

Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Nomination Application
HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY



Submitted to:

Delaware Department of Transportation
Scenic and Historic Highways Program

Sponsored by:

Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware &
National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

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*Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware
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January 20, 2009

The Honorable Carolann Wicks
Secretary
Delaware Department of Transportation
800 Bay Road
PO Box 778
Dover, DE 19903

RE: Submission of Application
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway

Dear Secretary Wicks,

It is my great pleasure to submit to you this Delaware Byways application for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware first identified this project as a top goal in 2001 in their overall plan to highlight the places and heroes of the flight to freedom in the State. For the past three years the Coalition has worked steadily with our consultant, David Ames and the team from the University of Delaware, on this application, reviewing many drafts and obtaining input from the Delaware community. We have joined with our Maryland friends in naming the route for Harriet Tubman, in the hope of being joined in the near future to byways in Pennsylvania and New York to create a continuous memorial of Tubman's secret journeys. While Tubman's travels are highlighted, we have also included some of the known stories and places associated with other freedom seekers and conductors who comprised the phenomenon of the Delaware Underground Railroad. We hope that a designation will draw heritage tourists to Delaware and will encourage further scholarship on the subject.

I believe that you will find the nomination both factual and exciting, and I look forward to the comments of the Evaluation Committee and the Technical Advisory Board.

Sincerely,


Kenyon L. Camper
President
Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware

Cc: Maria Andaya, DeIDOT
David Ames, University of Delaware
Debra C. Martin, City of Wilmington

FIGURE 1

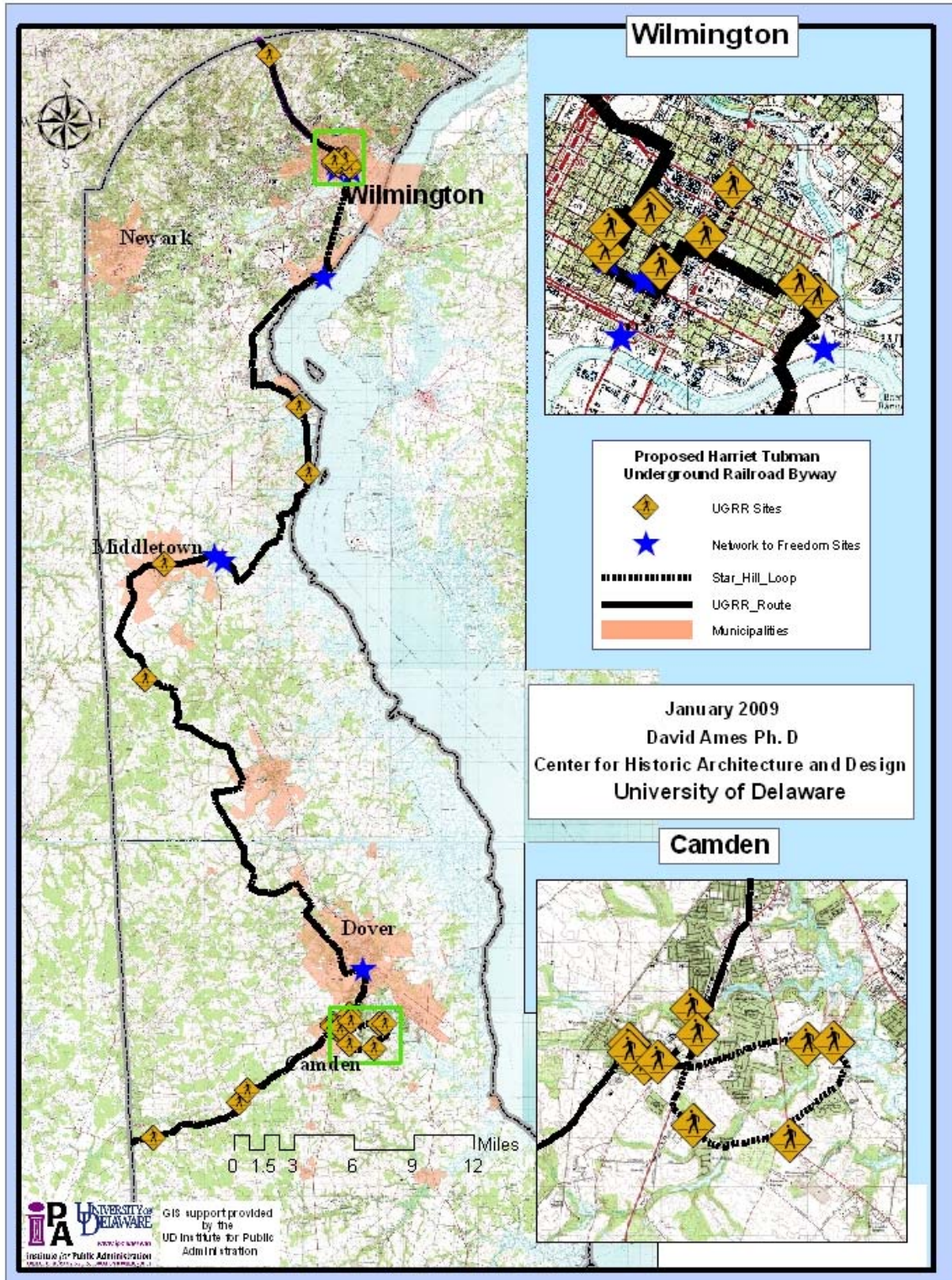


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Many people have contributed to the completion of this nomination. The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware is the sponsor of this nomination and we would like to acknowledge several members of the coalition. In particular, the Coalition appointed a Byway Advisory Committee which reviewed and commented on the development of the nomination along the way. Officers of the Board of Directors of the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware played an important role in garnering grass-roots support for the nomination.

Of the current board members, we would like to recognize Kenyon Camper (president), Teresa Haman (secretary), Margaret Alexander, Helene Altevogt, Kay Wood Bailey, Patricia Lewis, and Lucreatia Wilson.

Of the former board members, we would like to thank Reverend Lawrence Livingston (president), Bradley Skelcher, Joan Hoge, Donald Blakey, and Matthew Simon.

Appointed by the Board, the Byway Advisory Committee, which met monthly with the University of Delaware team, was extremely helpful. It included Peter Dalleo, Christopher Densmore, Reverend Thomas Holsey, Robin Krawitz, Patricia Lewis, Debra Martin, Flavia Rutkosky, Charles Vann, Sr., Floyd Wells, and John Creighton.

A special thanks goes to Kate Clifford Larson, historian and biographer of Harriett Tubman, who was always willing to provide helpful advice via email.

Finally, the nomination could not have been completed without support from key administrators in government agencies. These include Maria Andaya, Coordinator of the Scenic and Historic Highway Program at the Delaware Department of Transportation and from the City of Wilmington, Mayor James M. Baker; Peter D. Besecker, Director, Department of Planning; Robert Johnson, Senior Accountant; Department of Finance and Debra Martin Historic Preservation Planner, Department of Planning.

INTRODUCTION

This is a nomination of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway to the Scenic and Historic Highway Program of the Delaware Department of Transportation (Figure 1). The goal of this scenic and historic highway is to provide the traveler with an alternative travel route through the state in a generally south to north orientation that provides opportunities for experiencing Delaware's Underground Railroad history by guiding visitors to locations where this history happened. The byway is named to honor the most famous of Underground Railroad conductors, Harriet Tubman, more famous now than the day she died in 1913. Her legendary struggle against remarkable obstacles to achieve freedom for herself, her family, and others, has inspired generations of Americans of all races and all backgrounds.¹ Surveys have revealed that US high school students view Harriet Tubman as one of the five most important American historical actors—a remarkable testament to Tubman's enduring legacy as a liberator, civil rights activist, and humanitarian. Today her iconic status has spread around the globe, becoming an international symbol of the struggle for freedom, equality, justice, and self determination. Tubman guided freedom seekers through Delaware on many of her daring trips from Maryland. Her journeys north, and those of many others, were helped by a well organized Underground Railroad network in Delaware, of which Camden and Wilmington were focal points. She worked with Thomas Garrett, a white abolitionist Quaker from Wilmington, who was a leader of the Underground Railroad in Delaware, purportedly helping more than 2,700 freedom seekers travel through the state.²

It is intended that the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway will be part of a larger multi-state Underground Railroad Byway beginning in Maryland and continuing northward through Delaware into Pennsylvania and New York. The Byway begins in Dorchester County, Maryland, Tubman's place of enslavement, and then moves through Caroline County, coming to the Delaware State line at Sandtown from where it continues east to Camden and Dover and then northeast to Middletown and Odessa and finally swings north to Wilmington. From there it goes north along Kennett Pike into Pennsylvania.³ The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware is the sponsor of this nomination. The Coalition has been assisted in its preparation by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design at the University of Delaware.

In Delaware, a designated Scenic and Historic Highway “is a transportation route that is adjacent to or travels through an area that has particular intrinsic scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational or archeological qualities. It is a road corridor that offers an alternative route to our major highways, while telling a story about Delaware's heritage, recreational activities, or beauty.”⁴ To be designated a Scenic and Historic Highway, a road must exhibit at least one

¹ Knowing the race of participants is critical in telling the story of the Underground Railroad. In this nomination the race of individuals is noted the first time an individual is mentioned if it is not apparent from the context. In doing so we attempt to negotiate the fine line between being repetitive for the reader while presenting known information about the race of individuals. Those whose race is well known like Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglass including those unrelated to the Underground Railroad such as William Penn were not identified in this manner. The reason for enacting such a policy is the desire to improve the scholarly discourse on the Underground Railroad, leaving behind the past bias of Underground Railroad scholarship that has downplayed the role of freedom seekers and free African Americans. By identifying the race of all of the individuals in the nomination, it is hoped that such biases can be avoided, or at least lessened.

² James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Jefferson, MO: McFarland & Company, 2005), 18.

³ Although the proposed route travels through New Castle and Kent Counties, Sussex County also played an important role in the Underground Railroad. However, less is known about Sussex than about New Castle and Kent. For that reason, additional research is being conducted on the Underground Railroad in Sussex.

⁴ Delaware Department of Transportation, *Delaware Scenic and Historic Highways Program Guide*, November 10, 2001.

outstanding intrinsic quality. The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is being nominated on the basis of its historic intrinsic qualities.

Despite its name, the Underground Railroad was not actually a railroad nor was it underground—it was a network of people who assisted fugitive enslaved people in their escape to freedom in the North. Slaves had been escaping from bondage since they were first forced to come to the North American British Colonies in the 1600s. What came to be called the “Underground Railroad” after 1830 was “perhaps the most dramatic protest action against slavery in United States history.”⁵ It reached its peak between 1840 and 1860, in the two decades before the Civil War. Between 1810 and 1850, it is estimated that 100,000 people escaped slavery through the Underground Railroad.

Originating with the initiative of the enslaved, the Underground Railroad was a clandestine transportation network of a series of hiding places connected by secret routes including trails, roads, and streams and rivers. Historians Kate Clifford Larson and Robin Bodo have defined it as “an evolving system and network of real people, places, and methods throughout the Early Republic and antebellum periods, which often facilitated and encouraged attempts by enslaved African Americans to escape their bondage.” Further, it was both “a movement rooted in the evolving political, religious, moral and personal ideologies of freedom,” and “a real set of paths to freedom, where individuals and groups of people, both black and white, helped enslaved people find their way to freedom.”⁶

The exact origin of the term “Underground Railroad” is not known. Legend suggests that it may have been coined by a frustrated master from Kentucky who concluded that a slave he could not find must have “gone off on an underground road.”⁷ What is known is that the term evolved shortly after steam railroads had been introduced in the 1830s, and railroad terminology made useful metaphors for this clandestine activity. “Underground” was both a fitting term for this secret operation and an allusion to ways in which the network could conceal freedom seekers, while “Railroad” was useful to describe how the system worked. In their coded communications, agents often referred to fugitive slaves as “passengers,” and the different parts of the network had special names as well. Those who guided freedom seekers along the way were “conductors,” the people who provided their homes as safe houses were called “station masters.” Although this terminology was by no means standardized, it is a useful organizing metaphor and thus appears throughout the nomination.

The goal of this historic byway is to provide the traveler with a travel route through the state that provides opportunities to experience Delaware’s Underground Railroad history. Because the Underground Railroad was designed to be secret and thus left little trace on the landscape, it presents a special challenge to development as a Scenic and Historic Highway. Rather than highlighting only the movements of one specific individual or group, the route connects a trail of documented locations related to the Underground Railroad in the northern half of the state. Delaware’s position as a slaveholding border state abutting the northern states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey made it a veritable highway for escaping slaves. Some of the most famous escapes, including those of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, passed through the state, and Delawareans who provided aid to freedom seekers included both whites, such as Thomas Garrett and John Hunn, and free blacks, such as Samuel D. Burris and William Brinkley. Heroic stories of freedom seekers and those who assisted them are interpreted in a number of museums along the route. All of these sites are connected by roads that were chosen as much as possible for their continuing rural or otherwise historic character.

⁵ National Park Service, “Taking the Freedom Trail, The Underground Railroad: Special Resource Study,” available from <http://www.nps.gov/undergroundrr/ugsum.htm>, 1. Internet.

⁶ Larson, Kate Clifford and Robin Bodo. *The Underground Railroad: A Research Context, Draft 5*. Manuscript, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, 2007, 3.

⁷ Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America’s First Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Amistad, 2005), 237.

In addition to content specifically related to the Underground Railroad, the route's narrative includes important aspects of African American history in Delaware, especially related to areas of known African American settlement before the Civil War. Accounts from conductors such as Harriet Tubman and other scholarship on the Underground Railroad support the idea that settlements of free blacks were a likely source of aid for those fleeing enslavement. A study by Professor Bradley Skelcher in 1995 identified African American settlements in the Upper Peninsula geographic zone, generally from Kent County to the foothills of the Delaware piedmont. Those settlements along the route have been identified as sites whose role in the Underground Railroad is not yet fully understood. In addition to these sites of settlement, the route also passes several cemeteries that are the last resting places of African American veterans of the Civil War, yet another important chapter of history in the state.

Development, enhancement, and protection of the traveler's experience of the byway will be addressed in the corridor management phase of this project. Some locations no longer match their appearance during the antebellum period but have well-documented stories, while other areas retain their historic and physical character currently but may not continue to do so. In this period of rapid development of Delaware's rural landscape, there will be sections of the route that cannot be protected from change. Strategies to enhance the visitor's experience will include signage programs, partnerships with land use regulators to facilitate the protection of important properties, and interpretive materials that will be essential to understanding the history of the Underground Railroad along the route.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY AND ITS LAND USE CONTEXT

The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware is a continuation of the Maryland Tubman Historic Byway. As such, it starts at the border with Maryland near Sandtown and follows Delaware State Route (SR) 10 northeast to Camden and Dover. Between Camden and Dover there is an optional Star Hill/Hunn loop though historically free black communities. From Dover, the Tubman Byway continues north to Middletown and then swings east to Odessa. From Odessa, the Byway follows the Delaware Bay northward along State Route 9 though the town of New Castle and on to Wilmington. Route 9 from Odessa to New Castle.

In Wilmington the route threads among 13 sites in the city telling the story of the Underground Railroad. Here, in small-scale historic Wilmington, the traveler has the opportunity to explore this cluster of sites on foot. From Wilmington, the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway follows Kennett Pike north into Pennsylvania. Kennett Pike is also one segment of the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway.

The route generally follows that of Harriet Tubman, who in 1897 gave an interview to the white historian Wilbur Siebert in which she explained her role in helping many enslaved people in their escape. Tubman retraced her route from Maryland through Delaware, and she mentioned Sandtown, Willow Grove, Camden, Dover, Blackbird, New Castle, and Wilmington as sites in Delaware where she found safe harbor. The proposed route also links a series of sites mentioned in well-documented stories of escapes through Delaware. One of these was the story of the Samuel Hawkins family, who escaped from Queen Anne's County, Maryland, in 1845 and were captured in Middletown at the farm of John Hunn, brought to jail in New Castle, and finally released with the help of Thomas Garrett, a Wilmington Quaker and important figure in the Delaware Underground Railroad network. Many references to the Hawkins family and to Thomas Garrett appear throughout the route. In creating the route, these sites formed the basis of the historic byway, and other sites were included as they were discovered.

