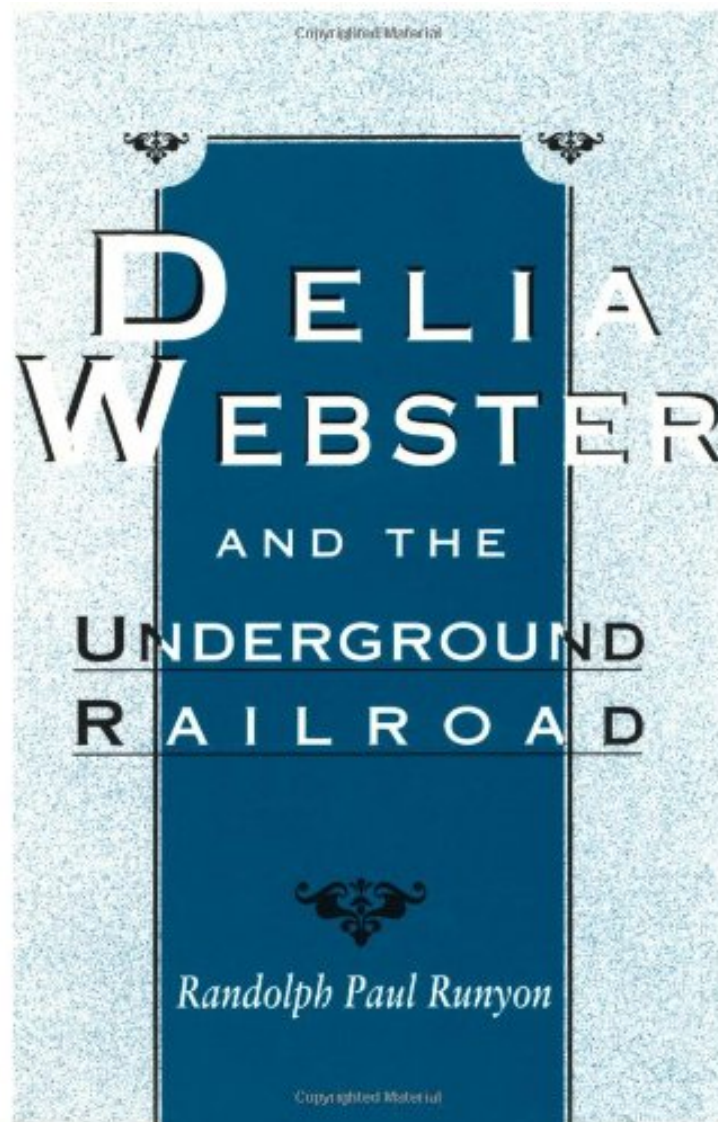


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## Delia Webster and the Underground Railroad

*Randolph Paul Runyon*

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**Randolph Paul Runyon : Delia Webster and the Underground Railroad** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Delia Webster and the Underground Railroad:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Unbelievable True StoryBy AvidReaderSometimes you just want to read a true story about a strong woman who takes control of her own life and saves the day--in this case she actually saves the lives of Lewis Hayden and his wife. This is a well researched, well documented piece of Civil War history that we've never heard. The author has done an excellent job of piecing together this forgotten story about a woman

who knew what she wanted and made a difference. Sacrificing her job, health, and freedom, she helped a family escape from slavery. When you study the man that Lewis Hayden became, you realize that this sacrifice was not in vain---Hayden went on to lead the fight to desegregate Boston public schools in a time when slavery was still legal and he himself was a fugitive slave. This story is also fascinating to read about how a woman found her own way in life in a time when women had very few options. That she was able to own property, run a business, and survive being the only female prisoner in a man's prison are only parts of this remarkable true story. If anyone ever deserved to be in the woman's hall of fame---this is it!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Liz MitchellTells a remarkable story1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A very brave forgotten abolitionist!By CustomerThis brave lady endured alot! The more you read the more you realize, nobody has ever heard of her, she's been forgotten. Lewis Hayden has been honored, Delia deserves to be remembered also! Very independent, a businesswoman who influenced northern abolitionists to invest in her endeavors and the farm that would be a stop on the Underground Railroad, a stubborn, vocal single woman whose reputation was trashed in the newspapers of the time, she was cunning and lived amongst the slave owners, defying them. Enjoyed this book very much. You'll want to read about Lewis Hayden too!

