

# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

## BLOCK OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY 2025

"Slaves were not brought to America. Africans were brought to America, and there they were enslaved"

Bing Davis

The Underground railroad quilt symbolizes 246 years of Slavery in the United States. 100,000 escaped through the Underground railroad.

The Underground Railroad was not underground or a railroad. The name came about when a slave from Kentucky named Tyce was escaping but was being followed by his owner. When Tyce reached the Ohio River, the boat was not there to pick him up. Panicked he jumped into the frozen water and began to swim. He then heard a bell or a bird chirping. The slave owner took his eyes off of Tyce for one second and then he was gone. The slave owner returned home empty handed and told others that it was as if the slave had vanished on some kind of an underground railroad. The name stuck and the journey to freedom was forever called the Underground Railroad.

All of the Underground Railroad signals-to-slaves stories along with their history were orally transmitted. It was against the law to teach slaves to read and write. Therefore, histories and stories were passed down orally or by songs. With the Underground railroad, they learned their path to safety through quilt blocks and learned the stories of what each quilt block was signaling to them along their journey to freedom.

Songs also gave them a musical map with hints and clues to escape for freedom. The song title "Follow the drinking gourd" means follow the North Star. They had to leave at night, follow the North Star until Sunrise, rest in the day and again when the night came to go North and follow the North Star and the moss on the trees and hope for the best.

The best day to escape was on a Saturday because the owner would have to wait until Monday to place an add in the newspaper announcing one of his escaped slaves. This would buy them a three day head start.

Code names were used in the railroad system. "The Cargo" or escapes will wait at a "station" which was owned by a "Station Master" who was the owner of the next

safehouse until the next "Conductor" was to move the "Cargo" further north. They would travel until they would reach the "free states" or to Canada where it was also called "Heaven" or "The Promised Land."

Some slaves stayed in Canada or the "free States". It was possible for a black man to vote, build his family and even own land. However, there were some that wanted to travel back to the southern states to free their friends and family members.

One of the most famous and courageous was a women named Harriet Tubman, who during the years of 1850 to 1860, traveled the Underground Railroad 19 times to save hundreds of enslaved people.

Jacobs ladder – was renamed "the underground Railroad pattern" It was the first block in a sample quilt that used patterns to hide their meanings to the slaves in plain view.

The Monkey Wrench – Turns the wagon wheel toward Canada. The monkey wrench was a heavy metal tube used by the blacksmith. The Blacksmith was the most knowledgeable man on the plantation which he was called "The Monkey Wrench". He knew the layout of the land and facts about other plantations nearby. He was the one to get things started. When the Monkey Wrench quilt was displayed it meant to gather your tools, water, food, clothing and supplies that were hid in the hidden compartments in the wagon.

#### Some important dates:

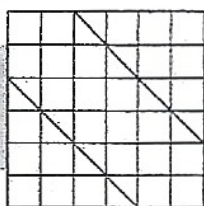
1619 – Africans first brought to American colonies

1786 – Documented the Earliest organized slave escapes, when Quackers aided runaways from Virginia

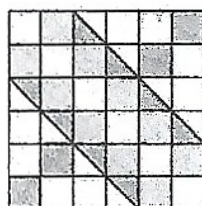
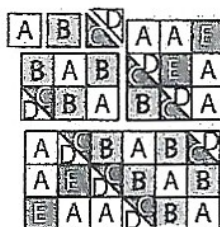
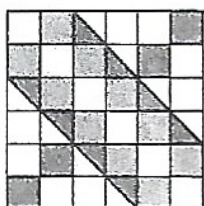
1863 – The Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves in seceded Confederate states.

1865 – After the four-year Civil War ends with the treaty at Appomattox in April, the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery in the United States.

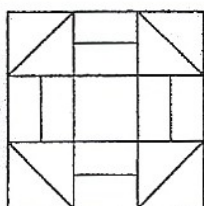




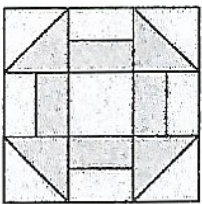
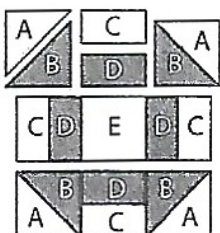
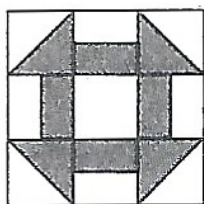
## Jacob's Ladder A



FOR	CUT	NEED	6"	9"	12"	15"	36"
A	14	14	1½	2	2½	3	6½
B	10	10	1½	2	2½	3	6½
C	4	8	1⅞	2⅜	2⅞	3⅜	6⅞
D	4	8	1⅞	2⅜	2⅞	3⅜	6⅞
E	4	4	1½	2	2½	3	6½



## Churn Dash



FOR	CUT	NEED	6"	9"	12"	15"	36"
A	2	4	2⅞	3⅞	4⅞	5⅞	12⅞
B	2	4	2⅞	3⅞	4⅞	5⅞	12⅞
C	4	4	1½ × 2½	2 × 3½	2½ × 4½	3 × 5½	6½ × 12½
D	4	4	1½ × 2½	2 × 3½	2½ × 4½	3 × 5½	6½ × 12½
E	1	1	2½	3½	4½	5½	12½