

Escaping through a Black Landscape by Rebecca Ginsburg

Forthcoming in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*, eds. Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg (Yale University Press, 2010)

It is difficult to do justice to the subject of escapes from slavery, mostly because so few of us can even begin to put ourselves in the place of those who had the courage and audacity to set out for freedom. Nonetheless, the topic deserves our critical attention. Accounts of enslaved laborers' flights to freedom contain provocative hints of the richness of the geographies of slavery. The secret paths that fugitives ran along, roads that patrols traveled regularly looking for runaways, spots where fugitives took cover, and systems for spreading news of rewards for captured slaves--these are only a few examples of the many nodes and networks that composed the layered environments inhabited by slaveholders, enslaved workers, and others. Their shared world is worth our attention. Although we can never hope to reproduce it exactly or understand it fully, mining its depths promises to bring us closer to a picture of slavery that acknowledges the conflict and violence that was at the heart of the American experience of slavery.

A good starting point is the work of scholars such as Stephanie M. H. Camp, Rhys Isaacs, Dell Upton (in this volume), and John Vlach, who have argued that there was a difference between the planters' perception of their surroundings and that of enslaved workers.¹ They have called the sphere occupied by enslaved people by various names, among them "black landscape," "black cognitive environment," "alternative territorial system," and "alternative geography." Nonetheless, their respective assessments of what geographer William Kirk might have called--to throw yet another term into the mix--the behavioral environment of enslaved workers are similar in several respects.² They agree generally that enslaved workers knew the land through a different set of cognitive processes than did whites; that enslaved people's views of their surroundings assumed less of a "godhead" perspective than did male planters' views, in particular; that the enslaved workers' territorial systems were typically more fluid and incorporated more fine-scaled details than did those of elite whites; and that whites often failed to recognize the components of enslaved workers' environments, the sites and paths, for what they were and how they were really used. Both a cause and a consequence of this last point was that the enslaved workers' environment was a useful place for acts for they wished to hide from

whites, such as eating stolen goods, enacting rituals, taking a break from work, or meeting friends and family away from eyes that might oppose such visits.

The connection between what I'll call the black landscape and escape is not as direct as one might expect. Romantic tales of what's popularly called "the underground railroad" notwithstanding, there were hardly any hidden routes that traveled from plantation country all the way North and few prearranged hiding spots a fugitive could rely on encountering along the way. Escapes were largely ad hoc, relying more on luck and opportunity than on prearranged plans, networks of "conductors," or secret signs.³ What role could the black landscape play in such journeys of circumstance? Prior participation in that landscape produced insights about the world and how it worked that served fugitives well as they sought the way to freedom.

Sources

In their book on runaway workers, John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger cite 1860 census figures that only about one of every five thousand enslaved people was an at-large fugitive.⁴ Even if we accept that this figure is low--enslavers were likely to underreport problems with their human chattel to census takers--escapees do not seem to have been a major problem for most planters. Collectively, however, they struck a powerful blow at the heart of American slavery. Benjamin Quarles argues that slavery was weakened less by any economic loss occasioned by absconding laborers than by the antislavery feelings that workers' flights and slaveholders' attempts to reclaim them evoked.⁵ Successful and dramatic escapes often generated extensive press coverage, especially north of the Mason-Dixon Line. By disabusing defenders' claims that enslaved workers were content with their conditions of servitude, they gave legitimacy to abolitionist efforts, a consequence that had particular salience after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, when tensions between North and South increased, leading ultimately to the Civil War.

Escapes, then, were a vital issue at the time but have since received less scholarly attention than they deserve.⁶ What is especially missing are well-theorized accounts of the actual escapes--the often weeks-long journeys through fields, woods, swamps, villages, and towns that people undertook to achieve their freedom.⁷ Popular representations of escapes tend to treat them as almost instantaneous events. One moment a woman is hoeing cotton in an Alabama field, and the next she is knocking on the door of a sympathetic Ohio farmer. In a way this is

understandable, as many contemporary accounts of slavery were thin on details in order to protect those involved, while Works Progress Administration interviews that broach the subject tend to be sketchy, possibly because of the passage of many years.

