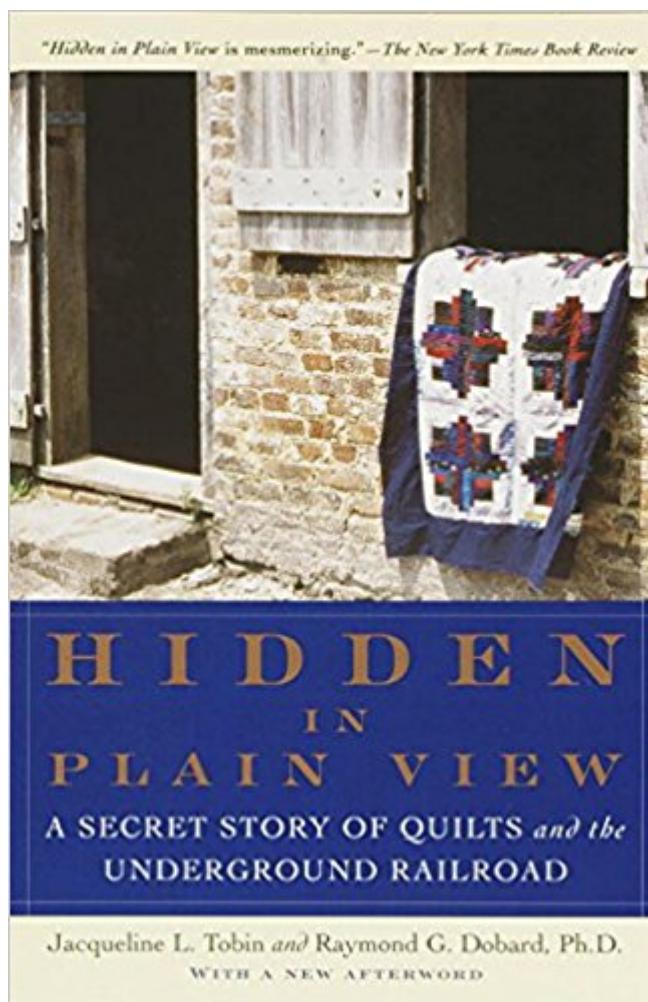


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# Hidden In Plain View: A Secret Story Of Quilts And The Underground Railroad



## Synopsis

The fascinating story of a friendship, a lost tradition, and an incredible discovery, revealing how enslaved men and women made encoded quilts and then used them to navigate their escape on the Underground Railroad. In *Hidden in Plain View*, historian Jacqueline Tobin and scholar Raymond Dobard offer the first proof that certain quilt patterns, including a prominent one called the Charleston Code, were, in fact, essential tools for escape along the Underground Railroad. In 1993, historian Jacqueline Tobin met African American quilter Ozella Williams amid piles of beautiful handmade quilts in the Old Market Building of Charleston, South Carolina. With the admonition to "write this down," Williams began to describe how slaves made coded quilts and used them to navigate their escape on the Underground Railroad. But just as quickly as she started, Williams stopped, informing Tobin that she would learn the rest when she was "ready." During the three years it took for Williams's narrative to unfold—and as the friendship and trust between the two women grew—Tobin enlisted Raymond Dobard, Ph.D., an art history professor and well-known African American quilter, to help unravel the mystery. Part adventure and part history, *Hidden in Plain View* traces the origin of the Charleston Code from Africa to the Carolinas, from the low-country island Gullah peoples to free blacks living in the cities of the North, and shows how three people from completely different backgrounds pieced together one amazing American story. With a new afterword. Illustrations and photographs throughout, including a full-color photo insert.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When quiltmaker Ozella McDaniels told Jacqueline Tobin of the Underground Railroad Quilt Code, it sparked Tobin to place the tale within the history of the Underground Railroad. Hidden in Plain View documents Tobin and Raymond Dobard's journey of discovery, linking Ozella's stories to other forms of hidden communication from history books, codes, and songs. Each quilt, which could be laid out to air without arousing suspicion, gave slaves directions for their escape. Ozella tells Tobin how quilt patterns like the wagon wheel, log cabin, and shoofly signaled slaves how and when to prepare for their journey. Stitching and knots created maps, showing slaves the way to safety. The authors construct history around Ozella's story, finding evidence in cultural artifacts like slave narratives, folk songs, spirituals, documented slave codes, and children's' stories. Tobin and Dobard write that "from the time of slavery until today, secrecy was one way the black community could protect itself. If the white man didn't know what was going on, he couldn't seek reprisals." Hidden in Plain View is a multilayered and unique piece of scholarship, oral history, and cultural exploration that reveals slaves as deliberate agents in their own quest for freedom even as it shows that history can sometimes be found where you least expect it. --Amy Wan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Hidden in Plain View is mesmerizing." •The New York Times Book Review"•A captivating read." •Dayton Daily News"Unfolds like a scholarly detective story and offers convincing evidence that quilts were used 'to conceal and yet reveal' a means of escape on the Underground Railroad." •Orange County Register"•A groundbreaking work." •Emerge

The discovery of the systems escaped slaves used to get North and into Canada by the secret language in quilt patterns was exciting, the more so for the fact that it has remained secret for the many years since the end of the Civil War. To someone like myself who has been a quilter and who knew already something about the terminus of the Underground Railway along the Ohio River. in Kentucky, it was even more so. I have seen the house which was known to have hidden the escapees. This location was a matter of local pride to people who grew up in that small town. I was happy to purchase the book and present it to a woman who was a child of former slaves. .

I actually find I love the quilt how to books or art books better than reading the secret stories--it was interesting, but for me, I'd rather be out touching, buying and creating my own work, and not reading about the whys of certain textiles--though the why always informs the appreciation even more.

Tells the story of getting to freedom...

This made a nice gift.

Not very engaging

Excellent book.

It was a gift

Book was in excellent condition

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