The route of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is divided into five segments based on the story each tells about the Underground Railroad as it proceeded through Delaware.

- Segment 1: The Gauntlet, from Sandtown to Camden, is called “The Gauntlet” because it was the most dangerous part of the journey for freedom seekers due to local pro-slavery sentiments and roving slave hunters. In addition, the flat, open agricultural fields in this segment were difficult to cross undetected except at night. This segment includes an optional loop that passes through Dover. This segment begins at the Maryland-Delaware border, following State Route 10, through Sandtown, Petersburg, and into Camden. Once in Camden the traveler follows Camden-Wyoming Avenue, around the loop, and takes State Route 13 into Dover.
- Segment 2: Making Choices, from Dover to Odessa, is called “Making Choices” because at this point freedom seekers had the choice of continuing north by land and on to Wilmington or traveling east some seven miles to the Delaware River and finding a boat to New Jersey. This segment takes the traveler through Dover, via State Street, to State Route 15, through Middletown, and Odessa, linking to State Route 299.
- Segment 3: The Bold Move from Odessa to Wilmington, is called “The Bold Move” because freedom seekers could choose one of several bold choices, including a straight shot to Wilmington along the King’s Highway or a journey over to the coast, where it might be possible to find passage north in the port cities of Port Penn, Delaware City, or New Castle. Here the segment follows the Scenic and Historic Byway, State Route 9, from Odessa, through Delaware City, to New Castle, and then to Wilmington.
- Segment 4: Gateway to Freedom Wilmington itself, is called “The Gateway to Freedom” because it was from here that Delaware’s most famous “station master,” Thomas Garrett, would arrange travel to Philadelphia and elsewhere in Pennsylvania. This segment takes the traveler throughout the city of Wilmington, and connects to State Route 52, or Kennett Pike, which is part of the Brandywine Scenic and Historic Byway.
- Segment 5: On to Pennsylvania, from Wilmington to the Pennsylvania border just north of Centreville, is called “On to Pennsylvania.” The last segment follows State Route 52/Kennett Pike, to the Pennsylvania border, concluding the trip.

The route of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway can be thought of as the centerline of a broad corridor through which freedom seekers traveled north. It is known that freedom seekers traveled through Delaware in many ways to reach the North, but it is not easy to discover exactly how they went. A conductor or individual could use numerous secret routes depending on where search parties and slave catchers were; a guide might also change paths at the last minute to avoid danger. With a flat, easily traversed, partially forested landscape latticed with many roads and streams, Delaware offered many avenues of escape. Most escapes are undocumented, and many stories cannot be verified. Freedom seekers coming from Maryland would cross into Delaware along the state line from around Laurel, in Sussex County, north to above Sandtown, in Kent County. From these entry points they would converge upon Camden.

The character of the landscape and land uses along the proposed route is an important aspect of the traveler’s experience. A goal of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is to give today’s traveler a sense of the experience of freedom seekers trying to find their way north through an unfamiliar Delaware landscape fraught with risks. Part of recreating that experience involved conducting a Historic Intrinsic Quality Survey which identifies features associated with the Underground Railroad and stretches of the corridor where the landscape still resembles that of the period from 1840 to 1865, when the Underground Railroad was most heavily used. Another task is to identify areas that have lost their historic character or are under the threat of sprawl. This is necessary because the second phase of planning a Scenic and Historic Highway is developing a Corridor Management Plan, which is a plan for conserving and enhancing the roadway’s historic character.

QUALIFYING AS A DELAWARE SCENIC AND HISTORIC HIGHWAY

Under the Delaware Department of Transportation Program Guide, a Scenic and Historic Highway is “a transportation route which is adjacent to or travels through an area that has particular, scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational, or archeological qualities. It is a road corridor that offers an alternative travel route to our major highways, while telling a story about Delaware’s heritage, recreational activities, or beauty.”⁸

To be designated a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway, a road must exhibit at least one outstanding “intrinsic quality.” Intrinsic qualities are features considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area. In short, they are qualities that the traveler sees from the road that make the road special. The six intrinsic qualities are as follows:

- *Scenic* intrinsic qualities reflect natural or human-made beauty. Their quality is measured by how distinctive, memorable, uninterrupted, and unified they are.
- *Historic* intrinsic qualities are found in landscapes, buildings, structures, or other visual evidence of the past.
- *Natural* intrinsic qualities are ecological or natural features of an area that remain relatively undisturbed by humans.
- *Cultural* intrinsic qualities are visual evidence of unique customs and traditions of groups and can be public art, museums, libraries, and even annual festivals.
- *Archeological* intrinsic qualities are evidenced in artifacts, buildings, ruins, and trails from earlier human society such as that of some Native Americans. Although it could be an aspect of a Delaware road, this intrinsic quality is most frequently found in the American Southwest.
- *Recreational* intrinsic qualities are found where the road corridor itself is used for recreation, like jogging and biking, or provides access to recreational sites such as campgrounds, shorelines and the like.

Beyond their content, intrinsic quality features along a road must meet three tests. First, the qualities must be visible from the road. Second, they should be significant. This means that the features should be representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of the area. Third, there should be a relationship between the intrinsic qualities and the road and among the qualities along the road. Ultimately, the road should tell a story through its intrinsic qualities. The road’s story should come from the experience and sensation of moving through the landscape and seeing a progression of features and views that tell the traveler about a central theme and how it unfolds. The flight of enslaved people north from slavery to freedom is the story told through the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway.

The character and significance of intrinsic qualities along a nominated road are determined through an inventory and evaluation. This evaluation includes an assessment of the overall visual character of the road. The number and continuity of features along the road are aspects of the intrinsic qualities of a road. In other words, the Scenic and Historic Highway should contain enough features to create a story with continuity and coherence. In many cases the historic quality of a byway is closely tied to its scenic, cultural, or natural qualities.

Although these intrinsic qualities are not mutually exclusive, to be nominated as a Scenic and Historic Highway in Delaware, a road should exhibit one predominant intrinsic quality. To qualify as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway, it must be shown that the primary intrinsic quality of the road has statewide significance. To be eligible for designation as a National Scenic Byway, it must be shown that the road’s intrinsic qualities have regional or national significance. To determine national or regional significance, the National Scenic Byway Program uses a “Two

⁸ Delaware Department of Transportation, 1.

State” standard of regional significance. To meet this standard, a road must exhibit at least one intrinsic quality that is representative of a geographic area encompassing two or more states. This nomination will document that the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is part of the nationally significant corridor of the Underground Railroad that traverses Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.

The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is being nominated to the Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Program on the basis of its historic intrinsic qualities. Scenic and cultural aspects will be its secondary intrinsic qualities.

Historic intrinsic quality is defined by the National Byways Program and the Delaware Department of Transportation as follows:

Historic quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with the physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or man-made, that are of such historic significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation of the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.⁹

Although most roads are nominated based on one primary intrinsic quality, the six intrinsic qualities are not mutually exclusive and they can often work together in the same road. This will be the case along the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The route travels through areas with different intrinsic qualities, including many visually appealing sections with highly scenic qualities. Cultural intrinsic qualities are closely tied to historic ones and many of the historic intrinsic qualities reflect cultural traditions related to Delaware’s African American community. In addition, two segments of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway have already been designated Scenic and Historic Highways. State Route 9 has been named the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway primarily on the basis of its natural qualities. The Kennett Pike leg from Wilmington to Pennsylvania is one spine of the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway.

INTRINSIC QUALITY RESOURCE INVENTORY, THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE’S NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM

Delaware’s guidelines for preparing a nomination for a Scenic and Historic Highway call for an inventory and evaluation of the intrinsic qualities along a proposed route. The purpose of the inventory is to survey the intrinsic qualities and features along the road and to determine the road’s primary intrinsic quality. The inventory is followed by an evaluation of the significance of the primary intrinsic quality features that were identified in the inventory. The evaluation includes determining the national, regional, and local significance of the properties and what theme or story they tell about the road.¹⁰

The primary intrinsic quality for the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is historical. The general corridor of the road was delimited, and the specific route chosen based on a review of scholarship and preservation planning studies on the Underground Railroad

⁹ National Scenic Byways Program, *Byways Beginnings: Understanding Inventorying and Evaluating a Byway’s Intrinsic Qualities* (Washington, DC: National Scenic Byways Program, 1999), 16.

¹⁰ David L. Ames, Eric Gollanek, and Sarah Rector, *A Manual for Nominating Roads to the Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Program* (Newark, DE: Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 2006), 42.

in Delaware and the state's historical African American population in general. After the route was chosen, it was surveyed for its visual qualities, and research was undertaken to identify and evaluate the significance of sites and intrinsic quality features associated with the Underground Railroad along and in the vicinity of the proposed route.

The National Register of Historic Places was used in two ways in conducting the Intrinsic Quality Inventory. Material prepared for or related to the National Register was used to establish evaluation criteria and to find sites already identified and verified for their association with the Underground Railroad.¹¹ The nomination also relies heavily on a draft historic context of the Underground Railroad in Delaware, commissioned by the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware with funds from the National Park Service and the City of Wilmington.¹²

Criteria for evaluating sites associated with the Underground Railroad have been established by the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.¹³ The Network to Freedom was established in 1998 by Congress to tell the story of the resistance against the institution of slavery in the United States through escape and flight. The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is an important chapter in that story. By defining the Underground Railroad as resistance to enslavement, the Network to Freedom Program focuses attention on the freedom seekers themselves. Common associations with the Underground Railroad include places of enslavement from which escapes occurred, water or overland routes, natural areas such as swamps or caves that were used as hiding places, churches with congregations active in the Underground Railroad (even if they were not used as safe houses), the location of legal challenges to the Fugitive Slave Acts, maroon communities, destination settlements and even locations where the kidnapping of freedom seekers occurred. The definition is intended to be fluid to incorporate and encourage new and original investigations, interpretations, and commemorative activities around the country.

The types of sites or elements eligible for inclusion on the Network to Freedom are the same as on the National Register of Historic Places, namely buildings, objects, districts (neighborhoods), landscapes or natural features, or archeological sites. To be nominated to the Network any element must have an association to the Underground Railroad that has been verified using professional methods of historical research, documentation, and interpretation.

Delaware has nine sites on the Underground Network to Freedom, eight of which form the core of the historic intrinsic quality sites on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware.¹⁴ They are, from south to north:

¹¹ To access this, or any other National Register nominations in Delaware, for an individual property or historic district, please use the following link: <http://chris.delaware.gov/CHRIS/faces/Login.jsp>. (Best viewed in Internet Explorer) Once at the website, select either the public users' option by clicking on the C.H.R.I.S. button, or if you have an account sign in. Next, when prompted enter the property name or the parcel ID number, i.e. "Quaker Hill," and hit go. The next step is to click on the linkable CRS number. Make sure to disable any pop-up blockers.

¹² Larson, Kate Clifford and Robin Bodo. *The Underground Railroad: A Research Context, Draft 5*. Manuscript, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, 2007.

¹³ *National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application (OMB #1024-0232) Instructions*, National Park Service, 2008.

¹⁴ National Park Service, "Network to Freedom Database," available from http://home.nps.gov/ugrr/TEMPLATE/FrontEnd/network_d.cfm; Internet; The ninth site is the Dickinson Plantation in Kent County which was the boyhood home of John Dickinson.

1. **Delaware State House, Dover:** Site of the trial of Samuel D. Burris for assisting the escape of enslaved people.
2. **Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, Odessa:** Whether or not local tradition is correct that the meetinghouse was a safe house along the Underground Railroad, the property is associated with the Underground Railroad through attending members who were ardently anti-slavery and acted on those beliefs.
3. **Corbit-Sharp House, Odessa:** A **National Historic Landmark** and listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**, this home of a noted Underground Railroad sympathizer was the site of successfully hiding a freedom seeker named Sam in a small eave closet; the searching sheriff thought the closet was too small to hide a man, according to an account by Mary Corbit Warner.
4. **New Castle Court House:** One of the oldest surviving courthouses in the United States and a **National Historic Landmark**, this building is associated with the Underground Railroad as the site where abolitionist and Underground Railroad station master Thomas Garrett aided the escape of a runaway enslaved family and, with fellow Underground Railroad station master John Hunn was subsequently tried and convicted in Federal court for violating the Fugitive Slave Acts.
5. **The Rocks-Fort Christina State Park, Wilmington:** A rock outcropping along the Christina River in Wilmington was a place where Captain Alfred Fountain landed fugitive slaves according to a letter from Thomas Garrett, a prominent Underground Railroad station master, to William Still.
6. **Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and Market Street Bridge, Wilmington:** Established to honor Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garrett and to interpret the city's rich Underground Railroad legacy as a major stop on the escape route north for freedom seekers fleeing the eastern shore of Maryland and points further south.
7. **Thomas Garrett Home Site, Wilmington:** Home of Thomas Garrett who fearlessly operated in a slave state, helped some 2,700 refugees gain their freedom, operated a network of African Americans, Quakers and others who worked on the Underground Railroad in Delaware, provided safe haven for conductors such as Harriett Tubman and provided links to the north including to William Still in Philadelphia.
8. **Wilmington Friends Meeting House and Cemetery, Wilmington:** Built in 1815 as the Wilmington center for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Wilmington Friends Meeting House is associated with the well-documented contributions of the Friends to the Underground Railroad: abolitionist members assisted freedom seekers through the Delaware Abolition Committee; the well-known Underground Railroad station master Thomas Garrett worshipped and was buried there; and member Isaac Flint purchased the freedom of Samuel D. Burris after he was convicted of assisting a freedom seeker in Kent County.

As will be explained below, of the 42 Intrinsic Quality Sites along the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, 18 are directly associated with the Underground Railroad.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD AS A SCENIC AND HISTORIC HIGHWAY

Scenic and historic highways are about the traveler's experience—what features can be seen and understood from the road and what stories they tell. A good example is the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway on SR 9 which in Delaware runs north to New Castle. Starting above the

St. Jones River east of Dover, it runs north along the Delaware River. The traveler sees the river in the background beyond natural landscapes of marshes and wetlands. In the summer, travelers must take care crossing the many small bridges that are often crowded with people fishing. Dramatic vistas open from place to place, and the historic towns along the route, with architecture dating from the 1700s, tell stories of the early settlement and maritime history of the coast.

Nominating the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway as a Scenic and Historic Highway presents a different challenge. On the one hand, there is no question that the story of the Underground Railroad, along which thousands of enslaved people fled to freedom in the North, is a very significant one in American history and in African American history. There is no question that the Underground Railroad in Delaware played a vital role in the national Underground Railroad story. More than 5,000 freedom seekers may have passed through the state. Thomas Garrett alone, the well-known Quaker station master in Wilmington, kept track of the nearly 2,700 persons that he helped over three decades; Harriet Tubman, called the “Moses of her people,” is known to have made some thirteen trips through Delaware bringing enslaved people from Maryland; and the meticulous records of African American William Still in Philadelphia, who received hundreds of freedom seekers sent by Garrett and others, are all evidence of the Underground Railroad.

But the key to its success, and the reason it was called “underground,” was because it was secret. As protection against discovery of the overall network, very few people involved in the Underground Railroad knew more than how it worked locally. Most escaping freedom seekers, as well as some Underground Railroad agents, could not read or write, and thus left few written records even after the Civil War as remembrances. In short, the Underground Railroad left little evidence on the land in buildings or other features of how and where it existed, much less details about how it worked.

At the same time, while little was known about how the Underground Railroad actually functioned, the daring and adventures of escape became the stuff of rumor, legend, and fiction, especially after 1840. Every basement or barn along the way could have been a hiding place and was frequently claimed by locals to have been so. Once a story becomes part of local oral history, it becomes nearly impossible to refute or confirm if only because it becomes a point of local pride and identity. However, histories about the Underground Railroad are places to begin research— a marker that the community was involved in some way. Research can then confirm or dispute the potential authenticity of the story.

