

## February is Black History Month

While the history of Black people in America is often tragic, often inspiring, and always important. Black History month is a time to celebrate this history. At the Elkins-Randolph County Public Library we welcome everyone of all colors, genders, and sexual orientation. This month we honor and draw attention to what Black people have overcome and accomplished. We encourage you to take some time this month to learn something new about the history of Black people in America and the world.

### Journal activity: Freedom quilt

People of African descent were brought to the colonies as slaves. After the United States was formed, a slave population was maintained in Southern States, including Virginia, which would later split into Virginia and West Virginia. The institution of slavery was so controversial that it helped spark a civil war, which resulted in the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of slaves.



Before slavery ended, enslaved people attempted and succeeded in escaping from Southern slave-holding states to Northern non-slave states. Many of those who successfully escaped traveled the Underground Railroad. Here “underground” doesn’t refer to a subway; “underground” refers to the secret nature of the network that helped slaves escape.

You may have heard of **Harriet Tubman**, an escaped slave who helped organize the secret network of the Underground Railroad.

A secret network, the Underground Railroad, relied on secret signals and coded messages. That might have included “freedom quilts.” Different quilt squares held coded messages for those in the know, allowing members of the underground railroad to pass messages to escaping slaves.

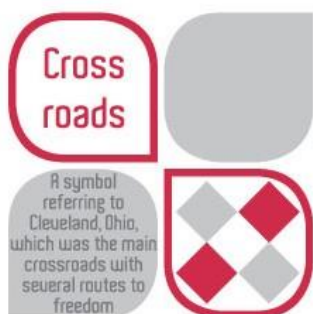
Today, you'll make your own freedom quilt square!!

**Activity:**

1. Check out the various quilt square designs and their meaning on the last page of packet.
2. Write a journal entry: Pick one of the patterns and describe what it looks like and what it means. Does the way it looks communicate something about its meaning?
3. Make a quilt square with construction paper and fabric. Directions for the 2 optional patterns are below.

**Directions for making a Crossroads square:**

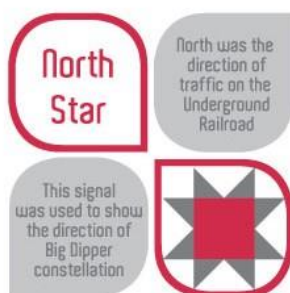
You'll need: 1 8x8 square of construction paper, 4 4x4 squares of fabric of 2 different colors. Glue. Scissors.



1. Cut out an 8x8 square of construction paper.
2. Arrange the pieces of fabric diagonally in each corner of the construction paper. Make sure the pieces of the same color are in opposite corners.
3. Glue the fabric to the construction paper. Let dry.

**Directions for making a North Star square:**

You'll need 1 8x8 piece of construction paper, 1 4x4 square of fabric with a solid color, 2 4x4 squares of fabric with a pattern. Glue. Scissors.



1. Cut out an 8x8 square of construction paper.
2. Place a 4x4 square of fabric in the center of the construction paper. Glue to attach.
3. Cut fabric with a different pattern into 8 triangles. Do so by cutting the provided square in half diagonally and then cutting those triangles in half again.
4. Arrange the triangles around the outside of the center square in a star-like formation. Glue to attach.

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