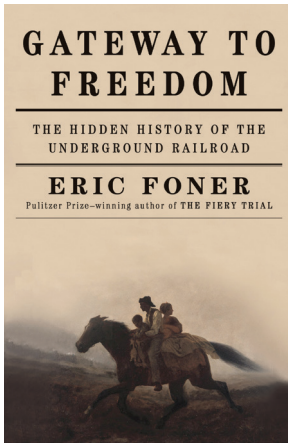


May 2018**Reading Guide:**

***Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* by Eric Foner (2015)**

1. What were you expecting from this book when you saw the title? Did the book fulfill your expectations? Why or why not?
2. The history of the Civil War period is very challenging for many Americans to discuss. What did you think of Foner's perspective? Did it alter your personal perspective?
3. Foner introduces many characters in the book, many of whom will likely be unfamiliar to modern readers. Who did you find most interesting, and why?
4. What was the most surprising thing you learned from this book? What will you remember about it a year from now?
5. The author says that this was an unusual book because instead of asking a question and then looking for sources to answer it, he found a source—Sidney Howard Gay's account book—and then started asking what it could tell him. How do you think this approach worked? What were its strengths and weaknesses?
6. How did your ideas about fugitive slaves and the Underground Railroad change after reading this book?
7. Do you think the history of abolitionism is familiar to Americans today? What would they know about it after reading this book?
8. If someone enjoyed this book, what other books, movies, museum exhibits, or other resources might you recommend to them?

Author Biography

Eric Foner is the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University. His publications have concentrated on the history of political ideology and race relations in nineteenth-century America. Among his books are *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (1970), *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–77* (1988), and *The Story of American Freedom* (1998). Foner has also been the cocurator, with Olivia Mahoney, of two prize-winning exhibitions on American history. He revised the presentation of American history at the Hall of Presidents at Disney World and Meet Mr. Lincoln at Disneyland, and has served as consultant to several National Parks Service historical sites and historical museums.

Related Texts

If you liked *Gateway to Freedom*, you may enjoy these other books (descriptions courtesy of Amazon.com):

- ***New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* by Jill Lepore (2006)**

New York Burning is a well-told tale of a once-notorious episode that took place in Manhattan in 1741. Over the course of a few weeks in 1741, ten fires burned across Manhattan, sparking hysteria and numerous conspiracy rumors. Initially, rival politicians blamed each other for the blazes, but they soon found a common enemy. Based solely on the testimony of one white woman, some 200 slaves were accused of conspiring to burn down the city, murder the resident whites, and take over the local government.

- ***Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800–1850* by Andrew W. Torget (2015)**

Seeds of Empire tells the remarkable story of how the cotton revolution of the early nineteenth century transformed northeastern Mexico into the western edge of the United States, and how the rise and spectacular collapse of the Republic of Texas as a nation built on cotton and slavery proved to be a blueprint for the Confederacy of the 1860s.

- ***Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman: Portrait of an American Hero* by Kate Clifford Larson (2003)**

Harriet Tubman is one of the giants of American history—a fearless visionary who led scores of her fellow slaves to freedom and battled courageously behind enemy lines during the Civil War. Drawing from a trove of new documents and sources as well as extensive genealogical research, Clifford Larson reveals Tubman as a complex woman—brilliant, shrewd, deeply religious, and passionate in her pursuit of freedom.

- ***The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800–1852* by Martha J. Cutter (2017)**

The Illustrated Slave analyzes some of the more innovative works in the archive of antislavery illustrated books published from 1800 to 1852 alongside other visual materials that depict enslavement. Through exploration of famous works such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as well as unfamiliar ones by Amelia Opie, Henry Bibb, and Henry Box Brown, Martha J. Cutter delineates a mode of radical empathy that attempts to destroy divisions between the enslaved individual and the free white subject and between the viewer and the viewed.

Education programs at Bayou Bend receive generous funding from Landry's, Inc.; Mitra Mujica-Margolis and Michael Margolis; Houston Junior Woman's Club; Mr. William J. Hill; Sharon G. Dies; Susan Vaughan Foundation; Frost Bank; Ann and John Bookout; Mrs. Denise D. Monteleone; and Dee Osborne.

The education programs also receive endowment income from funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Ballard and Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Tate.

Education programs at Rienzi receive generous funding from the Sterling-Turner Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; the Carroll Sterling and Harris Masterson III Endowment; and the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment for Rienzi.