Other factors that have obscured an accurate understanding of the Underground Railroad were the assumptions and methods used in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century histories. Many of these Underground Railroad histories were based on oral histories or interviews of participants—both freedom seekers who escaped and those who helped them. However, the validity of much of this testimony has been found to be questionable because it was not properly verified or because of what is now seen as a bias of early historians in underestimating the role blacks played in the working of the Underground Railroad. In confirming evidence, today’s historians, like journalists, require verification of an event by at least two independent sources. Many early histories based on oral histories did not, or could not, meet this test because there were no other witnesses or written records, such as letters, or verification was not considered necessary. Thus, important parts of the history of the Underground Railroad remain unverified. Contemporary historians, however, are making great efforts to create a body of knowledge supported by strong evidence.

Since the early histories of the Underground Railroad were written, scholars of African American history have shifted, according to Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, from “an approach focused heavily on the physical and institutional structure of black communities and the degree to which whites regulated and controlled black life [to one] emphasizing an agency model demonstrating the extent to which African Americans in slavery and freedom shaped and

controlled their own destinies.”¹⁵ Early histories of the Underground Railroad by white historians saw whites in charge as station masters and conductors assisting dependent black freedom seekers. Consequently, the early historians of the Underground Railroad were primarily white, and they interviewed white participants. Recent research has found blacks to have been active participants in the operation of the Underground Railroad, not merely as “passengers.” This is particularly true in Delaware with its large population of free blacks.

Inventorying Historic Intrinsic Qualities for the Underground Railroad

To meet the challenge presented by the Underground Railroad as a topic for a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway designation, the Intrinsic Quality Inventory focused more heavily on background research than might be needed for a scenic byway on another topic. The researchers compiled existing information on known sites, people and events uncovered and documented in existing histories and standard references on the subject. Beginning with the starting point where the Maryland section of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway enters the State of Delaware, the route follows a general pathway identified by Harriet Tubman in an interview with historian Wilbur Siebert in 1893. The information Tubman left with Siebert was skeletal in nature, describing towns along her route and some individuals she worked with along the way. Information from already compiled information was collected on the individuals and places that Tubman mentioned in her interview.

Other freedom seekers used a similar route, including the well documented experience of Emeline and Samuel Hawkins and their family, whose stories are well documented in the interpretation of the New Castle Court House Courtroom where the evidence was gathered to support the prosecution of Thomas Garrett for assisting the Hawkins family on their journey to Pennsylvania. William Still’s *Underground Railroad* was also reviewed for information related to Underground Railroad events that happened along this general corridor. The history compiled was then connected with places in Delaware where the history happened. A visual survey was then undertaken to identify what potentially remains from the historic period. Information was compiled for places and people identified and these historic profiles can be found in Appendix 2. It is expected for more documentation to surface through continuing research on this subject. New information will be integrated into the interpretive materials through a process determined in the Corridor Management Plan for this Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway.

INTERPRETIVE HISTORIC THEMES OF THE PROPOSED HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

The historic context that establishes an interpretive framework for the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is influenced by the major historic themes and subthemes of Larson and Bodo’s *The Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Research Context*.

Slavery as an Inhumane Institution and the Situation in Delaware

Central to the historic context of the Underground Railroad is that slavery was an inhumane institution that denied enslaved black people access to freedom, justice, equality and self-determination.¹⁶ Required to labor a lifetime, those locked into chattel slavery were denied legal rights to their own bodies, the fruits of their own labor, and to family and social relationships. Delaware was a slave state and its slaves suffered the same inhumane conditions as those elsewhere. As Bordewich observes, “At the end of the eighteenth century, slaves...lived under a

¹⁵ Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 2.

¹⁶ Larson and Bodo, 108.

regime in which fear was woven into the fabric of life, the threat of savage punishment was horrifyingly explicit, and the obstacles to general revolution were insurmountable.”¹⁷

Manumission, the legal process by which blacks became free, was a contract specifying the conditions of freedom between the owner and slave. In Delaware, manumission of an enslaved person by the owner was voluntary, unlike in the Northern states, where legislators passed laws requiring phased manumission as a way of ending slavery. Many manumission agreements were deferred, meaning that the enslaved person was not free until he or she had completed a term of indentured service, usually until the age of twenty-one for females and twenty-five for males, but sometimes even longer periods were required.¹⁸ These individuals hovered between freedom and slavery, often giving the best years of their lives to their enslavers.

Slavery in Delaware.¹⁹ The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is inextricably linked to the history of the institution of slavery in Delaware. Delaware was a slave state through the Civil War and one of only two states, the other being Kentucky, in which slavery was only legally abolished by the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, as the other border states had passed emancipation laws of their own by this time. Delaware initially rejected the amendment in 1865, only ratifying it in 1901.²⁰ The history of slavery in Delaware was fraught with conflict as abolitionist Quakers and Methodists fought long and hard from the colonial era to the Civil War against steadfast pro-slavery interests to end slavery. Delaware’s history as a slave state is paradoxical, developing differently from the states neighboring it, both the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and the southern states of Maryland and Virginia. Knowing this paradoxical history is essential to understanding Delaware’s role in the Underground Railroad.

Slavery was introduced in Delaware in 1639 by the Swedes, who brought the first African slave, Anthony, to the New Sweden colony in what is now north east Delaware, though it is unclear if he later became a free man or what exactly his status was. From that almost accidental beginning, the institution took root in a state that held onto it far beyond the point of its economic viability. From the beginning, Delaware was influenced by powerful conflicting cultural influences from the South and the North. A strong Quaker influence increasingly opposed to slavery came from Pennsylvania to the north at the same time that a planter culture supporting slavery came from Maryland to the west and south. Indeed, much of Sussex County, Delaware was a part of Maryland until the boundary disputes between Maryland and Pennsylvania were settled in 1769. These contending cultures would create Delaware as a state with a regional division between north and south, each with separate values.

During the early colonial period, the three counties of Delaware were under the governance of William Penn, who wanted the access to the Atlantic Ocean that the counties provided. Meanwhile, Penn’s claim to much of southwestern Delaware was disputed by Cecil Calvert, first proprietor of the Maryland colony, who had claimed the land first and felt that the area was part of his land grant rather than Penn’s. The three lower counties that became Delaware were permitted by Penn to set up their own governments in 1704, but the Maryland dispute was not settled until 1769 when the land that is now western Sussex County was put under county ownership. Then in 1776 Delaware declared its independence first from Pennsylvania and then from England. Because of these early disputes, Delaware retained

¹⁷ Bordewich, 25.

¹⁸ Patience Essah, *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 92.

¹⁹ This section was prepared using the following sources: Patience Essah, *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996); William H. Williams, “An Overview of Slavery in Southern Delaware;” *Ross Mansion Quarter, Seaford, Sussex County, Delaware, Historic Structure Report*, David L. Ames et al. (University of Delaware, July 1992).

²⁰ Essah, 186.

cultural influences from both the Quaker and abolitionist Pennsylvania and the Maryland plantation culture. This colonial history was key to the state's ongoing debate over the institution of slavery.

When slavery peaked in Delaware in 1790, 15 percent of the total population or 8887 African Americans were enslaved. With six percent of the total population free, Delaware had the highest proportion of free blacks among the slave states. Throughout the period of slavery, roughly half of Delaware's enslaved people lived in Sussex County, with fewer numbers in New Castle and Kent counties. After 1790, the number of enslaved people in Delaware steadily declined, largely due to manumissions for moral or economic reasons, and the number of free blacks increased each year.

In 1790, Delaware's enslaved blacks were almost evenly divided between New Castle and Kent counties in the north and Sussex County in the south. Sussex County had 4,025 enslaved blacks, New Castle County had 2,562, and Kent County had 2,300. In Sussex County, 85 percent of the black population was enslaved, accounting for 45 percent of Delaware's 8887 enslaved blacks. Although Kent County had a slightly larger black population than did Sussex County at 4,780 persons, more than half— or 53 percent—were free at this early date. While New Castle County had the smallest African American population at 3,201, it also had the high proportion of enslaved African Americans in 1790 with 80 percent or 2,562 persons enslaved.

By 1830, the enslaved population in Delaware had declined by 37 percent since 1790. The number of enslaved people in Kent and New Castle Counties had dropped to 588 from 2300 and 786 from 2562 people, respectively, since 1790. In Sussex County, on the other hand, there remained 1918 enslaved African Americans and accounted for 58 percent of the total number of enslaved African Americans in Delaware. However, by 1860, the total number of enslaved African American had dropped to 1,798 persons or 1 percent of the total population in Delaware. The historic pattern of the majority of enslaved people being concentrated in Sussex County persisted with 75 percent of the enslaved African Americans residing in Sussex County with 14 percent in Kent County and 11percent in New Castle County.

In the nineteenth century, the average slave unit on a Delaware farm consisted of three to six slaves who acted as laborers and house servants and lived in available spaces in the homes of their enslavers or in outbuildings on the farm. Although larger populations of enslaved people who lived in designated slave quarters are known, they were the exception rather than the rule. Across much of the antebellum era, Delaware's primary crops were wheat, corn, and other grains, which did not require or support the vast number of field hands needed for tobacco or cotton cultivation. Because of the small populations on individual farms, many enslaved people had to search elsewhere for marriage partners, which contributed to the fracturing of African American families. The constant contact with whites while living in these small units also led to the loss of African roots and the adoption of white customs, including naming and religion. Such small units were a unique aspect of Delaware slavery.

The declining population of enslaved people and the rising population of free blacks may have been influenced by several laws passed in the state of Delaware designed to place limits on slavery. Most significantly, in 1787, 1789, and 1797, the Delaware state legislature passed several laws that effectively prohibited the importation or exportation of slaves in the state. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state had abolished the slave trade completely. This ensured that no new enslaved people could enter the state legally, and none living in the state could be legally sold into more profitable markets in the Deep South. Despite the fact that some new laws improved conditions for slaves, others restricted the lives of free blacks, and slavery was never abolished. During the antebellum era, bills that would abolish slavery were defeated twice in the legislature, each time by only one vote. Legislative action during the period of slavery shows how firmly the state was divided over the issue.

Even against the pressure of strong abolitionist voices and the quiet groundswell of voluntary manumission, slavery persisted in Delaware. The stalemate that took place in a Delaware almost evenly divided between antislavery and pro-slavery forces was a microcosm of the grave divisions between the antislavery North and pro-slavery South on the national stage. Key to the standoff in Delaware was the question of giving blacks the right to vote, which would surely follow steps toward emancipation on moral grounds. At issue was the delicate balance between southern Democrats and more northern Republicans in the state, which usually tipped slightly in favor of the Democrats. Delaware Democrats, primarily from Sussex County, knew that it was unlikely that new black voters would side with the party of their former enslavers, so they blocked any resolution abolishing slavery more on political grounds than economic ones. This unique situation prefigured the problems that would occur throughout the Reconstruction era and into the twentieth century with regard to African American civil rights.

Free Blacks in Delaware. From 1790 to 1810, the free black population in Delaware exploded from 3899 to 13,136, an increase of 237 percent, which increased the percentage of free blacks in the overall African American population from 30 to 76 percent. (Statistic on the free black population may include African American Indians.) Furthermore in Kent County, the free black population rose to 89 percent of the total black population, in New Castle County to 79 percent, and even in Sussex County to 60 percent. By 1830, 15,855 persons or 83 percent of the state's African American population were free. By 1860, 92 percent of the African American population was free. Overall, from 1790 to 1860, the number of African Americans (free and enslaved) in the state grew from 12,789 to 21,627 persons.

Wilmington experienced the most spectacular growth in free blacks. Not only were enslaved people being freed there, but the city quickly became a magnet for free black migrants from rural Delaware and the South. From 1800 to 1830, the percentage of blacks in the city who were free climbed to 79 percent. By 1860, only four enslaved persons remained in the city.

Although the state had a large free black population, life was not fair or easy for those African Americans living in the state. Many whites saw them as a "threat to their racialized conceptions of civil society,"²¹ and the legislature moved to deny them basic rights. To counter the abolition of the slave trade and new laws liberalizing private manumission in 1787, many laws were passed in 1797 that severely limited the freedoms of free blacks living in the state, affecting such areas as the right to vote, marriage, trade between free and enslaved people, education, mixed-race unions, and punishment for aiding freedom seekers in their escape to Northern soil. Harsh corporal punishments awaited those who violated the law and included such penalties as thirty-nine lashes followed by the removal of an ear.²² The law excluded free blacks from almost all rights other than the right to own property and to bring lawsuits in court. They could not hold elective office or testify against whites in court. In 1837, William Yates, a free African American man sent by the American Anti-Slavery Society to investigate the status of blacks in Delaware, reported that Delaware's free people of color were only "nominally free...because of the wretched system of laws which have been enacted in regard to them...designed to degrade, to crush, and to render them ignorant and powerless."²³ Because free blacks in Delaware failed to find the freedom they defined as the antithesis of slavery, they were free in name only and almost as equally wanting of full freedom as the enslaved people in their state. As one African American man put it, they were "free men yet we are guilty of [black] skin."²⁴

No blacks were really free, because free blacks and enslaved people alike lived under the constant threat of being kidnapped and sold into slavery in the Deep South. A voracious demand for slaves gripped plantation owners in the Southern cotton-producing states because

²¹ Essah, 84.

²² Larson and Bodo, 49.

²³ William H. Williams, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware, 1639–1865*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resource, Inc., 1996), 189.

²⁴ Essah, 110.

the cotton boom in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana took off at the same time that the international slave trade was outlawed in 1808, cutting off slave imports. This meant that the demand for slaves could only be met within the United States. Kidnapping was a lucrative business, and Delaware blacks were vulnerable. Most kidnappers preferred to target free blacks because owners would go to great lengths to recover their stolen chattels, but some enslaved people were kidnapped as well. Some slaveholders in Delaware even arranged for their surplus slaves to be “kidnapped” for a fee to work around the prohibition against selling slaves out of the state. Two of the most notorious white kidnappers in Delaware history were Patty Cannon and her son-in-law, Joe Johnson, who ran a gang of outlaws trained to snatch unsuspecting blacks. Operating along the Delaware-Maryland line in Sussex County, they “routinely abducted free blacks, along with some slaves, and sold them into bondage to southern traders who...shipped them to Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.”²⁵ Her kidnapping ring has been called the “Reverse Underground Railroad” by some recent scholars. Although they were the most famous kidnappers, they were not the only ones, and many others engaged in this cruel but profitable scheme.

All of these elements contributed to the evolution of the Underground Railroad in Delaware. Because Delaware was a slave state, passage through the state was highly dangerous for freedom seekers, with the threat of capture and re-enslavement coming from both the local authorities and the roving bands of outlaws who profited from kidnapping schemes. Delaware was the last step before free soil, and thus the pressure from legal sources was intense. Because Delaware was home to enslaved people, it was also the point of origin of many escapes by Delaware’s freedom seekers. Enslaved people from all three counties made good on opportunities to escape. The large population of free African Americans, a higher percentage of the total black population than any other slave state, and the large number of abolitionist Quakers in the state worked to facilitate escapes, serving as guides and providing safe harbor for those fleeing for freedom. Harsh laws may have threatened those who chose to help, but these individuals soldiered on, fighting for what they believed.

Delaware’s odd status as a nearly free state made it both a haven and a danger for freedom seekers traveling through its borders. Like-minded individuals were available in many places, but the threat of pro-slavery forces loomed around every corner. For this reason, the work of Underground Railroad operators is particularly noteworthy. Despite unfair policies regarding the institution of slavery and the rights of African Americans, these crusaders worked tirelessly to bring down slavery in Delaware and in the United States.

