lines began" (197), and he reminds us that he has "not written an encyclopedic survey of the underground" (7). What he has given us is an engaging and beautifully written introduction for the nonspecialist in which African American voices, male and female, are heard together with those of their white colleagues.

Healing Waters: Missouri's Historic Mineral Springs and Spas, by Loring Bullard. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. xi, 242 pp. Illustrations, graphs, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Jacqueline S. Wilkie is professor of history at Luther College. She has done research and writing on the technology and perceptions of bathing.

In this account of Missouri's mineral waters and their use, Loring Bullard recounts the multifaceted story of the exploitation of this natural resource. The first half of the text surveys about two hundred years of the use of mineral waters in the state of Missouri. Bullard touches on the development of the mineral water resources of the state by placing them in the context of both the development of the state of Missouri and of mineral spas and springs in the United States and Europe. He covers a wide range of topics, including the use of waters for medicinal purposes, the history of tourism, the evolution of water spas into

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