Fortunately, there are other sources. My reconstruction of escape efforts is based primarily on published nineteenth-century interviews with formerly enslaved workers who made successful bids for freedom. The main source is the collection compiled by Benjamin Drew following his mid-1800s tour of Canada West (now Ontario), which was then home to about thirty thousand black residents, most of whom were fugitive slaves or their offspring.⁸ Many of his interviews were conducted within weeks of his informants' arrivals in Canada, when details of their escapes were presumably fresh. Drew's interviews were first published in 1856.

I've relied as well on African-American autobiographies that include firsthand accounts of escapes, almost all of which, like Drew's book, were published to support abolition. I have not included escapes described in accounts of what has come to be called "the underground railroad," since escapes carried out with the organized assistance of others formed such a small proportion and because histories of the railroad tend to exaggerate the roles of whites.⁹

The Black Landscape

We can understand the black landscape as the system of paths, places, and rhythms that a community of enslaved people created as an alternative, often as a refuge, to the landscape systems of planters and other whites. It was a largely secret and disguised world, as compared to the planter landscape of display and vistas. Rhys Isaac, in his work on eighteenth-century Virginia, explains that enslaved people read the black landscapes they inhabited through a set of markers that were indecipherable to most whites and that spoke of black occupation of the land-- a loose board they pried open to enter a storehouse, for instance, or spots associated with secret ritual activity.¹⁰ In generating a network of sites of their own making, enslaved people operated in a fashion similar to oppressed peoples in other times and places.¹¹ Learning to exploit whatever opportunities their environment affords is often a necessity for those who lack political and economic power or any means of asserting their interests except through what James Scott calls the "weapons of the weak": everyday, routine, often subversive practices.¹²

There was no generic black landscape, and its actual composition on any given plantation or in any town varied according to conditions there at a particular time. For instance, on the

Singleton plantation in Craven County, North Carolina, the black landscape likely included the row of cabins in which enslaved workers slept; the corn, cotton, and tobacco fields in which they worked; the slave village on the neighboring Winthrop plantation; nearby Adams Creek, where people sometimes fished; and areas of the surrounding woods. An incident related by William Singleton in his autobiography allows us to observe its black landscape in use. William was a child of about ten in 1845, living on the plantation with his mother and older brother, when he learned that his owner-enslaver had sold him to another man. Frightened, and determined not to leave his family, he later wrote, “I ran into the woods. They tried to find me, but they could not.”¹³ After dark each evening, he would creep to his mother’s cabin and sleep in her root cellar. He returned to the woods very early in the morning, before sunup, and from there watched the men going to work, letting us know that he hid close enough to be in sight of the slave cabins. He managed to evade the slave patrols that traveled the neighborhood, including those that were looking for him. He wrote, “I would stay in the woods all day and then come back at night. Of course I could not have done this if the coloured people had not been friendly to me.”¹⁴

His last point is important. William was not hiding in a world of his own making. Rather, during his months of evasion, he inhabited a system of trails and spaces known to and apprehended by other slaves. This is not to suggest that all enslaved people had equal acquaintance with the entire extent of any black landscape, any more than all whites were equally familiar with the official road system. “Black landscape” is a term of convenience and is not meant to erase the multiple orders that enslaved people who were differently situated created and inhabited. Nonetheless, just as it would be possible to speak of and to delineate the “official” white landscape without needing to assume that all whites had equal knowledge and experience of it, so there was an identifiable black sphere, such that William could avoid detection from his owners, all the while being fed regularly by other enslaved people who knew of his whereabouts and kept this information among themselves.

I suggested above that the black landscape was more than the network of specific physical sites and passages that enslaved workers employed in a given community. The term refers also to the ways of looking at one’s surroundings that made slaves’ exploitation of such sites possible at all. One reason I prefer the term “black landscape” to others is that it resonates so well with what scholars have for decades been telling us about landscapes. A landscape, they argue, is more than a scene; it is a particular, socially constructed way of looking at the world; it

is one point of view among many. The “landscape eye” did not emerge until the Renaissance as a response to new understandings of and attitudes to property, technology, and religious belief. The particulars of sixteenth-century modes of seeing, of course, are not as useful to us here as the powerful idea that distinct landscapes--understood as ways of perceiving--exist and that each, in the words of geographer Denis Cosgrove, “is a restrictive way of seeing that diminishes alternative modes of experiencing our relationship with nature.”¹⁵ The black landscape was the particular cognitive order that enslaved workers generally imposed on the settings that surrounded them and through which they connected those settings to other places. If geography is the imaginative process by which people relate sites seen to those unseen and by which they thereby compose a picture of a larger whole, then participation in the black landscape contributed to the production of a distinctive black geography. The term “black landscape,” then, is an expression of geographical intelligence. It refers to ways that enslaved people knew the land, to the modes by which they made sense of and imagined their surroundings.