The Regional and National Context of Slavery. When viewing the institution of slavery nationally, it becomes apparent just how unique Delaware’s situation was. By the early nineteenth century, most states had made a decision to abolish or retain slavery based partly on economics and partly on ethics. Northern states found that the institution was not economically viable and thus passed gradual abolition laws while many Southern states came to rely on cash crops such as cotton and tobacco that needed large workforces of unpaid labor to sustain them. Other border states, such as Maryland, experienced a decline in the number of enslaved people and a growth in voluntary manumissions, but no other slave state lost enslaved people and gained free blacks at the exponential rate experienced in Delaware due to manumissions and resistance. Rather than the rapid decline in the number of slaves with a corresponding growth of free blacks, as in Delaware, the nation experienced a growth in the number of enslaved people from fewer than 700,000 in 1790 to 3,953,760, by 1860.²⁶

A common image of American slavery before the Civil War pictures enslaved people living in groups of more than one hundred on large plantations, cultivating cotton or some other cash crop. In reality, many plantations operated on a much smaller scale. Of the 334,884

²⁵ Williams, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware*, 238.

²⁶ John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans, Seventh Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1998), 123.

slaveholders listed in the 1860 census, 294,698 or 88 percent owned fewer than 20 slaves, and of the 294,698 slaveholders, 200,000 had five slaves or fewer. In addition, that total number of slaveholders made up only a little more than 4 percent of the total white population in the Southern states of about 8 million people. The slave population, on the other hand, was more skewed toward larger holdings, with more than half living on plantations that had twenty or more slaves, and at least 25 percent held in groups of fifty or more.²⁷ Even though a relatively small percentage of the population was part of the privileged slaveholding class, these individuals held enough power and influence to have a major effect on legislative practices in their respective states, where they asked for strict regulations on enslaved and free blacks and helped to put policies in place that would eventually fuel the Civil War.

The majority of the enslaved people bound in Southern states worked as agricultural laborers on farms that produced cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar, four cash crops that had long growing seasons and required large amounts of manual labor. These crops, especially cotton, sustained the Southern economy and made the uncompensated labor provided by slaves cost-effective. The lack of a major cash crop was one factor that set Delaware apart from the rest of the South and contributed to the decline of slavery, as many Delaware farmers grew wheat and corn, crops that did not require large labor forces to till them constantly. Another concept that was foreign to Delaware life was the large plantation, a phenomenon most prevalent in the cotton-producing states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, but also present in many of the other Southern states. On these large plantations, enslaved people were often divided into groups of house servants and field hands, and those in the fields were watched over by overseers who sometimes resented the fact that they were employed by individuals wealthier than themselves. In these worlds, the plantation owner often insisted on a paternalistic control over the lives of his slaves, including what they ate, what they wore, when they worked, and who they married. As Peter Kolchin puts it, "The typical Southern slave owner knew his or her slaves by name and interacted with them on a frequent basis, not only directing their labor but also looking after their welfare and interfering in their lives."²⁸ Most slaveholders felt that it was their right to control the lives of their slaves and their duty to protect their investment in the slaves' bodies.

A slave's life was filled with long hours of backbreaking work, punctuated by the constant threat of harsh punishment, separation from loved ones by sale, and, for women, the added danger of sexual exploitation. Rewards and pleasures were few and might include one day off per week to celebrate the Sabbath, holidays at Christmas and at the end of the harvest, and occasional rewards or celebrations provided by the master. In this oppressive environment, enslaved people did what they could to build a stable home life and to glean enjoyment from the few moments of rest and relaxation that they were provided. Many took refuge in the Methodist and Baptist faiths, finding solace in the story of Moses leading his people out of slavery in Egypt and the idea that good people would be rewarded with heavenly paradise. In this way, many enslaved people did their best to bear their lot.

Not all enslaved people were willing to bear their suffering quietly, and many devised methods of resistance against their enslavers.²⁹ The most common forms of resistance came in attempts to avoid work by subterfuge or sabotage. These methods included feigning illness, breaking farm equipment, destroying crops, mistreating livestock, arson, and in some extreme cases, self-mutilation. Slaveholders often did not recognize these actions for what they were, and used them to label African Americans as lazy or foolish. Much more extreme resistance came in the form of slave insurrections, the bloodiest of which was the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831 in Virginia, in which fifty-nine whites were killed before the rebellion was quashed. These types of revolts always led to bloody reprisals and increased regulations of slave behavior; the country

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 111–112.

²⁹ Ibid., 155–160.

was overall too prosperous and too stable in this period for this method to succeed. Two other forms of resistance were more direct and often more successful. One was individual resistance against an overseer or owner by an individual or small group of individuals. This type of action was often punished harshly, but it sometimes succeeded in gaining the slave new respect from his owner, and some enslaved people found that a reputation for dangerous behavior protected them from unjust treatment. The other form of direct resistance, running away, could award the fugitive with lifelong freedom if the plan proved to be successful. In time, networks to aid fugitives in their escapes became more organized as free blacks and whites working to end slavery saw the political importance in this type of work, and the Underground Railroad was born. This type of resistance is at the heart of this nomination.

Those who chose to obtain their own freedom had some major obstacles to overcome. Slave owners did not look kindly on fugitives, and federal law was generally on the side of the owners. The first Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1793 to settle interstate conflicts over the return of fugitives to their places of origin. Before this point, many Northern states felt that they were not obligated to allow slave catchers from other states to operate within their borders, but the 1793 law made this explicit. However, many Northern jurisdictions were able to get around this law by passing "personal liberty laws" that granted fugitives the right to a jury trial or to appeal a verdict. All of these forms of resistance were stalled by the much stronger Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, part of the Compromise of 1850. This act imposed harsh penalties on anyone aiding a fugitive or refusing to aid a slave catcher and forbade fugitives from testifying on their own behalf. The act only fueled the anger of the abolitionists, bringing new converts to the cause. Even though the stakes were high, freedom seekers were willing to take the risk in finding liberty.

Abolition and the Long Effort to End Slavery

The history of the growth of abolitionist sentiment in the United States and of the movement to abolish slavery is an important part of the Underground Railroad story in Delaware. Moral and religious factors contributed to a culture that supported voluntary manumissions, which helped to erode the institution in the state. In all, three major factors are important to the understanding of abolition in Delaware. First, religious groups such as the Quakers and, for a time, the Methodists, made the end of slavery a moral imperative and influenced their members and others to free their slaves. Second, in the wake of the American Revolution, Enlightenment ideals of independence, equality, and the dignity of man led many to question the practice of holding slaves. Finally, as the two preceding factors led to an increasing trend of voluntary manumissions, communities of recently freed blacks who were very interested in working toward the end of slavery began to dot the landscape. The people affected by these factors became the backbone of the Underground Railroad.

Religious movements and manumission. Some of the earliest and most persistent resistance to slavery among whites came from the evangelical religious sects that gained a foothold in North America in the eighteenth century. These sects included the Society of Friends, also called Quakers, the Methodists, and the Baptists. Opposing slavery on moral grounds, these faiths encouraged voluntary manumission among their members, and some attempted to work toward an end to slavery through legal channels. Religious movements were thus an important part of the abolitionist movement.

Quakers had been a presence in North America since the 1650s, but migration of Quakers from Britain to Pennsylvania beginning in 1681 was an important influence on Delaware. As most of the area of the three counties of Delaware was once part of Pennsylvania, Quaker influence was strong in the area, and many Quakers settled in Delaware. Fairly early in their history, many Quakers began to feel uneasiness about slavery, realizing that it went against their belief in an Inner Light that dwells within all people. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took the first tentative steps toward an antislavery stance in 1696, when it advised members not to engage in the importation of slaves, and by 1776 this first step had evolved into sanctioning the disownment of slaveholding Quakers. From this point until the turn of the nineteenth century,

Quakers in Delaware and in the rest of the country appealed to their legislatures to enact gradual or total abolition laws and to end the slave trade. This succeeded in many Northern states, but Delaware Quakers fell short of abolition, having to content themselves with their success in bringing about the ban of importation and exportation of slaves within the state. By the early nineteenth century, Quakers in Delaware began to realize that slavery would not be ended by legal means, and many turned to the Underground Railroad as a means of resistance. Thomas Garrett, the most celebrated Quaker on Delaware's Underground Railroad, saw more than 2,700 freedom seekers on their way to freedom through his home in Wilmington. The Quakers earned their reputation as one of the most hardworking antislavery sects in the country.³⁰

Three Quaker meetinghouses on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway are considered significant Underground Railroad sites. The Camden Friends Meeting House was built in 1805 and was frequented by many prominent Delaware abolitionists during the antebellum era. It is the burial site of John Hunn, who was laid to rest there following his death in 1894. In Odessa, the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, built in 1785, was also attended by abolitionists, and it is an important marker of the community of antislavery activists who worshipped within its walls. The current Wilmington Friends Meeting House was built in 1816 on a site that was in use by Quakers beginning in 1738. Thomas Garrett attended the Wilmington Meeting, and after his death in 1871 he was buried in the adjoining graveyard.

Early in their introduction to the United States, other sects, including Methodists and Baptists, held antislavery positions that faded as it became apparent that slaveholding members would rather give up their support of the church than their slaves. These two evangelical movements won many converts across the South, but a staunch antislavery stance was rarely well received in such states as Virginia or South Carolina. Methodism took a firm hold in Delaware, where it was possible for the sect to promote a radical antislavery policy. Methodists grew rapidly in Kent County, where some of the first Methodist churches in the state were built. Because of the work of Methodists in Delaware, many were moved to free their slaves. Although the exact number of enslaved people released by Methodists is not known, the number was significant enough that the Quaker-led abolition society in Delaware acknowledged their efforts and attempted to coordinate with them.³¹

Moral influence based on religion was an essential part of the fight for total abolition. Spurred by the influence of Quakers and Methodists, Delaware slaveholders, even those who did not belong to either sect, manumitted their slaves in impressive numbers. Through voluntary manumission, Delaware was able to achieve higher percentages of free blacks in the African American population than some Northern states; New Jersey's percentage of free blacks did not pass Delaware's until the 1830 census. Many of these manumissions can be credited to Quaker or Methodist intervention. Although these sects can be credited with raising the issue of manumission, they were often unsuccessful in fulfilling the spiritual needs of African Americans because of discriminatory practices, which led many African Americans, such as Peter Spencer in 1805, to found new churches completely run by blacks.

The American Revolution and the Enlightenment. Another important ideological challenge to slavery in the United States came with the rhetoric of the American Revolution. With the concept of inalienable rights for all mankind at the core of the Declaration of Independence, many questioned whether holding an entire race in bondage was contrary to Revolutionary ideals. Enlightenment philosophy, which stressed rational thought, scientific study, and the rights of man, had a major role in shaping the rhetoric of the American Revolution, and many realized that these theories were diametrically opposed to the concept of slavery.³² This was a major factor in many

³⁰ Essah, 41-56.

³¹ Essah, 56-59.

³² National Register, "Underground Railroad Resources in the United States: Theme Study," available from <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/underground/thhome.htm>, 9. Internet.

of the gradual abolition laws passed in the Northern states, and even in the South, the rate of manumissions and the size of the free black population increased.

In Delaware, the combined pressure of Enlightenment thought and religious objections was not enough to end slavery outright, but these arguments did spark spirited debates over the issue in the state's newspapers. Many Delaware slaveholders who manumitted their slaves chose the Fourth of July as the date on which manumissions would take effect and cited the ideology of the American Revolution when explaining their reasoning. Even though no manumission law was passed, it is clear that legislators were deeply affected by these ideals as evidenced by laws passed to end the interstate slave trade and to simplify the process of manumission while protecting the slaves being freed. In court cases to determine whether or not an African American person was a slave, the burden of proof often lay with the person claiming ownership, and many African Americans won their freedom through the courts. Enlightenment philosophy did not have the power to end slavery completely in the state, but many who believed in these ideals made personal decisions to move away from slavery.³³

Free Black Communities and Activists. As manumissions on religious and Enlightenment grounds helped to swell the population of free blacks living in the United States, communities of free blacks began to form. These groups were some of the most natural opponents to slavery, and their involvement in the abolitionist movement and in the Underground Railroad is finally being properly recognized. More than thirty free black communities have been identified in central Delaware alone, and there were even more elsewhere in the state.³⁴ African American abolitionists fought long and hard to end slavery and opposed such schemes as the American Colonization Society, which advocated freeing slaves on the condition that they settle in a colony of their own in Africa. Black communities and churches in the North and South did the bulk of the work on the Underground Railroad, guiding fugitives from one safe house to the next, providing food and clothing, and forwarding messages about successful escapes to anxious loved ones still in slavery.

A large number of the known Underground Railroad agents operating in Delaware were African Americans. The most famous of these was Harriet Tubman, who made thirteen trips through the state on the way from Maryland to Canada while rescuing friends and family enslaved on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Samuel D. Burris, a resident of Kent County, was prosecuted and jailed for his Underground Railroad activities and was only saved from being sold into slavery by the intervention of his friends in Wilmington. In Camden, William and Nathaniel Brinkley and Abel Gibbs (later Abraham) were among the members of the black community whom Tubman felt she could trust explicitly. Wilmington, the central hub of Underground Railroad activity in Delaware, was home to many African Americans who acted as conductors, including Joseph Walker, Comegys Munson, Severn Johnson, Henry Craige (also referred to as Henry Craig or Harry Craige), George Wilmer, Abraham Shadd, and Davey Moore. All of these men worked with Thomas Garrett in some capacity, sometimes sheltering freedom seekers in their homes and sometimes guiding parties that Garrett had cared for from Wilmington to Pennsylvania.

Another important figure living in Wilmington was Peter Spencer, a former enslaved person who relocated to Wilmington after the death of his enslaver. A minister, he founded the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1805, the first independent African American church in the United States. In founding the church, Spencer was reacting to discrimination against African Americans in the white-led churches, which often forced blacks to sit in separate sections and refused to let them become members of the church leadership. Spencer also inaugurated the Big Quarterly in 1814, a festival designed to celebrate African American religion and culture. Enslaved people were allowed to come north for the Quarterly from as far away as Maryland and

³³ Essah, 63-69.

³⁴ Bradley Skelcher, *African American Settlement Patterns on the Upper Peninsula Zone of Delaware, 1730–1940+/-: Historic Context* (Dover, DE: Department of History and Political Science, Delaware State University, September 1995).

may have been the first to lay the path of the Underground Railroad. It is believed that he opened his church doors to fugitive slaves, and he was an outspoken opponent of colonization schemes. In fact, there is at least one escape narrative, that of James Williams, that links the Quarterly to freedom seekers.³⁵

Although black activists and free black communities were the backbone of the Underground Railroad, it was not always true that every community was a safe haven and every African American person was a friend. Free black communities may have been magnets for freedom seekers, but they were also constantly patrolled by slave catchers and law enforcement officials looking for runaways. Those who participated in the Underground Railroad did so at great personal risk, as often the penalties for aiding a fugitive were much more serious for black agents than they were for white agents. Because of this, residents of black communities were sometimes reluctant to give assistance in order to avoid harassment and protect their already tenuous legal standing. Some communities brought the even greater danger of betrayal, as the reward money that came with the capture of a fugitive was a powerful temptation. One example is the story of the Dover Eight in which the African American Thomas Otwell betrayed the party of freedom seekers. Those who volunteered to aid freedom seekers showed a great deal of courage and commitment to ending slavery no matter what the risks might have been.

Delaware's Underground Railroad Stories Begin and End in Other States: The Place of Delaware in the Underground Railroad Network

Delaware was one part of a nationwide network of sites and trails that brought freedom seekers from slavery in the South to liberty in the North, the last slave state before reaching free soil. Most of the fugitives traveling along Delaware's routes either came from a state further south, were fleeing to a location further north, or both. For many, Thomas Garrett's home in Wilmington, with its connection to several conductors willing to guide the way to Philadelphia, was a beacon leading them on to freedom. Delaware's existence as a great crossroads of the Underground Railroad was an important part of the freedom seeker's experience while traveling through the state.

One major attraction that kept freedom seekers moving through the state was the city of Philadelphia. As one of the first accessible cities on free soil, Philadelphia was a magnet for fugitives who took advantage of the anonymity offered by the big city and the help available from the city's free black and Quaker communities. Philadelphia was also the home of William Still, a member of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society who worked persistently to forward freedom seekers who had passed through Thomas Garrett's home on to safety further north. Still kept meticulous records of all who came through his office and after the Civil War he published these records in a volume that has become one of the most important sources of fugitive stories. Many stories of freedom seekers passing through Delaware are known because of his work, illustrating the fact that Delaware narratives are not confined within the boundaries of the state.

