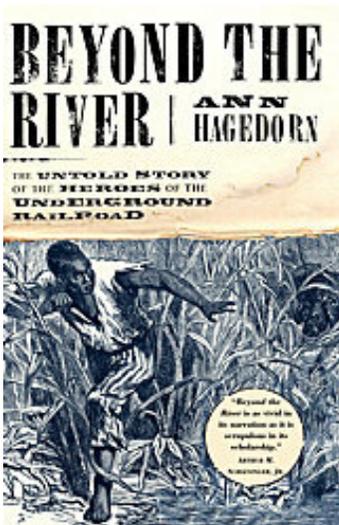


Beyond the River by Ann Hagedorn A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

About the Book



From the highest hill above Ripley, Ohio, you can see the five bends in the Ohio River. You can see the hills of northern Kentucky and the rooftops of Ripley's riverfront houses. You can also see what the abolitionist John Rankin saw from his house at the top of that hill, where for nearly forty years he placed a lantern each night to guide fugitive slaves to freedom beyond the river.

In **Beyond the River: The Untold Story of the Heroes of the Underground Railroad**, Ann Hagedorn tells the remarkable story of the participants in the Ripley line of the Underground Railroad. She brings to life the struggles of the men and women, black and white, who fought "the war before the war" along the Ohio river.

Determined in their cause, Rankin, his family, and his fellow abolitionists - some of them former slaves themselves - risked their lives to guide thousands of runaways safely across the river into the free state of Ohio. They did this even when a sensational trial in Kentucky threatened to expose the Ripley "conductors".

Rankin, the leader of the Ripley line and one of the early leaders of the antislavery movement, became nationally renowned after the publication of his *Letters on American Slavery*, a collection of letters he wrote to persuade his brother in Virginia to renounce slavery.

A vivid narrative about memorable people, **Beyond the River** is an inspiring story of courage and heroism that transports us to another era and deepens our understanding of the great social movement known as the Underground Railroad.



About the Author

Dayton native Ann Hagedorn is an award-winning author and journalist, and has been a staff writer for *The Wall Street Journal*. She has taught writing at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Hagedorn lives in Ripley.

In 1991, Hagedorn focused her knowledge of fraud and bankruptcy on probing the collapse of America's premier horseracing dynasty, Calumet Farm. The result was the highly acclaimed book **Wild Ride: The Rise and Tragic Fall of Calumet Farm, Inc.** In late 1993, Hagedorn joined the *New York Daily News* as Special Projects Editor. There, in addition to overseeing projects, she wrote multi-part series on: geriatric inmates in New York prisons, New York lawyers who were laundering money for Colombian drug cartels, capital punishment, and George Steinbrenner and the bankruptcy of his shipbuilding empire (which won an Associated Press award.)

After the release of her second book, **Ransom: The Untold Story of International Kidnapping**, Hagedorn wrote for *The Washington Post* and taught a narrative non-fiction writing course at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. During that time, she discovered a stunning story in the Ohio River Valley that resulted in her third book, **Beyond the River**. While in Chicago, teaching a writing course at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, she began the research for **Savage Peace: Hope and Fear in America, 1919**.

Hagedorn has given lectures on writing at Vassar College, Berea College, Denison University, Wilmington College, Ohio State University, at the Antioch Writer's Workshop, and at the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati, among other venues.

Author Resources:

Ohioana Author Profile

<http://www.ohioana-authors.org/hagedorn/index.php>

Simon & Schuster Author Profile

<http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Ann-Hagedorn/1668150>

Library Thing's Ann Hagedorn Page

<http://www.librarything.com/author/hagedornann>

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Discussion Questions

1. What was John Rankin's early background? How did this affect his antislavery work later in life?
2. What was the Underground Railroad? Why was it called this and how did it get this name? What was the significance of the lantern in the window?
3. What document, written by John Rankin, influenced the antislavery movement? Who was this document written to and what was its purpose?
4. How did the politics of the time affect John Rankin's work? How many states were "free" and how many supported slavery?
5. What treatment did runaway slaves receive? Were those who protected slaves punished as well? Who was John P. Parker? What was his relationship to John Rankin?
6. Why do you think religion and the church were so important in the lives of free and enslaved blacks? What role do you think religion played in the lives of slaveholders and other proponents of slavery?
7. In addition to escaping or conducting armed rebellion, in what ways did enslaved blacks resist slavery? In what ways did free blacks struggle for full citizenship? In what ways were their efforts similar or different?
8. What impact do you think slavery had on white people who didn't own slaves? On those who did own slaves? Why might someone who wasn't a slaveowner support slavery? Why might someone be opposed to the spread of slavery, but not opposed to slavery itself?
9. Who was involved in the abolitionist movement? In what ways do you think abolitionists differed on the strategies and goals of their movement? Why do you think they disagreed?
10. Why did the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the Dred Scott decision of 1857 result in more direct action against slavery by black abolitionists?



Additional Resources

Africans in America (PBS Series) Teacher's Guide
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/tguide/index.html>

John P. Parker Museum & Historical Society
<http://johnparkerhouse.org/>

Ohio Historical Society: African American Experience in Ohio
<http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/africanam/>

Ohio History Central: John Rankin
<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=319>

Ohio Memory
<http://www.ohiomemory.org>

Select "Search", then enter "John Rankin", or browse records of primary source documents on Ripley, Underground Railroad, or Slavery.

Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area: Underground Railroad
<http://www.ohiohillcountry.org/undergroundrr.html>

Ripley, Ohio Official Website
<http://www.ripleyohio.net/>

Bound For Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America
by Fergus Bordewich. Amistad Press, 2005

Ohio's War: The Civil War in Documents, Edited by Christine Dee. Ohio University Press, 2007.

Ohio and Its People by George Knepper. Kent State University Press, 2003.

Book details:

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About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.