We know little about this. Dell Upton describes the cognitive slave landscape as a static network composed of discrete places. Enslaved people, he argues, experienced the plantation and its surroundings as a set of immovable barriers. They tended to relate all points to their customary location rather than regard them as components of a dynamic system. In the schema of twentieth-century psychologist Warner Brown, who identified four kinds of orientation, the slave form of cognition corresponded to that mode in which people comprehend their environments as a memorized sequence of movements.¹⁶

The many accounts, such as Singleton’s, of enslaved people hiding out on plantations, stealing from the stores, traveling after curfew, and conducting secret meetings suggest that their disjointed, fragmented views of the landscape were no handicap when such views included a fine-grained acquaintance with the particular spots that composed such fragmented orders. One result of regarding any given landscape as a system of disjointed nodes, and movement between them as a series of turns in a maze, is the necessity of memorizing the locations and features of the nodes and turns. Enslaved blacks who used the black landscape needed to pay close attention to details, changes in the land, and variations along the paths. This many appear to have done, with the result that they could move quickly and furtively through the land and stay quietly hidden in some sites for long periods of time, even years.

John Little, also from North Carolina, was another enslaved person who exploited his mastery of home terrain to effect an escape from white control. He had previously been owned by the same master-enslaver who owned his mother. However, when he was about twenty-three years old, that man sold him to another planter who lived about ten miles away. Finding him intransigent, Little's new master sent him after four months to Norfolk, Virginia, to be sold downriver. Little escaped from the jail where he was being held and set out for "the neighborhood of my old place, hoping, by dodging in the bush, to tire out my master's patience and induce him to sell me running."¹⁷ He crossed the river in a stolen skiff and returned to his mother's cabin. "I ran about there in the bush, and was dodging here and there in the woods two years."¹⁸

According to his own account, Little survived by eating pigs and chickens stolen from his former master's stock. He was finally captured when some "poor whites" offered a local free black man ten dollars to reveal Little's location.¹⁹ It is noteworthy that they had to rely on a black man for information about Little's hiding place. Although planters and poor whites seem to have experienced their surroundings differently, the latter being subject to the spatial barriers erected by their betters in a way that even slaves were not, poor whites did not participate in the black landscape uninvited.²⁰ Little's account suggests, too, that he was not entirely self-sufficient during his two-year sojourn. Though the length of time he was able to stay on the run indicates a high degree of personal familiarity with the area and its resources, the fact that a local man knew where to find him makes it likely that Little, like Singleton, occasionally depended on others who knew his whereabouts to feed him, hide him, and cover his tracks.

Edward Hicks was a "well-grown boy," in his own words, when his master sold him off the Lunenburg County, Virginia, plantation where he lived with his family to a New Orleans trader who took him to the nearby town of Brunswick. Determined to avoid being sold downriver, Hicks escaped from the man and eventually made his way back to Lunenburg, "up into the neighborhood where I was born and raised."²¹ Learning that his new owner was advertising his disappearance, he decided to go to an old house he knew of, "where cotton was kept," until the hunt for him had ended. He got under the stored cotton crop and stayed buried there "some two or three days" until the bloodhounds and men had passed.²² Then he headed for the surrounding bush, where he spent the winter hiding in barns and caves. Hicks obviously had good knowledge of the lay of the land, from understanding the suitability of the old house as a

hiding place (he knew that the cotton would disguise his scent) to knowing the location of nearby barns and the schedule of their use.

In the spring, his new master sold him to yet another planter, who sent some of his slaves to inform Hicks of the purchase.²³ As was so often the case, local enslaved folk knew exactly where to find him, whereas whites had been unable to locate the fugitive for months. It is likely that white ways of viewing the landscape compromised planters' abilities to see details that did not form part of the graduated, articulated platforms from which they expected to view and be viewed (see Upton, this volume). Enslaved blacks' and planters' respective modes of geographic knowing contributed to the advantages enslaved people held in keeping from unfriendly whites knowledge of clandestine activities. At least, this was the case close to the plantation. What about farther away?