With its close proximity to Maryland and Virginia, Delaware was often chosen as the route of escape for freedom seekers leaving from Maryland's Eastern Shore or the Delmarva Peninsula. As Delaware's slave population was relatively small and many enslaved people were waiting out indentures that would free them in early adulthood, analysis of runaway ads shows that most of the fugitives passing through the state came from these southern states. For instance, many of Harriet Tubman's thirteen journeys bringing friends and family from Dorchester and Caroline counties in Maryland to Canada traveled through Delaware, sometimes picking up additional people in southern Delaware along the way.

³⁵ Peter T. Dalleo, *Researching the Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Select Descriptive Bibliography of African American Fugitive Narratives* (Wilmington: The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware & the City of Wilmington, June 2008), 29.

Most of those fleeing through Delaware were planning on continuing to a Northern state or across the border to Canada. Even though Delaware's free black population greatly outnumbered its slaves, Delaware was still a slave state and thus an extremely dangerous place for a fugitive. Slave catchers looking to reap reward money and kidnappers looking for merchandise to sell in Southern slave markets were everywhere, and not all of the state's African Americans could be trusted as friends. Northern states provided something of a haven, as each of these states passed laws immediately or gradually ending slavery, beginning with Vermont in 1777 and continuing on to Pennsylvania in 1780 and, finally, New Jersey in 1804. Still, Canada was the most favorable option, as fugitives who fled there could escape the jurisdiction of United States federal fugitive slave laws. Thus, Delaware was a gateway, and many parties who found themselves separated on the route through the state were reunited in communities of successful freedom seekers in Ontario. To find the endpoints of Delaware escape narratives, it is often important to search in Northern locations.

Interpersonal Networks to Freedom in Delaware That Fed and Supported the Underground Railroad

Interpersonal networks of like-minded people working together to end slavery were an essential element of the Underground Railroad in Delaware. Free black communities, Quakers, other abolitionists and other individuals worked together to forward freedom seekers from one location to the next and to conceal them from authorities along the way. These networks were developed through family, business, social, religious and other relationships, and they helped to ensure that the Underground Railroad would operate smoothly and secretly.³⁶ The networks in Delaware were connected with similar networks in other states, ensuring a pathway of safe houses all the way to freedom in Canada.

One of the best known networks to freedom in Delaware involved the people around the state who were connected with the activities of Thomas Garrett. Freedom seekers lucky enough to make it to the cluster of free black communities in the Camden area could look for William Brinkley or Samuel D. Burris, conductors ready to lead them the rest of the way through the state. Brinkley and Burris might seek the aid of John Hunn, a Quaker who lived in Middletown in the 1840s before moving to the Camden area. John Hunn's home was a stop on the way to Wilmington and Thomas Garrett. In Wilmington, Garrett housed many freedom seekers in his home, but if his home was already full or too dangerous because of surveillance by law enforcement officials, he could contact one of his many confederates in the free black community of Wilmington, including Joseph Walker, Comegys Munson, Severn Johnson, Henry Craige, George Wilmer, Abraham Shadd, and Davey Moore. These men often opened their homes to freedom seekers and acted as conductors on the last leg of the journey through the state on the way to the Pennsylvania border. These conductors would frequently bring the freedom seekers as far as Chester County, Pennsylvania, where they could find shelter with one of many Garrett or Mendinhall relatives, or even all the way to William Still's office in Philadelphia. Harriet Tubman often made use of the safe houses and services provided by Garrett's accomplices.

The operation of this particular network is illustrated in the escape of the Samuel Hawkins family. Hawkins, a free black man, took his wife Emeline, and six enslaved children away from their places of enslavement in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, in November 1845 and brought them through Delaware. Near the Camden area, the family was fortunate enough to meet Samuel D. Burris, who introduced them to Ezekiel Jenkins, a Quaker living in Camden who had the connections to help them find the next safe location. Jenkins provided the group with a letter introducing Burris as a reliable conductor and the Hawkins family as a group needing assistance; he addressed the letter to Daniel Corbit, John Alston, or John Hunn (Jenkins' cousin), all Quakers living in the Middletown and Odessa area who were sympathetic to abolitionist ideals or working on the Underground Railroad already. With the route that he chose, Burris reached Hunn's farm in Middletown first, arriving on December 5, 1845. Hunn agreed to give them shelter, but the plot

³⁶ Larson and Bodo, 111-112.

was betrayed when Hunn's neighbor, Thomas Merritt, noticed the unfamiliar group and contacted the local magistrate. Unfortunately, two representatives of their enslavers had just arrived in Middletown with a notice calling for their capture, and the magistrate, William Streets, decided that the family should be taken to the New Castle jail and held there until the truth could be discovered. Meanwhile, Hunn wrote a letter to Thomas Garrett in Wilmington apprising him of the situation, and the letter was delivered by Burris. On December 7, 1845, Thomas Garrett arrived in New Castle and was able to convince Chief Justice James Booth that there was not enough evidence to hold the family. The Hawkins family was released, and Garrett quickly spirited them away to Wilmington and then Pennsylvania. Garrett and Hunn were later fined for their part in the family's escape.³⁷

The Hawkins family's story illustrates the way in which interpersonal networks helped freedom seekers move from one location to the next. All of the individuals involved used whatever connections they had, from Jenkins appealing to his cousin John Hunn to Hunn contacting Garrett when a little extra ingenuity was needed. Underground Railroad agents in Delaware used all the tools at their disposal to bring about successful escapes.

Who Escaped? How Personal Circumstances Determined the Choices Individuals Made and the Challenges They Faced³⁸

Escapes on the Underground Railroad were governed largely by the personal circumstances of those seeking freedom. Freedom seekers were most commonly young men in good health, traveling alone or in small groups. These were often the most successful escapes as the men could travel quickly, attracted less attention than an entire family might, and could defend themselves from challenges. Because male slaves were often sent on errands that took them away from plantations or were hired out to neighboring planters, they were a common sight walking along the road and could often travel without being challenged. Many took advantage of off-plantation errands to run away at a time when it might be a few days before they were missed, so that they could be miles away by the time their absence was discovered. Men such as William Cornish, John W. Tillman, and Isaac Mason all escaped from or through Delaware.³⁹ Many of the people who fled considered the step for a long time but decided to take it due to threat of sale, punishment, or some other life-changing event. The majority of trips were made by foot, with most men only able to travel between ten and fifteen miles per day. The journey was long and arduous, but the reward was great.

Women were less likely to attempt escape than men, but the horrors of slavery were great enough to make the risk worth taking in many documented cases. Traveling in a family group may have been more dangerous and complicated, but many families who feared the threat of separation by sale felt it was worth trying. Women often felt themselves tied to their home in slavery because they spent the prime years of their adult lives giving birth to and caring for children and most could not bear the thought of escaping and leaving their children behind. When women and children escaped, although some traveled by foot, they and their conductors on the Underground Railroad often attempted to procure alternate forms of transportation, such as wagons, boats, and later, the railroad. Sometimes husbands and wives devised elaborate ruses

³⁷ In their context, Larson and Bodo assemble primary source material on the Hawkins family to create one of the most complete and engaging accounts of their escape. Larson and Bodo, 59-62.

³⁸ This section was prepared using the following sources: Kate Clifford Larson and Robin Bodo, *The Underground Railroad: A Research Context, Draft 5* (Manuscript, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, 2007); Patience Essah, *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996); Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *Slavery in America* (New York: Facts On File, 2007).

³⁹ Peter T. Dalleo, *Researching the Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Select Descriptive Bibliography of African American Fugitive Narratives* (Wilmington: The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware & the City of Wilmington, June 2008), 7, 18, 24-25.

to escape together, as when in 1848 the very light-skinned Ellen Craft posed as the ailing white master of her husband, William, who acted the role of her body servant on the train ride from Macon, Georgia, to Savannah, and later to Philadelphia.⁴⁰ Ellen Craft's story proves just how determined and courageous a woman traveling on the Underground Railroad could be, contradicting accounts by male freedom seekers who projected feelings of fear onto their female companions.

However, many of the most celebrated escapes in Delaware were not single men traveling alone, but larger groups that had to overcome massive obstacles to obtain their freedom. These groups may have been well known due to the sheer difficulty of their journeys and because they sometimes had to go to greater lengths than single travelers did to secure their freedom. The most prominent narrative, that of the Hawkins family, involves an entire family traveling together, using vehicles such as wagons to travel from point to point along the way. Another group, the Dover Eight, was a mixed company of young men and women who used their combined strength and ingenuity to break out of a difficult situation after their conductor, Thomas Otwell, betrayed them.⁴¹ Two other large groups that started from Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1857, one consisting of fourteen freedom seekers and the other encompassing twenty-eight, were made up of entire families, including children who were only weeks old. It was a miracle that these groups were not caught, but thanks to the quick thinking and efficiency of Delaware's Underground Railroad operators, they were brought through the state and forwarded to Canada. Although these most celebrated escapes represent deviations from the norm, the majority of freedom seekers traveled through Delaware singly or in small groups. Some of their names will never be known, but each journey of self-liberation was an important act of defiance against an unjust system.

Pathways and Barriers to Freedom Provided by Delaware's Physical Landscapes

The physical and cultural landscapes of Delaware provided both pathways and barriers to freedom. Physically, while travel was eased by a landscape of flat land with many roads and streams, it was also made difficult by marshes, wetlands, and barriers like the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and open fields where concealment was difficult. Culturally, some areas with strong abolitionist sentiments were easier to traverse, such as Camden and Wilmington, while other strongholds of pro-slavery values were dangerous and best avoided if possible. Freedom seekers passing through the state made their way through all of these landscapes.

Freedom seekers and organizers of the Underground Railroad network did their best to find the shortest and quickest routes with the greatest potential for concealment. The Underground Railroad corridor through Delaware met many of these criteria. The physical landscape provided the possibilities for travel—the paths of least resistance. On the cultural landscape freedom seekers escaped from sites of enslavement and fled to destinations such as Camden, Wilmington, and Pennsylvania, points of abolitionist support and ultimately freedom. The corridor encompasses the many paths that connected these and other destinations along the Underground Railroad in Delaware. The physical landscape changed little over the history of the Underground Railroad, while the cultural landscape evolved to support the routes as a result of abolition and other antislavery activities. That cultural landscape defines the corridor of escape.

In its role in the national Underground Railroad, Delaware must be seen as part of the larger Delmarva Peninsula. Charles L. Blockson, an Underground Railroad historian, argues that any account of the Underground Railroad nationally must consider the Delmarva Peninsula "lying between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, the land area of which includes the whole of Delaware, nine counties of Maryland and two of Virginia. Abolitionists and fugitive slaves found

⁴⁰ William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom; or, The Escape of William and Ellen Craft* (London: William Tweedle, 1860).

⁴¹ Larson and Bodo, 74-79.

it desirable to use this large river- and bay-drained area as a part of their secret system.”⁴² The Delmarva is both a source of freedom seekers and a path for those fleeing from Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and other states further south. Larson and Bodo find that according to surviving records, slaves escaping through Delaware came mostly from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, with the greatest number from Maryland counties along Delaware’s western border. Although those fleeing from Delaware came from all over the state, the great majority of the state’s enslaved people lived in Sussex County and southern New Castle County.⁴³

Up until the twentieth century, water was the easiest, and often fastest, way to travel. For those whose destination was freedom in the North, the Delmarva Peninsula was a vital link reachable by water from immediate southern states and providing a dense network of rivers and streams for continuing escape. The spine of the Delmarva Peninsula divides the watersheds of the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River and Bay. From the spine of the watershed, which is in western Delaware, streams drain southeast into the Chesapeake Bay and east into the Delaware River and Bay. Three of the rivers feeding the Chesapeake Bay have headwater in or near Delaware. From south to north, they are the Nanticoke River from Seaford, Delaware, to Tangier Sound, the Choptank River from a point near Denton, Maryland, past Cambridge to the Chesapeake Bay and the Chester River from a point in Maryland opposite Blackiston, Delaware.⁴⁴ These rivers and their tributaries provided paths heading northwest for those escaping into Delaware.

Once in Delaware, streams offered avenues of escape eastward to the Delaware Bay. Delaware was useful as an Underground Railroad portage between the Maryland Chesapeake area and the Delaware River and Bay. Upon reaching Delaware, freedom seekers had to decide whether they wanted to continue north by land or go east to the Bay and try to cross to New Jersey. During the nineteenth century, the Delaware River and Bay also served as an important north-south “highway” that connected Delaware coastal communities with points north, including Philadelphia. Streams were navigable further inland than they are today, both Dover and Smyrna were ports in the 18th and early 19th century. Packet boats ran daily.⁴⁵ While the eastern streams helped those traveling by water, they also formed a series of barriers to north-south travel where bridges would have to be crossed or waterways forded. The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, completed in 1825, which connected the Delaware River and Chesapeake Bay across south-central New Castle County, was a major barrier to those trying to travel unobserved. Fortunately, being a waterman was an occupation open to both free and enslaved black men. Many of these watermen were willing to ferry freedom seekers from place to place or to look the other way when a stowaway came aboard.⁴⁶

As a land route, Delaware was relatively easy to travel physically. Situated on the Atlantic Coastal Plain, it was flat and well-drained by sandy soils. Roads tended to be oriented to coastal towns. However, there was also an important north-south route through the center of the state, called the King’s Highway (now State Route 13). Laid out in 1762, it was postal road running from north to south. From Dover, it proceeded north to Blackbird and Odessa, continuing through St. Georges to Red Lion and Wilmington. In the early nineteenth century, a series of turnpikes were built that radiated from Wilmington. Two of these were Philadelphia Pike to Philadelphia and Kennett Pike north to Pennsylvania, which became a major part of Thomas Garrett’s Underground Railroad activities.

⁴² Charles L. Blockson, *The Underground Railroad*, (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987) 95-96.

⁴³ Larson and Bodo, 18.

⁴⁴ Harriet Tubman brought fugitive slaves up the Choptank River to a landing place near Delaware from which she made her way to Wilmington through the state’s Underground Railroad network. Blockson, 99.

⁴⁵ Larson and Bodo, 45.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Finally, the trends in slavery and abolition discussed earlier contributed a cultural landscape that facilitated the creation of the Underground Railroad over the course of the nineteenth century. New Castle and Kent counties became home to an increasingly large free black population, members of which created communities that were concentrated in central Kent and parts of New Castle County. Most of the enslaved people in the state were concentrated in Sussex County. Camden and Wilmington became poles of antislavery activism, and free black communities become the major destinations on Delaware's Underground Railroad.

TYPES OF UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORIC INTRINSIC QUALITY SITES

Intrinsic qualities are the visual features that the traveler sees from the road that give this byway its special identity. Historic quality is defined by the National Scenic Byways Program as encompassing "legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or man made that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation of the past." Intrinsic qualities for the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway are historic in nature and therefore not visually distinguished the way other types of intrinsic qualities can be. The historic intrinsic quality connects the resources along the byway to the themes of the Underground Railroad which were first identified by compiling research from existing material and scholarship related to the Underground Railroad in Delaware. Then, the physical attributes of the corridor were documented using the intrinsic quality resource inventory which was conducted according to the DelDOT Program Guidelines.

Types of Sites: From the inventory, evaluation and research, four types of sites have been identified reflecting historic intrinsic qualities conveying the experience of the Underground Railroad and its context to the traveler.

- **Underground Railroad Sites (U):** These sites have verified association between individuals, events, and places with the network of people who assisted fugitive enslaved people in their escape to freedom.
- **Cultural Context Sites (C):** Connotes a site or area that is related to broad themes of the Underground Railroad historic context such as the growth of free black communities and churches, abolitionist Quaker families and meetinghouses, African Americans in the Civil War and others.
- **Commemorative/Interpretive Sites (I):** Sites that commemorate specific Underground Railroad events or interpret the general history of the Underground Railroad, including museums and historical markers.
- **Evocative Landscape Site (E):** Connotes a site or area that visually evokes the general undisturbed historic landscape of this part of Delaware providing the traveler with an experience as removed as possible from contemporary intrusion.

