

## About the Artist and Exhibition

William Still, who most historians agree is probably the second-most important person in Underground Railroad history after Harriet Tubman, remains unknown by most. He dedicated 14 years of his life to working as secretary for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. When freedom seekers arrived in Philadelphia, he would interview the former slaves and record their stories in his self-published book, *The Underground Railroad*. He assisted over 800 slaves escape and his narratives were published after the Civil War in 1872. During those years Still and Tubman crossed paths and thus an investigation of his contributions to American history are vital links in my narrative paintings.

The amazing story of the Still brothers' meeting can't be understood without starting with key events that occurred prior to William Still's birth. My painting and drawing research began where the story begins, in Caroline County, Maryland.

-Written by the Artist

Born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1958, Mark Priest completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1987 and went on to obtain a Masters in Fine Arts at Yale University in 1989. Priest has exhibited consistently for the past thirty-seven years both nationally and internationally. Priest has received numerous grants including the Morgan Research Grant in 2016 to continue his research and the Commission on Racial Equality & Diversity Grant in 2015. Priest's recent paintings and drawing seek to depict the mental, emotional, and physical prowess needed to succeed on the Underground Railroad.

# THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:

THE STILL FAMILY &  
CHARLES NALLE

AUGUST 31 - NOVEMBER 11, 2023

Exhibition Resources  
for Middle and High  
School Teachers





## Activities

### Freedom Seeker Profile (English-Language Arts/Social Studies)

Have students choose one of the Still Family members or Charles Nalle profiled in the exhibition and do some additional research to create a short report or presentation to compile all information that they find. Students could write a written report or create a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation to share their findings with their classmates. Students could also use pictures taken of the paintings and drawings on display to add to their presentations.

### Primary Source Analysis (Social Studies)

Have students explore the exhibition and choose one of the images to use as a primary source for analysis. Students can use the [Library of Congress' Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) to dig deep into the information contained in the artwork they chose. Students could also choose to analyze one of the sources used for research by the artist in the creation of the exhibition.

### Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 [Carousel Reading](#) (Social Studies)

One major piece of legislation that impacted the abolition movement and the enslaved population in the United States was the [Fugitive Slave Act of 1850](#). Break students into groups and the text of the law into sections. Have the different sections of the law situated around the room that each group will travel to. At each station have a large paper where students will record their thoughts on how this section would impact enslaved people and free abolitionists. Students will move from station to station at your direction until they have read through all of the sections and recorded their thoughts. As a wrap-up have students brainstorm ways that enslaved people and abolitionists could have worked around the challenges presented in the law and then share with the class. Students can also discuss the ways in which the members of the Still Family were impacted by the different sections of the law by watching the PBS documentary on the William Still linked in the Additional Resources.

## Questions for Viewing and Discussion

The following questions can be used to guide viewing and discussion of any of the paintings or drawings in the exhibition.

- What feelings do these pieces of art bring out for you?
- What can you learn about the artists from viewing this exhibition?
- What is your favorite work in the exhibition and why?
- What questions would you like to be able to ask the artists to know more about a specific piece of art or their bodies of work as a whole?
- How can we use art to tell a story?
- Why do you think the artist chose these individuals to highlight for this exhibition?
- How does the subject matter evolve as the artist moves from drawing to painting?
- How can researching historical subjects inform an artist's work?



*1st and State Street Skirmish*, Mark Priest, 2008.  
6' x 12', Acrylic on canvas.



## Additional Resources

### *The Underground Railroad Webpage*

<https://carnegiecenter.org/exhibitions/from-audubon-to-sisto-highlights-from-the-permanent-collection/>

Information from the Carnegie Center about the exhibition as well as other events at the museum

### Artist Website: Mark Priest

[markapriest.org](http://markapriest.org)

Learn more about the art of exhibition artist Mark Priest

### Underground Railroad: William Still Story

[pbs.org/video/wned-tv-history-underground-railroad-william-still-story/](https://pbs.org/video/wned-tv-history-underground-railroad-william-still-story/)

Watch the 55-minute PBS documentary about William Still

### House Divided Lesson Plans

[https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/ugrr/lesson\\_plans.html](https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/ugrr/lesson_plans.html)

Additional lesson plan ideas and activities created by House Divided at Dickinson College for Elementary, Middle, and High School classrooms

## About Us

The Carnegie Center for Art & History is one of Southern Indiana's cultural cornerstones. Housed in New Albany's original library building, the Carnegie Center has ongoing exhibits about the history of the Underground Railroad in the region and the remarkable life story of celebrated Civil War nurse Lucy Higgs Nichols. The Carnegie also features rotating exhibitions of contemporary local, national, and international art in a wide range of visual mediums, as well as many opportunities for hands-on learning.

As a branch of the Floyd County Library, the Carnegie Center supports the growth and creativity of an engaged, informed, and connected community. Those tenets form the basis of the Carnegie Center's creation of quality programming for both youth and adults. Admission is always free as part of our dedication to community accessibility and inclusivity. Visit or schedule a tour on Mondays through Saturdays, and join us for special programs on Thursday evenings.

201 E. Spring Street, New Albany, IN 47150  
812-944-7336 | [www.carnegiecenter.org](http://www.carnegiecenter.org)  
Monday - Thursday: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Friday & Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Cover Image: *Sydney's Choice*, Mark Priest, 2023. 49.5" x 46.5", Acrylic on canvas.