Escape

The difference between hiding in the woods in the neighborhood of one's home and making a break from family and friends in order to effect an escape was the difference between night and day. In the examples above, the runaways had no intent of making a permanent break. Indeed, what drove them to camp out was the fear that such a break might be imminent. When the Bermuda Royal Gazette in 1828 celebrated the fact that Bermudan slaves docked in Belfast rejected an Irish magistrate's offer of freedom and chose rather to return to their families in Bermuda, interpreting that decision as evidence of the slaves' attachment to the attention and sympathy of their masters and mistresses, the editors showed a lamentable lack of imagination.²⁴ As Frederick Douglass explained, when he contemplated his own escape, "the thought of being separated from [my friends] forever was painful beyond expression. It is my opinion that thousands would escape from slavery, who now remain, but for the strong chords of affection that bind them to their friends."²⁵ It should be no surprise that many people chose their families over their freedom.

Nonetheless, in the lives of many enslaved, a moment came when the pain and offense of being held as another person's possession outweighed the prospect of lifelong separation from loved ones and the risks of flight. Men were most likely to reach this point. Franklin and Scheninger estimate that they represented more than 75 percent of runaways between 1790 and 1860 and that most of these were in their teens and twenties. The main reason for the gender

imbalance was probably women's awareness that any children were likely to be much more dependent on them than on their enslaved fathers.²⁶ Fleeing with young children would slow a woman down and expose the children to great danger. Leaving them was usually unthinkable.

Nineteenth-century accounts of escapes are often written in a plain and understated manner that belies the traumatic nature of their authors' flights. Nonetheless, the writing style cannot disguise completely the emotions felt by fleeing fugitives. What is most striking about firsthand accounts of escapes is the high degree of fear and disorientation that most fugitives experienced. In the abstract, of course, we are not surprised to learn that their flights--dangerous journeys on which so much depended--produced such feelings; far less portentous journeys generate them even today. What is noteworthy is the multiple sources from which threats generated.

In the countryside, the biggest danger was in getting lost. James Pennington's adventures provide a good example. Pennington worked as a blacksmith on a plantation in Washington County, Maryland, when, in the late 1820s, he decided to leave his parents and ten brothers and sisters and flee north. He later wrote in his autobiography, "I had no knowledge of distance or direction--I knew that Pennsylvania is a free state, but I knew not where its soil begins, nor where that of Maryland ends."²⁷

Setting out from the quarters after midnight, he set a course "through thick and heavy woods and back lands" to the nearby town.²⁸ Despite the seemingly inhospitable terrain, he had confidence about this part of the journey, having made the trip often before. Once he passed through town, however, he found himself in unfamiliar territory. "I knew my general course northward, but at what point I should strike Pennsylvania, or when and where I should find a friend, I knew not."²⁹ He went on, fighting the chilling effects of the predawn dew and his own loneliness and weakening nerves. He hid himself when morning came, burrowing into a corn shock he found on the road. "The day was an unhappy one; my hiding place was extremely precarious. I had to sit in a squatting position the whole day, without the least chance to rest."³⁰ By this time, he had eaten all the corn bread he had brought with him, and his hunger began to gnaw at him, buried though he was in food he could not consume.

When darkness fell, he set out again. It was cloudy and he could not see the North Star, which he knew to use as a guide. Walking through the night, at dawn he found some sour apples, which he ate, and secreted himself under a small bridge that crossed the road. Unfortunately, the

apples made him sick. He wrote, “I suffered most of the day with severe symptoms of cramp.”³¹ After sunset he set out again, by now so tired, hungry, and sick that he had to stop often. He continued walking even after dawn broke and in the early morning came upon a toll gate.

The only person I saw was a lad about twelve years of age. I inquired of him where the road led to. He informed me it led to Baltimore. I asked him the distance, he said it was eighteen miles.

This intelligence was perfectly astounding to me. My master lived eighty miles from Baltimore. I was now sixty-two miles from home. That distance in the right direction would have placed me several miles across Mason and Dixon’s line, but I was evidently yet in the state of Maryland.³²

Instead of traveling north, Pennington had gone southeast, deeper into slaving territory.