INVENTORY OF THE PROPOSED HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY HISTORIC INTRINSIC QUALITY SITES

SEGMENT 1: This segment begins at the Maryland-Delaware border, following State Route 10, through Sandtown, Petersburg, and into Camden. Once in Camden the traveler follows Camden-Wyoming Avenue, around the loop, and takes State Route 13 into Dover. This is called "The Gauntlet" because it was the most dangerous part of the journey for freedom seekers due to local pro-slavery sentiments and roving slave hunters. In addition, the flat, open agricultural fields in this segment were difficult to cross undetected except at night. This segment includes an optional loop that passes through Star Hill consisting of several sites off the main route.

Sandtown to Camden to Dover

1. **Sandtown (U)**
This small town was once home to a community with residents who were active in the Underground Railroad. This town was mentioned by Harriet Tubman as part of her route in an interview with historian Wilbur Siebert in 1897 but research has not uncovered any further detail to date.
2. **State Route 10 Agricultural Landscape (E)**
State Route 10 from Sandtown to Camden traverses a flat open agricultural landscape studded with farmsteads which retain much of its character from the mid-nineteenth century.
3. **Henry Cowgill Farm Site (U) (E)**
The Cowgills were a prominent Delaware Quaker family, and family oral tradition states that Henry Cowgill and his wife helped fleeing slaves by housing fugitives in the family's home or barn and providing them with much needed food, rest, and clothing during their stay. None of the buildings from this time period survive.
4. **Willow Grove (U)(C)**
Willow Grove has been linked to Underground Railroad through Harriet Tubman. It was also a rendezvous point for the Dover Eight and today retains much of its historic character. After the escape from the Dover jail, William Brinkley escorted six of the eight fugitives who backtracked from Dover to his home in Camden back to Willow Grove presumably to regroup and take another route north.
5. **Free Black settlement west of Camden (C)**
The area west of Camden was once a free African American neighborhood that included the Zion AME Church. Not many buildings from the historic period survive.
6. **Zion AME Church (C)**
An African Methodist Episcopal congregation has met on this site since 1845 but the surviving church building dates from 1889. The adjoining cemetery includes the burials and markers of United States Colored Troops Caleb Fisher and Abraham Gibbs, the son of Abel Gibbs (later Abraham), one of Harriet Tubman's Camden connections on the Underground Railroad. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places.**)
7. **Camden Historic District (C)**
On the **National Register of Historic Places**, the Camden Historic District contains many of the structures dating to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This community was a stronghold of anti-slavery sentiment dating back to the founding of the town when it was known as Mifflin's Crossroads in the late eighteenth century. The strong Quaker community was centered on the Camden Friends Meetinghouse.
8. **Camden Friends Meeting House (C)(I)**
On the **National Register of Historic Places**, the meetinghouse was built in 1804. It was both the weekly meetinghouse for Camden area Quakers and the place of worship for the larger regional Quaker community. Allied with the Hicksite branch of the Quaker faith—the more ardently anti-slavery branch of the mainstream Quaker community—the meetinghouse also shared the status as a monthly meeting place for the Quaker community stretching from Lewes to Odessa with the Meeting House at Little Creek in eastern Kent County. Prominent Abolitionists from local families are buried in the adjoining cemetery including John Hunn who was prosecuted in 1848 with Thomas Garrett for assisting runaway slaves. The site includes a State Archives marker about John Hunn and the Underground Railroad.
9. **Whatcoat Methodist Episcopal Church (Morningstar Institutional Church of God in Christ) (C)**

This building was the second church constructed for this white Methodist congregation in Camden. Dedicated in 1857, this church was built by prominent free African American bricklayer Absalom Gibbs. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** as part of Camden NR Historic District.)

10. **Brinkley Hill (Free Black Settlement north of Camden) (U)**

By the mid-nineteenth century a small predominately African American community north of Camden called "Brinkley Hill" was home to William Brinkley, a well documented conductor on the Underground Railroad, and his brother Nathaniel. These free men were vocal supporters of maintaining the rights of free people of color, signing their names to petitions opposing the limiting of their rights by the State Legislature. Letters from William Brinkley to Thomas Garrett survive documenting his activity, and he was also mentioned by Harriet Tubman in her interview with historian Wilbur Siebert in 1897. Unfortunately, nothing physically remains of this important and historic community today.

11. **Brecknock Park (E)**

Begun ca. 1750, Brecknock, the main house of the Hanson-Howell estate, is the focal point of this Kent County park. Located across Main Street from Brinkley Hill, the evocative aspects of this property include the main house that was present during the Underground Railroad period, and the nature trail that allows the visitor to explore the wooded area along Isaac's Branch, the site of the milling operation that helped establish the prosperity of the owner. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**)

Optional Star Hill/ Hunn Loop: This optional loop contains the Star Hill AME Church and Museum, and the sites associated with the Hunn Family.

12. **Great Geneva (C)**

One of two family homes within the vast land holdings of the Hunn family near Forest Landing at the confluence of the St. Jones River and Tidbury Creek. A wealthy and prominent Quaker family, the Hunns may have been involved in assisting escaping slaves as early as the 1810s. John Hunn, the well-documented Underground Railroad operative, was born here in 1818. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**.)

13. **Wildcat Manor (C)**

This house was part of the land holdings of the Hunn family in the vicinity of Forest Landing on Tidbury Creek. Family oral tradition indicates that it was used as a hiding place for escaping slaves.

14. **Happy Valley (C)**

In 1853, John Hunn and his wife Mary Swallow Hunn purchased the Happy Valley farm south of Dover. Living there until 1862, this farm was his home during his most active period of Underground Railroad work.

15. **Star Hill AME Church and Museum (I)**

Originally built in 1866, the current configuration of the church reflects rebuilding after a fire in 1905. Attached to the social hall of the church is a small museum devoted to slave life and the accomplishments of African Americans which is geared towards children. The church is on the **Network to Freedom** for its interpretive programs on the Underground Railroad. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**.)

Continuation to Dover:

16. **Dover Green (E)**

Established as a court town for Kent County in 1683, Dover was planned by William Penn around a central public square, called "Court House Square" which later became "The

Green.” Laid out in 1717, and the site of the Kent County court house, the Green became the central public space in Delaware when the state capital moved to there in 1777.

17. Delaware State House (U) (I)

The State House was the site of the 1847 trial of Samuel D. Burris, a well-documented conductor on the Underground Railroad. Burris was convicted of assisting an enslaved woman, Maria Matthews, on an unsuccessful attempt to escape from bondage. A typical punishment for free African-Americans was to be sold into term slavery, typically for seven years and Burris was to have this punishment inflicted upon him. Luckily, Burris' contract was purchased by Isaac Flint, a Wilmington merchant and abolitionist, who attended the auction in the guise of a slave trader, with funds raised for this purpose in the abolition community. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** and is a designated **Network to Freedom** site.)

SEGMENT 2: This segment takes the traveler from Dover, via State Street, to State Route 15, through Middletown, and Odessa, linking to State Route 299. This segment is called “Making Choices” because at this point freedom seekers had the choice of continuing north by land and on to Wilmington or traveling east some seven miles to the Delaware River and finding a boat to New Jersey.

Dover to Odessa

1. Hawkins Route to Hunn Farm (E)

In 1845, the family of Samuel Hawkins left Caroline County, Maryland to seek freedom in the north. The family was able to secure the help of free African Americans. The Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris led them through Camden, and with a letter from Ezekiel Jenkins, they continued to the farm of John Hunn near Middletown where, unfortunately, they were recognized as an unfamiliar group by a neighbor of John Hunn.

2. Landscape of Blackbird State Forest (E)

This area was generally forested in the nineteenth century because of its marginal value as cropland. As a State Forest, the land is not subject to the development pressure of unprotected lands in other sections of the route and is more likely to retain its physical character.

3. Ebenezer Church (E)

In 1867 an African American congregation purchased land to build a new church, originally named “Forrest” and then changed to “Ebenezer.” The church was finished in 1873. This church is the only reminder of a community that may have been active on the Underground Railroad. The church also serves as a landmark for its landscape that characterizes the area and affords the traveler an idea of what the historic landscape may have looked like to freedom seekers.

4. Site of the Farm of John Hunn, now Middletown High School (U)

The site of the Hunn Farm is now the property of the Middletown High School. The Hunn farm, located at the intersection of Middletown-Odessa Road and Silver Lake Road, was a stop in the Hawkins family journey to freedom; it was also the location where the Hawkins family was arrested after a tip to Middletown’s magistrate from a neighbor. This incident led to the prosecution of Thomas Garrett and John Hunn by the enslavers of the Hawkins children for their role in assisting the family through Delaware. The story of the Hawkins family and the Trials of 1848 are told in detail at the New Castle Court House Museum.

5. Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House (U)(I)

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built in 1785. On the **National Register of Historic Places** partially for its association with the Underground Railroad through the attendance of the Hunn and Alston families. It is also designated a **Network to Freedom** site. Strong local oral tradition says that freedom seekers may have used it as a hiding place, specifying the upstairs eaves closet as the location. The meetinghouse is also important as a site where prominent abolitionist Quakers met for weekly worship.

6. **Corbit-Sharp House (U)(I)**

The Corbit-Sharp House was built between 1772 and 1774 by William Corbit, a Quaker, a prominent resident of Odessa and successful tanner. His son, Daniel Corbit, was known to have helped those traveling on the Underground Railroad into Pennsylvania and further north. The house is identified as a stop on the Underground Railroad in a story recounted by Mary Corbit Warner, the only child of Daniel Corbit. A **National Historic Landmark** property for its architecture, it is also designated on the **Network to Freedom** for its association with the Underground Railroad.

SEGMENT 3: Here the segment follows the Scenic and Historic Byway, State Route 9, from Odessa, through Delaware City, to New Castle, and then to Wilmington. This segment is called “The Bold Move” because here freedom seekers could choose one of several bold choices, including a straight shot to Wilmington along the King’s Highway or a journey over to the coast, where it might be possible to find passage north in the port cities of Port Penn, Delaware City, or New Castle.

State Route 9

1. **Delaware State State Route 9 Landscape (E)**

The wetlands along State Route 9 are an important part of the state’s natural history and remain virtually unspoiled from the time before European settlers’ arrival in Delaware. State Route 9 crosses the sea level Chesapeake and Delaware Canal over the Reedy Point Bridge and the 360 degree view of the marsh landscape is a highlight of the route. Also, several eighteenth century houses remain on the landscape adding to the evocative qualities.

2. **Stewart Street in Port Penn (Free Black settlement) (C)**

Stewart Street was the site of a free black community in the village of Port Penn. It was near the site of a camp meeting in the 1850s as noted in John W. Tillman’s escape narrative (1896) (Listed on **National Register of Historic Places** as part of NR Historic District.).

3. **Polktown near Delaware City (Free Black settlement) (C)(E)**

Polktown was a free black settlement founded in 1835. In the nearby African Union cemetery are the graves of several African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War.

4. **New Castle Court House (U)(I)**

The New Castle Court House was both where the Hawkins family was jailed after being captured in Middletown and the site for the trial of Thomas Garrett and John Hunn in 1848. The National Park Service has recognized this property as a **National Historic Landmark** for its association with the Underground Railroad and is also designated on the **Network to Freedom**.

SEGMENT 4: This segment takes the traveler throughout the city of Wilmington, and connects to State Route 52, or Kennett Pike, which is part of the Brandywine Scenic and Historic Byway. This segment is called “Gateway to Freedom” because it was from here that Delaware’s most famous “station master,” Thomas Garrett, would arrange travel to Philadelphia and elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

Wilmington

1. **The Rocks-Fort Christina State Park (U)**
This site was mentioned in a letter by Thomas Garrett as a port of embarkation for Captain Fountain, who ferried many freedom seekers to Wilmington and Philadelphia by water from points south. (A **National Historic Landmark**, it has also been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.)
2. **Severn Johnson House (U)**
Severn Johnson, a worker on the Underground Railroad, lived on Buttonwood Street between Taylor Street and Brandywine Creek. Unfortunately, Johnson's house does not survive.
3. **George Wilmer House (U)**
George Wilmer, a slave from Kent County, Maryland, who worked as an Underground Railroad conductor, moved to Wilmington after he was freed and lived at 832 Church Street. Unfortunately, Wilmer's house does not survive.
4. **Comegys Munson House (U)**
The home of Comegys Munson, an Underground Railroad worker, was located along French Street between 12th and 13th streets. Munson's home is mentioned as a safe house in at least one letter by Thomas Garrett. Unfortunately, Munson's house does not survive.
5. **Peter Spencer Plaza (I)**
A former slave from Maryland, Peter Spencer established the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1805, the first independent African American church in the United States. He also established the Big Quarterly which annually attracted slaves from the Eastern Shore and may have laid groundwork for the Underground Railroad. This plaza, dedicated to him, is on the site of the church he built, and Spencer and his wife are buried here.
6. **Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and Market Street Bridge (C)(I)**
This commemorative park was dedicated in 1998 to the work of Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman. An earlier bridge at Market Street was one way to access the city and used by Harriet Tubman. The park has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.
7. **Wilmington Old Town Hall (U)(I)**
Old Town Hall was a site where abolitionist meetings were held. Ironically, it was also the site of the city jail where captured freedom seekers were held before being returned to their places of enslavement. (Listed in the **National Register of Historic Places**.)
8. **Thomas Garrett Home Site (U)(I)**
One of the most important figures on the Underground Railroad in Delaware, the home and store of Thomas Garrett was a destination for many freedom seekers. Demolished in the 1970s, the property now lies under a parking garage but is designated as a **Network to Freedom** site.
9. **Quaker Hill Historic District (C)(E)**
The Quaker Hill Historic District was the nucleus of the Quaker community in Wilmington and home to many prominent abolitionists and Underground Railroad participants. Quaker Hill is both a **National Register Historic District** and **City of Wilmington Historic District**.
10. **Wilmington Friends Meeting House and Cemetery (U)(C)(I)**

Built in 1815, the Wilmington Friends Meeting House was the meeting place of many prominent Quaker abolitionists including Thomas Garrett, a leading agent of the Underground Railroad. Garrett is buried in its cemetery. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**, the Meeting House has also been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.)

11. **Elwood Garrett House (C)**

Elwood was the oldest son of Thomas Garrett. The extent of his involvement in the Underground Railroad is not known, but given his father's dedicated involvement, it is possible that Elwood also used his Quaker Hill home as a refuge for freedom seekers.

12. **Joseph Walker House (U)**

The dwelling of Joseph Walker, a worker on the Underground Railroad, was located on Tatnall Street between 8th and 9th Streets. Unfortunately, Walker's house does not survive.

13. **Henry Craige House (U)**

The dwelling of Henry Craige, a worker on the Underground Railroad, was located on Tatnall Street between 8th and 9th Streets. Unfortunately, Craige's house does not survive.

Segment 5: The last segment follows State Route 52/Kennett Pike, to the Pennsylvania border, concluding the trip. This segment is called "On to Pennsylvania" because it goes from Wilmington to the Pennsylvania border just north of Centreville.

Kennett Pike

1. **Centreville (C)**

Centreville was the site of an altercation between a group of twenty-eight freedom seekers who had escaped from Dorchester County, Maryland in 1857 and a gang of Irishmen. (Listed as a historic district on the **National Register of Historic Places**.)

2. **Thomas Garrett Route to Longwood (C)(E)**

Kennett Pike was the most direct route that Thomas Garrett could have taken to the Longwood Meeting in Pennsylvania. He wrote that he forwarded freedom seekers along this road to relatives of his wife, Isaac and Dinah Mendenhall, two leading abolitionists who helped to form the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, also known as Longwood Yearly Meeting in 1853. Their home, called Oakdale, was the first stop north of the Delaware state line on the Underground Railroad.