In this captivating tale, Randolph Paul Runyon follows the trail of the first woman imprisoned for assisting runaway slaves and explores the mystery surrounding her life and work. In September 1844, Delia Webster took a break from her teaching responsibilities at Lexington Female Academy and accompanied Calvin Fairbank, a Methodist preacher from Oberlin College, on a Saturday drive in the country. At the end of their trip, their passengers Lewis Hayden and his family remained in southern Ohio, ticketed for the Underground Railroad. Webster and Fairbank returned to a near riot and jail cells. Webster earned a sentence to the state penitentiary in Frankfort, where the warden, Newton Craig, married and a father, became enamored of her and was tempted into a compromising relationship he would come to regret. Hayden reached freedom in Boston, where he became a prominent businessman, the ringleader in the courthouse rescue of a fugitive slave, and the last link in the chain of events that led to the Harpers Ferry Raid. Webster, the focal point at which these lives intersect, remains an enigma. Was she, as one contemporary noted, "A young lady of irreproachable character?" Or, as another observed, "a very bold and defiant kind of woman, without a spark of feminine modesty, and, withal, very shrewd and cunning?" Runyon has doggedly pursued every historical lead to bring color and shape to the tale of these fascinating characters.

From Library JournalRunyon (French, Miami Univ.) has successfully extracted this very readable narrative of antislavery activities, clarifying and tying together a mass of disjointed and contradictory primary sources. Delia Webster, a teacher from Vermont, moved to Kentucky and in 1844 helped Methodist minister Calvin Fairbank transport the slave Lewis Hayden and his family to Ohio. Hayden went on to become a prominent abolitionist and businessman in Boston. Webster and Fairbank were arrested and imprisoned in Kentucky. Webster was later pardoned and released, and she secretly continued to assist runaway slaves, although her reputation, livelihood, and property were under constant attack. Webster's story illustrates the complexities of living within a community while subverting its laws. Recommended for larger regional and subject collections.?Wendy Knickerbocker, Rhode Island Coll. Lib., ProvidenceCopyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. "In this captivating tale of a petticoat abolitionist, Delia Webster stands at the center of a riveting story about the Underground Railroad."Appalachian Quarterly"Runyon's riveting account reveals the intrigues that surrounded the at times hesitant abolitionist Delia Webster. In piecing together the complex puzzle of Ms. Webster and her cohorts, Runyon has illuminated a fascinating, little-known slice of anti-slavery history."Edward J. Renehan Jr."Another active and important woman has been rescued from the shadows and obscurity and given her proper place in the history not only of Kentucky but of an emotional and important era in the nation's history."Filson Club History Quarterly"This Victorian melodrama reads like a detective story. . . . Working with a difficult and complex body of evidence, Runyon has produced a fascinating and poignant story without being seduced by it."H-Net s"An exciting and dramatic reconstruction of the life and times of a pioneering American woman."Library Booknotes"Runyon has successfully extracted this very readable narrative of antislavery activities, clarifying and tying together a mass of disjointed and contradictory primary sources. It illustrates the complexities of living within a community while subverting its laws."Library Journal"Readers interested in the anti-slavery movement of the pre-Civil War years will find Runyon's book fascinating. . . .Has all the elements of adventure, romance, and intrigue."Ohioana Quarterly"A beautifully written telling of a passionate story. Runyon truly exemplifies the historian as detective."Thomas H. Appleton Jr."It has just about everything that makes for a great narrative...close escapes, scorned love, sacrifices, and vengeance."Random Thoughts on HistoryFrom the Back Cover"In this tale of a petticoat abolitionist, Delia Webster stands at the center of a story about the Underground Railroad. Randolph Paul Runyon follows the trail of the first woman imprisoned for assisting runaway slaves and explores the mystery surrounding her life and work."--BOOK JACKET.