Formerly enslaved people’s accounts repeatedly demonstrate how their set of geographic skills, which had served them to advantage back on the plantation and nearby, let them down when they were at large. Indeed, we would probably be surprised to learn otherwise. Enslaved people, like uneducated whites of the era, had little place in their geographic schemas for ordinal directions, for instance. They appear to have had little sense of distance or scale, and most would never have seen a map or known how to read one. Much of their ignorance was part of a deliberate strategy on the part of slaveholders. As Frederick Douglass explained, “Every slaveholder seeks to impress his slaves with a belief in the boundlessness of slavery territory, and of his own almost illimitable power. We all had vague and indistinct notions of the geography of the country.”³³

Unlike poor whites, runaways traveled under the fear of being caught, and their efforts to avoid detection made them yet more susceptible to losing their way. For instance, they could not easily stop along the way and ask anyone for directions, as whites could. In fact, to avoid being seen at all, most avoided open roads, tending to move along animal traces, follow old Indian trails, and cut their own paths through the bush. The challenge was to move quickly and quietly until at a place of safety. The longer the journey, the greater the chances of becoming susceptible to cold, hunger, or thirst--all of which, of course, could lead to death. Edward Hicks solved the problem of orienting himself during his flight through unfamiliar woods by carrying a stick with him. When he went to sleep each morning, he laid it on the ground by him with the bigger of its ends pointed in the direction in which he wanted to travel on awakening.³⁴

Runaways familiar with local lore about where “freedom” lay might rely on that to navigate their way to safety. Many making their way from Kentucky or western Virginia knew to

follow the tributaries of the Ohio River, while those more to the east followed the direction of the Appalachian Mountains, which were known to run north and south.³⁵ Many slaves actually headed south, following the Mississippi and other rivers to find refuge where rumors promised in Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw territories.³⁶ Maroon communities, especially the numerous settlements in the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina, cursed by local planters as hideouts for livestock thieves, also offered refuge to runaways who could find their ways there.³⁷

Some fugitives sought cities, for urban areas contained resources such as jobs and information that could be of great use to runaways. However, cities held dangers of their own. The problem in the city was not disorientation. Certainly people from rural areas often got lost in the unfamiliar warrens of strange cities, but getting lost in a city did not lead as inexorably to exposure and to death as it did in the countryside. Instead, the biggest threat in the city was of capture from bounty hunters and others whose interests might lead them to turn in runaways. It was not that unsympathetic characters could not be found in the country. Law-abiding citizens, as they might have termed themselves, were everywhere willing and enthusiastic about turning in fugitives. In the city, though, one was more likely to find people who thrived on and profited from the practice. For example, a gang of poor whites in New York City, many of them recent European immigrants, called themselves the Black Birds. It was a thuggish group that earned money for its members in part by turning in fugitives and even kidnapping free blacks.³⁸

The threat in urban areas also came from officialdom. Municipalities engaged in crackdowns, some more or less frequent, depending on local scares, and during these periods police officers and vigilance committees became even more rigorous about demanding to see free papers or passes.³⁹ Post offices and other city buildings were popular places to post flyers announcing awards for fugitives. One might read, if literate, whether one was among those whose disappearance was being publicized. This was valuable information for a fugitive, but there was obviously a danger in getting too close to posters that described one's self and advertised for one's own capture.

Because of these risks, some fugitives assiduously avoided all built-up areas, even while others specifically sought them out. There was no single formula for a successful escape, either across the country or within a particular region. Many variables bore on the likelihood of success or failure, including the health, intelligence, courage, speed, and strength of the fugitive; whether

help in the form of food and water, shelter, directions, or advice was forthcoming; the resolve of slave catchers, bounty hunters, police, and other white citizens to pursue suspicious-looking characters; and, not least, luck. Fugitives constantly navigated a series of unknowns: Will this path lead me there? Is this man trustworthy? Will this fence hide me? Is this berry safe to eat? The list is effectively endless. No figures reveal the proportion of successful to unsuccessful attempts or, for that matter, the number of fugitives who managed to make their way to freedom. However, evidence of the difficulties encountered by those fortunate enough to have had success points strongly to the conclusion that many attempts did not end happily. Indeed, one might reasonably wonder why any succeeded.