TRAVELER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE PROPOSED HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

The route of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway travels through Delaware's landscape in a pattern thought best to approximate the way freedom seekers moved through the state on their way to the North. The route was constructed mainly considering evidence from two major sources: the route of the Hawkins family and the route described by Harriet Tubman as the path she usually took through the state. Although much of the landscape has been altered since the antebellum era, many areas along the route continue to evoke the experience of the fugitive slave. The farmlands along State Route 10 and State Route 15 recall the difficulties of traveling across open fields. Towns such as Camden and Dover retain much of their historic character. Blackbird State Forest and the wetlands of State Route 9 showcase natural landscapes that have been largely unchanged throughout the history of the state. The route offers an opportunity not only to visit sites that have been connected to the Underground Railroad through research, but also to pass through landscapes that remind the traveler of this important period in history. Photographs throughout this section correspond to the text and highlight the route's historic and scenic character.



View from Route 10, Kent County

Segment 1: The Gauntlet: This segment begins at the Maryland-Delaware border, following State Route 10, through Sandtown, Petersburg, and into Camden. Once in Camden the traveler turns right on Camden-Wyoming Avenue, to U.S. Route 13, which goes north into Dover. At the intersection of Camden-Wyoming Road and Route 13 the traveler can follow the Optional Camden/Hunn Loop.

The State Route 10 segment of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway travels through a landscape that has a high concentration of sites related to Underground Railroad activity in Delaware. It begins at the Maryland-Delaware border near Sandtown. The road travels through Sandtown, Willow Grove, Camden, and Dover, all of which have significance in the story of escaped enslaved people seeking freedom.



View at the Maryland State Line, Route 10, Kent County

An optional and highly recommended loop south of Dover provides access to sites that figure heavily in the stories that have been passed down. This segment of the route has been referred to as the Gauntlet, the most dangerous part of the route for the risk of recapture. After passing through this area, the road to safety in Wilmington with Thomas Garrett was still dangerous, but more assured. The strong integrity of the agricultural landscape helps the traveler to picture the area as it was in the antebellum era.

The segment begins on State Route 10 at the border of Maryland and Delaware. Here is one of the most forested areas along the route, with large clumps of trees alternating with open fields, creating a pattern

of filtered and enclosed views. The many different types of vegetation vary in color and texture, with different views available depending on the season. The historic structures that appear along



Agricultural Landscape, Route 10, Kent County

the road add to this sense of variety. Shortly after the segment begins, State Route 10 passes through Sandtown, a small town that may have once had residents who were active in the Underground Railroad. The town was mentioned by Harriet Tubman in her interview with Wilbur Siebert in 1897 as one of her frequent stops on her rescue missions.⁴⁷ However, it is unclear whether Tubman passed through Sandtown as part of her route or stopped and stayed there with sympathetic friends. Sandtown was also mentioned in the *Easton Gazette* in late 1852 as the home of two men, probably African Americans, who were foiled in an attempt to meet with and perhaps carry away Tom, a

slave. In this article, the meeting is presented as a possible kidnapping plot, but it may also have been related to the Underground Railroad, a point that illustrates how hard it was for freedom seekers to distinguish friends from foes.⁴⁸ Although there is little visual evidence this nineteenth-century past, the small white and off-white structures provide a pleasing contrast to the tall trees that surround them. Because the buildings and the trees coexist in such a neat visual harmony, the area is not very distinctive, but the town's historic significance makes it an important part of the Underground Railroad route. As the area is separated from Camden and Dover, there is little threat that new development will disturb its character.

After passing through Sandtown, the route becomes predominantly agricultural, with wide open farmlands stretching back to tree lines in the middle distance. This area would have also been agricultural in the antebellum era and thus invokes the difficulty that came with attempts by freedom seekers to cross open fields. The progress of the route from open field, to wooded area, to water is enhanced by the movement of the road itself. The road winds as it passes directly over Meredith Branch, a part of the larger water feature Cow Marsh Creek, which is heavily wooded to either side. The road then opens into a landscape characterized by fields. The sense of scale changes in this section, with trees standing away from the road, along the borders of fields far in the distance. The vastness of the landscape is visually potent, and this sense is heightened by the width of the road—two lanes with wide shoulders. This openness makes the sky a dominant feature and an exceptionally beautiful one on days of fair weather. One memorable sight along the route is that of Cow Marsh Baptist Church, founded in 1781. The simple form of the structure and its long, vertical windows evoke a historic feeling heightened by the cemetery visible from the road. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**.)



House at Willow Grove, Route 10, Kent County

As State Route 10 continues, the road's straight alignment changes as it winds through the landscape, creating a variety of viewsheds and experiences for the traveler. Most of these

⁴⁷ Material Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus. Manuscript Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Call Number US5278.36.25.

⁴⁸ Larson and Bodo, 89-90.

views comprise agricultural features—open fields, farmhouses, and barns, in addition to the small community of Petersburg. There are several brick farmhouses in the area, two-story Georgian structures that evoke the area’s historic character and agricultural past. More disruptive are the newer residential subdivisions that have distinctly different architectural character and setting. These larger and taller houses might add to the pleasing diversity already present if it were not for their repetitiveness: dozens of similar houses side by side makes a radical break with the visual character of what came earlier on the land. The landscaping of these communities also disrupts the visual character of the corridor with the use of small evergreen trees not native to the area and not found anywhere else along the route. Although the natural environment has been modified over the years by farmers, what exists today is a harmonious agricultural landscape whose continuity is interrupted by these brash new patterns of development.



Camden Wyoming Ave, Camden, Kent County

Just after the community of Petersburg, the route crosses Henry Cowgill Road and the site of the former Henry Cowgill farm, which was connected with the Underground Railroad, according to oral tradition. Cowgill was a Quaker who attended the Camden Friends Meeting House, and his descendents remember stories of how he would open his home to freedom seekers, housing them in his farmhouse or barn and providing them with food and clothing. An abolition medallion once owned by Cowgill is on display at the meetinghouse in Camden.

The route comes to the village of Willow Grove, another town that has a history as a free African American community active in the Underground Railroad. This community has been linked to the Underground Railroad through Harriet Tubman’s interview with Siebert; he recorded that she mentioned a “Will Grove,” whom he thought was a person, but this location between Sandtown and Camden makes more sense as no person by the name of “Will Grove” has been discovered.⁴⁹ As is the case with Sandtown, it is not known exactly how Tubman used Willow Grove, and with this particular settlement, the issue is complicated by the fact that Willow Grove was once separated into white and black communities that existed about a mile apart from each other. Willow Grove is also mentioned in the story of the Dover Eight; after the escape from the Dover jail, six of the eight fugitives made it to the town, where one of the residents helped them north.⁵⁰ As Willow Grove is slightly off of State Route 10, the road does not go through the town proper, yet the visual character along this section of the road is influenced by the community’s architecture. Some of the most memorable examples are the two-story brick houses along the roadside. The use of brick and the eighteenth century Georgian forms of these houses establishes a tangible connection to the history of the area while creating picturesque views. Landscape plantings around these houses harmonize well with their surroundings, unlike the newer subdivisions. Deciduous trees encircle the homesteads, lessening the stark impact of their size and mediating between the man-made structures and the natural environment. These homes largely occur as isolated structures within open fields, providing some visual interest along the typically open expanses through this section while maintaining the agricultural integrity of the landscape. The fields that otherwise characterize the landscape are much the same as those seen earlier. The overall feeling of expanse is preserved, although diminished somewhat by the more regular appearance of houses adjacent to the road.

Once the traveler has passed Willow Grove, the landscape becomes agricultural again.. There is less forest in this section than in earlier portions of the route, which heightens the

⁴⁹ Material Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus. Manuscript Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Call Number US5278.36.25.

⁵⁰ “Excitement in Delaware”, *Provincial Freeman*, March 21, 1857, Accessible Archives.

awareness of the fields, sky, and road itself. Ditches alongside the road provide some variety in both color and form. Unfortunately, recent suburban development has left its mark on the landscape in this section. As the road draws closer to Camden, the frequency of new construction appears to increase, putting the historic and cultural integrity of agricultural sections like this one at greater risk.

As an abolitionist center with an active Quaker community and surrounded by a cluster of free black communities, the Camden area was an important station on the Underground Railroad where freedom seekers could rest, make connections to continue their journey and get new clothes and shoes for the next leg.

Camden and Dover were very significant in the story of the Underground Railroad albeit for different reasons. From the intersection of State Route 10 and Camden-Wyoming Avenue, the traveler goes straight ahead down Rodney Avenue, and there, flanked by Fred Fifer Middle School, stands the Zion A.M.E.



Brecknock Park, Old Camden Road, Alternate Route 13, Camden, Kent County

Church, a small white church with a steeple among tall trees which marks the location of the historic Free African American neighborhood that was active in the Underground Railroad. This church was built in 1889 for a congregation that was established 1845 in the same vicinity.⁵¹ The adjoining cemetery includes the burial place of Abraham Gibbs, who served with the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War. Gibbs was the son of Abel Gibbs, who later changed his name to Abraham, a man named by Harriet Tubman as one of her helpers on the Underground Railroad.⁵² The church helps to preserve the history of the African Americans in Camden who worked against slavery.

Here the Traveler should turn around and return to State Route 10. To continue the traveler should turn left, following State Route 10 along Camden Wyoming Avenue. This road passes through the Camden townscape, with its many historic structures. The buildings, made up of many colors, shapes, and sizes, provide a variety of interesting views.

Very quickly on the right is the Camden Friends Meeting House built in 1804.⁵³ This Meeting House is important as the regional hub of Quaker worship and because it served local Quakers who were very active in the Underground Railroad. One of the Quakers who attended meetings here was John Hunn, who was buried in the adjacent graveyard in 1894. As Camden-Wyoming Avenue passes through the middle of town the traveler will see the large red brick Whatcoat Methodist Episcopal Church, built by the bricklayer Abel Gibbs (later Abraham). Members of Gibbs' family worked on the Underground Railroad and oral tradition proposes that freedom seekers may have hidden underneath the church while on their dangerous journeys north.

(Here the traveler might want to stop and follow this route description on the map since in the next part of the route new development is mixed with the historic sites.) The route makes a left on Main Street. To see the sites, you will drive two blocks, past a high school, to a park, and then turn around and go back to Camden Wyoming Avenue. The route passes two more Underground Railroad sites which are the free black community of Brinkley Hill, and an historic

⁵¹ Frank R. Zebley, *The Churches of Delaware* (Wilmington, DE: Privately printed, 1947), 226.

⁵² Larson and Bodo, 85-86.

⁵³ Zebley, 223.

African-American cemetery containing Brinkley Hill residents and Brecknock Park, the site of an 18th century mill seat.

The VFW Post 3238 serves as a landmark of the traveler's arrival in Brinkley Hill. During the nineteenth century, Brinkley Hill was a free black community, with at least fifteen families living in the area by 1830. Today, the homes and landscape of Brinkley Hill as a community is gone. The area was named for the Brinkley family, which included William and Nathaniel Brinkley, two men who were active participants in Underground Railroad activities.⁵⁴ The route also passes Demby Cemetery an historic African American cemetery that belonged to the Colored Peoples Methodist Episcopal church demolished for the widening of U.S. Route 13 in the 1950s. The cemetery contains the remains of some of the descendents of the Civil War inhabitants of Brinkley Hill. Brecknock Park (seen at the end of the road) was the estate of Thomas Howell, a wealthy miller whose house and mill ruins are located within



this Kent County park. Although gone physically, Brinkley Hill's location in the shadow of the estate nearby gives a sense of the social landscape of race in the nineteenth century.

Although the traveler may be tempted to get on U.S. Route 13, one is best advised to turn around at Brecknock Park and backtrack to State Route 10 and turn left. The Camden Meeting grounds, now the "Camp Meeting Woods," can be seen to the right, as a marker that the traveler is going in the correct direction. Historically this property was considered to be near Brinkley Hill and Brecknock but the widening of U.S. Route 13 terminated that connection. At this point, the traveler has a choice to continue on the main Tubman Byway along SR 13 North or on the travel Star Hill/Hunn optional loop which passes the Star Hill AME Church and Museum, and the sites associated with the Hunn Family.

To continue on the main Tubman Byway turn left on U.S. Route 13 and proceed north. Further travel directions pick up on page 41.

Star Hill/Hunn Optional Loop

The State Route 10 crosses U.S. Route 13 becoming West Lebanon Road, it) becomes East Lebanon Road on the far side of US 13.. The landscape along these roads is a rather unsightly urban sprawl of subdivisions and strip malls. On East Lebanon Road, after crossing a major intersection with South State Street, the route passes Great Geneva, which was one of the two Hunn family homes in the area. (Although Great Geneva may appear somewhat modest in its present context of commercial development, it was a quite substantial and elegant house when built in the 18th century.)

From Lebanon Road, the route makes a right onto Sorghum Mill Road, which heads through more recent developments. On this road, the traveler passes Wildcat Manor to the left. Unfortunately, when there are leaves on the trees Wildcat Manor is hidden from view from the road. It sits atop a bluff overlooking the St. Jones River along the old road trace that was bypassed when State Route 10 was constructed. This last remnant of this old road is accessed from a parking area on the north side of Sorghum Mill Road before taking the curve across the marsh and into Lebanon. Wildcat Manor is another home associated with the Hunn family and later willed to descendents of John Hunn's half brother.

⁵⁴ Larson and Bodo, 84-85.

At this point the traveler may choose to pull off at the Lebanon Landing boat landing, which is just past Wildcat Manor. Looking out over the water and wetlands, the traveler can place himself in the shoes of the freedom-seeker. It is a natural wetlands/marsh landscape typical of Delaware and is what faced freedom seekers. On the one hand, it provided opportunity to move silently on the water hidden among the marsh grasses but, on the other hand, without a guide, it was almost a certain path to getting lost and, worse, caught.

The route then follows Sorghum Mill Road through Lebanon and back across State Street, Extended. At the intersection of Sorghum Mill Road and State Street, Extended the traveler can look to the left to see the tree line which indicates the site of Happy Valley, John Hunn's home throughout his most active period of Underground Railroad work. Then the route continues through the Five Points intersection which is at the heart of the community of Rising Sun. At this light the route takes the gradual right fork becoming Voshells Mill-Star Hill Road going toward Star Hill, the third historic free black community in the Camden vicinity. As a marker, the traveler can look for the sign that says "Voshell Pond." At Voshell's Mill, continue on to Voshell's Mill-Star Hill Road. This road passes the Star Hill AME Church and Museum, which houses a congregation with roots into a pre-Civil War community. This church was re-built in 1905 after a fire but the original church on this site was built in 1866, and the three-bay structure to the rear of the church was part of the pre-Civil War lodge hall.⁵⁵ Adjoining the church is a museum on slave life and the Underground Railroad, run by the Star Hill Historical Society. Tours of surrounding Underground Railroad locations and the interpretation at this site earned this museum a designation on the National Park Service's Underground Railroad **Network to Freedom**.

Continuation Along the Main Route

As the state capital, Dover was the seat of the legislature and legal challenges to slavery and of the courts where Delaware as a slave state tried and convicted Freedom Seekers and those who assisted them.

The route bears left onto State Street, which carries the traveler into the heart of Dover. Dover retains its early city character of compact development and contains many historic structures from different eras. The State Street leads to the Dover Green, a pleasant shaded square that has been the symbolic center of the State. Here the traveler can pause to visit the Delaware State House. This recently restored 1791 Georgian building, figures in several of the known Underground Railroad stories and is designated as a **Network to Freedom** site. This was the site of the 1847 trial of Samuel D. Burris for the crime of helping Maria Matthews to escape from her master; he was sentenced to be sold out of the state.⁵⁶ As the capitol's central square, landscaped in its present form in the mid-nineteenth century and flanked by some buildings from the Underground Railroad era, the Dover Green retains some of the look and feel of the Underground Railroad era. Behind the Old State House, where the Visitor's Center and Biggs Museum is now located, is the site of the Dover jail, no longer standing, where Samuel D. Burris and the Dover Eight, were held. From State Street, the loop makes a left onto North Street, and then turns right onto State Route 15 North at a traffic light on to South Saulsbury Road which then becomes McKee Road.



Great Geneva, E. Lebanon Road, Camden, Kent County

⁵⁵ Zebley, 228.

⁵⁶ Larson and Bodo, 62-66.

