

Codes and Phrases Used on the Underground Railroad

Abolitionist — Person who demanded an immediate end to slavery.
Agent — Coordinator, who plotted courses of escape and made contacts.
Baggage — Fugitive slaves carried by Underground Railroad workers.
Bundles of wood — Fugitives that were expected.
Canaan — Canada.
Conductor — Person who directly transported slaves.
Drinking Gourd — Big Dipper and the North Star.
Flying bondsmen — The number of escaping slaves.
Forwarding — Taking slaves from station to station.
Freedom train — The Underground Railroad.
French leave — Secret departure.
Gospel train — The Underground Railroad.
Heaven — Canada, freedom.
Jumping off place — Place of shelter for fugitives.
Load of potatoes — Escaping slaves hidden under farm produce in a wagon.
Moses — Harriet Tubman.
Operator — Person who helped freedom seekers as a conductor or agent.
Parcel — Fugitives that were expected.
Patter roller — Bounty hunter hired to capture slaves.
Preachers — Leaders of and spokespersons for the Underground Railroad.
Promised Land — Canada.
River Jordan — Ohio River.
Shepherds — People who encouraged slaves to escape and escorted them.
Station — Place of safety and temporary refuge, a safe house.
Station master — Keeper or owner of a safe house.
Stockholder — Someone who gave money, clothing or food to the Underground Railroad.

PHRASES

The wind blows from the South today — A warning that slave bounty hunters were nearby.
A friend with friends — A password used to signal arrival of fugitives with an Underground Railroad conductor.
A friend of a friend sent me — A password used by fugitives traveling alone to indicate they were sent by the Underground Railroad network.
When the sun comes back and the first quail calls — Early spring, a particular time of year good for escaping.
The river bank makes a mighty good road — A reminder that tracking dogs could not follow the scent of fugitives through the water.
The dead trees will show you the way — A reminder that moss grows on the north side of dead trees, so if the North Star were not visible, they would know which way to walk.
Left foot, peg foot — A visual clue for escapees left by an Underground Railroad worker famous for his wooden leg.
The river ends between two hills — The Tombigbee River in Mississippi.
When the great big river meets the little river — The Ohio River and its tributaries.
Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus — Used to alert other slaves that an escape attempt was anticipated.

Source: <http://www.safepassageohio.org/resources/weblesson.pdf>