Knowing Whites

The black landscape helped. Granted, a fugitive's prior participation in the black landscape may not have provided knowledge of the route ahead. Neither did it impart geographical skills with which a person might ascertain that route. However, it offered something else perhaps more valuable still. It seems likely that many enslaved workers had what Patricia Hill Collins has called "outsider-within knowledge."⁴⁰ Whether they had worked on a plantation, on a farm, or in town, they had observed white people's being fooled thanks to the existence of the black landscape, and as a result, they had been disabused of the conceit of white omniscience and omnipotence. As Robert K. Fitts explains in this volume, as with most ideologies, the primary consumer of this conceit was the dominants themselves. We should not underestimate the value to enslaved people of realizing that whites were not all-knowing and all-seeing and that, having slipped under the radar of white surveillance previously in their lives, it was not impossible to do so again.

Even if he or she personally had not engaged extensively in surreptitious activity in and around the master-enslaver's property, an enslaved person was likely to be aware of its existence--of lovers' meetings that took place secretly under cover of night, of loose boards that allowed friends to pilfer from the meat house, or of reading lessons of which the white folks had no hint.⁴¹ For the stout-hearted who dared to dream, the road to freedom could even seem to form part of this network, to appear as one leg of the collection of paths and trails that ran figuratively and literally under the noses of master and mistress and that allowed enslaved people to put one over on them.

The black landscape was a way of knowing not just the land but also white people. In Collins's words, it revealed "how unsuperior white people really were."⁴² The black landscape was a site of cultural empowerment and resilience not only because enslaved people enacted there practices of communal significance but, more important, because any practices could take place there at all. By participating in a shared, hidden landscape, the enslaved formed bonds of support, trust, and resistance to white control. In the process, they became aware of what many white people never did--namely, the extent of the sphere of black activity that coexisted with but was out of the control of planter-enslavers and their allies. Being on the run, even with the clear dangers that escaping presented, could affirm one's sense of the persistence of that sphere. Black-owned barbershops in Southern cities where copies of The Defender could be secretly acquired; caves in which one could sleep for weeks at a time and be fed by workers on a nearby plantation; free blacks' homes located near those of whites where a fugitive could stay quietly overnight--all these pointed to the possibility of continued secret engagement with kindred folk in the face of planter ignorance.

Significantly, enslaved people were conscious of their view of the world. Black accounts of enslavement speak persistently to people's belief in the blindness of whites and the ease with which anyone with good sense and keen wit could pull the wool over their eyes. Granted, these sources do not refer to the landscape specifically. But so many songs, sayings, and stories--such as the original Brer Rabbit, for instance, who continually outwits the self-satisfied Brer Fox--can be interpreted as commentaries on whites' general vanities, gullibility, and foolishness, that we can understand that conventional wisdom held that whites were only in partial control of their surroundings and that enslaved people had eyes to see what whites did not. Enslaved people appreciated that whites owned the land and even putatively owned them, but they also knew that a mere notch below elite whites' displays of finery and grandeur lay a world the details of which most whites were unaware and of which they, the enslaved, had at least temporary control.

John Atkinson told Benjamin Drew, when Drew visited him in his Saint Catherine's, Ontario home, "A man who has been in slavery knows, and no one else can know, the yearning to be free, and the fear of making the attempt."⁴⁴ His words caution those of us who have never been in bondage against the folly of believing that we can ever truly appreciate what it was like to be held as another person's chattel or to make the difficult decision to strike for freedom.

Fortunately, acknowledging the limits of our understanding on a given matter does not require our silence on it. To the contrary, historical knowledge without imaginative sympathy is a hollow thing. I propose that a fugitive slave might have the courage to set off and to keep running, even when things got tough, on the basis of what he or she had learned from the slave landscape about whites and the advantages he or she held over them. The fugitive knew that he or she knew what master did not, that there was more than one way of seeing, ordering, and traveling on the land in the antebellum South.

Notes

1. Vlach, Back of the Big House; Upton, White and Black Landscapes; Isaacs, Transformation of Virginia; Camp, Closer to Freedom.
2. Kirk, “Historical Geography.”
3. See, e.g., Gara, Liberty Line.
4. Franklin and Schweninger, Runaway Slaves, 279.
5. Quarles, Black Abolitionists 143.
6. Classic texts on escapes from slavery include Siebert and Still respectively on underground railroad; Finkelman, Fugitive Slaves; Franklin and Schweninger, Runaway Slaves; Gara, Liberty Line; Hudson, Fugitive Slaves. Also of great value are works on specific individuals and local histories e.g. Clinton and Larson’s respective books on Harriet Tubman; Parker, Running for Freedom; Leaming.
7. But see recent books, such as Blight, Slave No More, Frost, Glory Land, and Pacheco, Pearl, which address specific escapes in detail.
8. Drew, North-Side View of Slavery.
9. Gara, Liberty Line.
10. Isaac, Transformation of Virginia, 52–53.
11. See, e.g., Ginsburg, “Serving Apartheid?” and Paulsson, Secret City, on the Holocaust.
12. Scott, Weapons of the Weak.
13. Singleton, ed., “I, Too, Am America,” 39.
14. Ibid.
15. Denis Cosgrove 1984, 1, cited in Butlin 1993, 137.

16. Brown, “Spatial Integration,” 1932, cited in Lynch, Image of the City, 131. Little has been written about cultural differences with respect to environmental image-making, wayfinding, or modes of geographic knowledge. Research to date deals primarily with differences within four realms: differences between men and women (see, e.g., Devlin and Bernstein, “Interactive Wayfinding,” and Ward, Newcombe, and Overton, ”Turn Left at the Church”), differences between visually-impaired and sighted people (see, e.g., Carreriras and Codina, “Spatial Cognition”; Hollins, “Haptic Mental Rotation”; Morrongiello et al., “Spatial Knowledge”; and Amedeo and Speicher, “Essential Environmental and Spatial Concerns”), developmental differences (see, e.g., Cornell and Hay, “Children’s Acquisition of a Route”; and Curtis, Siegel, and Furlong, “Developmental Differences”), and differences between adults suffering from dementia and other adults (see, e.g., Passini et al., “Wayfinding and Dementia”; and Rainville, Joannette, and Passini, “Spatial Disorientation in Senile Dementia”). Although these works do not treat culture as a variable, they suggest, first, that there is no “standard” way by which humans engage with the environment; second, that the way a given group engages can depend upon many factors, including its sociohistoric circumstance; and, third, that ways of environmental knowing often develop to provide compensatory advantages to disabled or disadvantaged populations.

17. Drew, North-Side View of Slavery, 204. Many slaves believed that they stood a better chance of not being sold to a particularly sadistic or abusive master-enslaver if they were sold running, while they were on the lam, since masters with better reputations were more likely to purchase such slaves. Planters with poor reputations knew that a slave would not reveal himself and come out of hiding to work under harsh conditions.

18. *Ibid.*, 205.

19. *Ibid.*

20. On the difference between poor and elite white landscapes, see Isaac, Transformation of Virginia, 53–56; and Upton, “White and Black Landscapes,” 66–68.

21. Drew, North-Side View of Slavery, 261.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. See Ed Chappell, this volume.

25. Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, 74.

26. Franklin and Scheninger, Runaway Slaves, 210–212.
27. Pennington, “Fugitive Blacksmith,” 215.
28. *Ibid.*, 217.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 218.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, 218–219.
33. Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, 281. See also Redpath, Roving Editor, 208, on slave and poor white geographical ignorance; and Brent’s chapter on “What Slaves Are Taught to Think of the North” in Life of a Slave Girl [1861] 1987, 374–376.
34. Drew, North-Side View of Slavery, 260–261.
35. Siebert, Underground Railroad, 54.
36. Franklin and Schweninger, Runaway Slaves, 112–116.
37. See Leaming, Hidden Americans; Cowan, “Slave in the Swamp.”
38. Horton and Horton, Slavery and the Making of America, 63–64.
39. See, e.g. Herman, “Slave and Servant Housing.”
40. Collins, Fighting Words, 5–8.
41. See, e.g., Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, 85–6, 189–190, and 264–268, respectively, for examples of all three.
42. Collins, Fighting Words, 7.
43. cite
44. Drew, North-Side View of Slavery, 43.

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