Segment 2: Making Choices: This segment takes the traveler from Dover, via State Street, to State Route 15, through Middletown, and Odessa, linking to State Route 299.

When freedom seekers traveled the 30 some miles from Dover to Odessa, passing near the towns of Smyrna and Middletown, their path threaded a needle between areas of proslavery hostility and anti-slavery abolitionist feeling in a landscape that both concealed and exposed them. For much of the trip freedom seekers found it safest to move through forests to the west, skirting towns like Smyrna until confronted with the open wheat farms known as The Levels southwest of Middletown. . Forests were familiar to free African-Americans in Delaware; because such settings were considered too wet and marginal for farming, free blacks could buy land in them and form communities. North of Clayton, the route travels through the Blackbird State Forest, which is evocative of its historic character. The route also passes the 1873 African American Ebenezer Church in the middle of the forest, which gives a sense of the isolated African-American settlement.



Railroad Tracks and Passenger Waiting Shelter, Railroad Avenue, Route 15, Wyoming, Kent County

The Saulsbury Road landscape is made up largely of dispersed suburban development marked by many strip malls and new housing developments being built. New developments appear throughout the State Route 15 segment and are particularly prevalent here. After passing through this landscape, the road becomes McKee Road, which offers more open views of farmland.

McKee Road bears left near the Delaware Technical & Community College, leaving State Route 15 for a while soon after. McKee Road then makes a right turn at the T intersection. Shortly after, the road bears left to run parallel to the railroad tracks. McKee Road becomes Commerce Street and then Moorton Road. The route then turns left onto State Route 42, Main Street in the small town of Cheswold. The town that appears in the area today postdates the study period for this route, but the small, neat houses provide visual pleasure for the traveler. After leaving the town, Main Street becomes Seven Hickories Road, and soon after this the route intersects and rejoins Route 15 by turning right on Brenford Road. This road continues the agricultural theme of much of the route, with farm structures such as silos and irrigation systems becoming particularly dominant.

To stay on State Route 15, the route bears left at Mt. Friendship Road, and then jogs right onto Wheatleys Pond Road and immediately left onto Alley Corner Road. When Alley Corner Road comes to a T intersection, the route makes a right onto Millington Road to stay on State Route 15 (also State Route 6 East during this part of the route), passing several housing developments. To stay on State Route 15, Millington Road proceeds to West Duck Creek Road, where the route makes a left at the sign for State Route 15 to pass through the village of Clayton. The most visually arresting site in Clayton is the St. Joseph Industrial School, on the traveler's left, which once served as an industrial and trade school for African American boys of "good character" from the larger urban cities of the east. (Listed on **National Register of Historic Places**.) The late nineteenth century stone arch and frame church were built by members of the Society of St. Joseph or Josephite Order of the Catholic Church and are the earliest elements of the school that remain.

After passing through Clayton, the road becomes Clayton Greenspring Road. On this road, the farms are primarily horse farms, and the animals can often be seen in the pastures. When Clayton Greenspring Road comes to a T with Van Dyke Greenspring Road the route makes a left, still remaining on State Route 15 and passing through more open agricultural lands.



Main Street, Middletown, New Castle County

Then, the traveler follows Van Dyke Greenspring Road through Dexter's Corners, where the route deviates from State Route 15 for a short distance on to Ebenezer Church Road. The route makes a right onto Ebenezer Church Road, passing Ebenezer Church and Cemetery. This site was purchased in 1867 by an African American congregation to erect the Forrest Methodist Episcopal Chapel, finished in 1873. Although the name "Ebenezer" and the current church structure postdate 1913, the site is the only remaining evidence of the free African American community that was present here beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Specifically, the church is a marker for the approximate location of the free black community of Blackbird, which bore the same name as the still-existing town a few miles to the east. Blackbird was mentioned by Harriet Tubman in interviews, and its location near Blackbird Creek may have meant that it was a rendezvous point for freedom seekers hoping to make their escape by water.⁵⁸ Contemporary reports suggest that many freedom seekers may have traveled by water to hasten their journey with the minimum possible trace of passage. The settlement does not survive, and the church and cemetery are not in use today, but the site is a meditative spot that helps to evoke the types of small churches and communities that may have been concerned with the well-being of freedom seekers.



Main Street, Odessa, New Castle County

After passing Ebenezer Church, and crossing the railroad tracks, the route rejoins State Route 15 again by turning left onto Blackbird Station Road which soon becomes Dogtown Road. The landscape along Dogtown Road is characterized by wide-open farmlands that are completely flat, stretching to a tree line that is far in the distance. When Dogtown Road comes to an intersection with Levels Road, the route makes a right to stay on State Route 15, traveling through much of the same landscape. Levels Road meets US Route 301 Middletown Warwick Road, and the route makes a right, ending its meandering connection with State Route 15. Middletown Warwick Road becomes more commercial as it travels toward Middletown, but historic farms line its south side.

After passing some commercial buildup, the road makes a right onto State Route 299, Main Street, and passes through Middletown. The road passes through some contemporary roadside commercial development at first, but soon enters Middletown's downtown area, which is marked by historic dwellings and storefronts and a small-town atmosphere. (This area listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** as an historic district) The structures in this section are densely packed together, and the variety of building types, architectural styles, and colors

⁵⁷ Zebley, 189.

⁵⁸ Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad: from Slavery to Freedom* (1898; repr., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 119.

provide varied and pleasing views. The historic structures call to mind Middletown's past as both a dwelling place for abolitionists and a site from which many slaves escaped to begin their journey north. William Still, in his records of freedom seekers who came to him in Philadelphia, records two different instances of people from Middletown passing through in the fall of 1856. These were a party that included Hill Jones, Elizabeth Lambert, and Elizabeth's three children, Mary, Horace, and William Henry, and another fugitive traveling alone, James Harris.⁵⁹ These groups are representative of the variety of freedom seekers who traveled north.



Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, Odessa, New Castle County

When the Route 299 leaves the downtown area, the road becomes East Main Street and then Middletown Odessa Road, passing more strip malls and chain restaurants. Along this stretch of the road, the traveler passes Middletown High School, built on the site that once included the John Hunn farm. It was here that the Hawkins family arrived with conductor Samuel D. Burris at 7:00 p.m. on December 5, 1845, seeking shelter after a long and grueling wagon ride through the snow. Shortly after their arrival, they were captured by slave catchers when a neighbor reported the unfamiliar group and transported to New Castle to await their fate.⁶⁰ Although the Hunn farm is gone, the high school is the landmark that makes it possible to find this location. Across State Route 299 from the high school, on the north side of the road, is the site of the home of John Alston, a cousin of John Hunn's who is also documented as harboring freedom seekers by William Still. After crossing State Route 1, the road becomes Main Street and passes through the historic town of Odessa.



View of Wetlands, Route 9, New Castle County

At the western edge of Odessa, Route 299 passes the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, a designated **Network to Freedom** site, on the south side of the road before the intersection with U.S. Route 13. Built in 1785, local oral tradition names this building as a possible stop along the Underground Railroad, with a hiding place in the second story eave closet for escaping slaves. Although written documentation for this legend has not been found, the Meeting House is still important as a place of worship for the Quaker families in the area, including well documented abolitionists John Hunn and John Alston. The accompanying graveyard is also the burial place of John Alston, his family, and one of the minor children of John Hunn.⁶¹ The walled Corbit family graveyard is also adjacent to the meeting

house. After passing the Meeting House, the route continues through Odessa, a town which is noted for its historic structures. Many of the buildings still standing in the town would have been present during the Underground Railroad era. One of the buildings is the Corbit-Sharp House,

⁵⁹ William Still, *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, Etc., Narrating the Hardships, Hair-Breadth Escapes, and Death Struggles of the Slaves in Their Efforts For Freedom, as Related by Themselves and Others of Witnessed by the Author: Together with Some of the Largest Stockholders and Most Liberal Aiders and Advisors of the Road* (1872; reprint, Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970), 397, 539.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 713-714.

⁶¹ Larson and Bodo, 118.

also a designated **Network to Freedom** site and **National Historic Landmark**, which was built in the 1770s and, according to family lore, was used as a stop on the Underground Railroad on at least one occasion. In 1914, Mary Corbit Warner recalled that her father, Daniel Corbit, was known to be active in the Underground Railroad, and one morning her mother hid a fugitive in a crawlspace in the attic while men searched the house for him.⁶² This historic house is open to public tours by the Historic Odessa Foundation, which interprets its connection to the Underground Railroad.



Delaware River, Route 9, New Castle County

Upon leaving Odessa, the road becomes Old State Road and passes through an area that has farmland mixed with housing developments. At Taylors Bridge Road, the route makes a left to continue on State Route 299. The segment ends at the intersection with Thomas Landing Road, where the route turns left onto State Route 9 and begins a new segment.

Segment 3: The Bold Move: To begin this segment, the traveler follows Main St. (SR 299) south to intersection with SR 9 at Thomas Landing Road and turns north. From here the Tubman Byway follows SR 9 north through the town of New Castle to Wilmington. SR 9 from Odessa to New Castle is also the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway.

The State Route 9 segment of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway runs concurrently with the designation of State Route 9 as the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway, recognized for its largely undisturbed natural qualities, including wetlands that host a myriad of species of migrating birds.⁶³ Its significance in the Underground Railroad story comes mainly from its proximity to the coast and Delaware Bay, where many freedom seekers made the bold move to search for passages by water to freedom in New Jersey. The landscape in this segment is largely unchanged from the way it appeared in the antebellum era, with marshy wetlands that provide a haven for waterfowl now just as they did then. The route also passes through several historic towns, including Delaware City and Port Penn, both of which were home to free black communities, and New Castle, the site of the trial of Thomas Garrett in 1848. These features help the traveler to imagine freedom seekers escaping through the landscape.



Reedy Point Bridge, S. Reedy Point Road, Route 9, Delaware City, New Castle County

From Odessa continue from Thomas Landing Road. The landscape is a mix of agricultural and residential, with modern subdivisions next to wide open fields, irrigation systems, and a Christmas tree farm.. Here, the landscape is mixed agricultural and wetlands. The route crosses two bridges over inlets from the Delaware Bay, and then crosses a third bridge after a sharp bend in the road. At a T

⁶² Mary Corbit. "Incident at the Corbit House before the Civil War by Mary Corbit (Mrs. E. Tatnall Warner), Story of the Underground Railroad Read before the National Society of Colonial Dames of America, March 9, 1914." Slavery Folder #4, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware.

⁶³ Route 9 Steering Committee, *Route 9 Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway: Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Nomination Application* (December 2006).

intersection with Bayview Road, the road makes a brief right before turning left onto Saint Augustine Road.

The byway travels by Augustine Beach, which is part of the Augustine Wildlife Refuge and offers high-quality views of Delaware Bay. In the spring and fall, this is a prime location for viewing huge flocks of migrating waterfowl. At this point and throughout much of the rest of the segment, the massive tower of the Salem and Hope Creek Generating Stations can be seen across the bay in New Jersey. On either side of the route, the landscape continues to be made up primarily of wetlands. In this part of the segment, the extremely isolated feeling of driving along State Route 9 makes a spiritual connection to the story of the Underground Railroad. As the route enters the historic village of Port Penn, the road becomes South Congress Street. For a short distance, Port Penn offers a townscape that has several historic structures. The route turns left very briefly onto North Market Street, crossing Stewart Street, the site of a free black community in the antebellum era.⁶⁴ The free black community in Port Penn possibly was in existence as early as the 1850s when John W. Tillman used the cover of a camp meeting as an opportunity to escape.⁶⁵ Evidence of this community is also present in the form of St. Daniel's United Methodist Church, which has been in the hands of an African American congregation since 1920, when the congregation that had been occupying it ceased to function. The structure was built in 1891.⁶⁶ Although this site is not directly connected to the Underground Railroad, it is included as a part of African American history. (Listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** as part of NR Historic District.) After passing Stewart Street, the route makes a right onto Liberty Street, passing the Port Penn Interpretive Center. Once the road has passed the town limits of Port Penn, it becomes Delaware City-Port Penn Road.

On this road, the route crosses Reedy Point Bridge, which achieves a great height while passing over the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, offering a 360-degree perspective of the surrounding landscape. As the landscape now is so similar to the way it was in the early nineteenth century, the view gives the traveler a unique perspective through which to survey the area. The low-lying, marshy land and the tall grasses would have provided both a haven and a hazard for escaping slaves. After crossing the bridge, the route enters Delaware City, passing the road to Polktown, a free black settlement that was founded in 1835 and today holds the graves of several African Americans who fought in the Civil War.⁶⁷ The small, vernacular houses that survive in this area help the reader to envision how free African Americans were forced to live. Delaware City is also the point of origin for the ferry to Pea Patch Island, which is the location of both a nationally recognized heronry and Fort Delaware, the Civil War prison camp. Researchers associated with Fort Delaware are currently looking into mentions of African American troops at the fort that have been found in letters, and the fort often offers an interpretive program about this subject. There is at least one story of an attempted escape by water that concerns Delaware City. According to the story, printed in the *North Star* on November 16, 1849, a free woman was trying to flee with her child, who was a slave. She managed to find transportation to Philadelphia from Delaware City on the steamboat



New Castle Court House, Delaware Street, New Castle, New Castle County

⁶⁴ Skelcher, 89-90, 152.

⁶⁵ Biographical Sketch of the Life and Travels of John W. Tillman, Doe Run, Chester County, Pennsylvania, February 1896, Delaware Historical Society.

⁶⁶ Zebley, 177.

⁶⁷ Route 9 Steering Committee, 21.

Express, but was discovered and captured on the journey. She was returned to Delaware City on the steamboat *Balloon*, put ashore, and brought to the Dover jail.⁶⁸ This tale shows what mothers were willing to do to rescue their children and demonstrates that steamboats were considered a viable means of escape. The traveler may take a detour to view the waterfront while in the town. While traveling through Delaware City the road is called Fifth Street, but upon leaving the town limits the name changes to Wrangle Hill Road.

On Wrangle Hill Road, the route returns to the wetlands that have dominated much of the segment. As the route makes a right onto River Road, it passes several industrial sites connected with the area's oil refinery. Although these sites detract from the surrounding natural landscape and the historic feel of the area, they provide visual interest in their intricacy and sheer size. After passing these industrial sites, the wetlands are interspersed with stands of scrubby trees and hedges, and the views become more enclosed, with occasional filtered views of Delaware Bay. Soon, the route becomes very enclosed as it is hemmed with phragmites that grow closely on both sides of the road.

As the route passes into the city of New Castle, the road becomes West 7th Street, and the route departs briefly from State Route 9. Instead of turning left onto Washington Avenue, as State Route 9 does, the route continues straight on West 7th Street into the heart of the historic district. At South Street, the route makes a right and then a quick left onto West 6th Street. Next, the route turns right on Delaware Street. New Castle has been preserved as a historic district with many structures that would have been standing during the Underground Railroad era. One of these is the New Castle Court House, which was the site of the 1848 trial where Thomas Garrett and John Hunn were convicted of knowingly assisting fugitive slaves in their escape, after they aided the Hawkins family. Both were fined heavily for this offense.⁶⁹ New Castle was also a site from which many slaves escaped, using the resources available as part of the Underground Railroad.



,The building is a **National Historic Landmark** and a **Network to Freedom** site and operates as a museum. William Still identifies three young fugitives who passed through Philadelphia after leaving New Castle, including William Henry Laminson and George Washington Gooseberry in late 1855 or early 1856 and Murray Young at an unknown date.⁷⁰ After viewing the courthouse, the route turns left on 2nd Street and then left on Harmony Street. Harmony Street returns the traveler to 6th Street where the traveler makes a right turn and the road changes from West to East

6th Street. This street carries the traveler out of New Castle and rejoins State Route 9, at this point called Wilmington Road.

The route stays on Wilmington Road for some time, and as it moves along, the landscape is increasingly dominated by late 19th century suburban residential and industrial development, After crossing Interstate 295, the road becomes New Castle Avenue, passing through much of the same type of early suburban pattern before entering an area that consists mainly of row houses, announcing the beginning of the more urban character of Wilmington. The segment ends just before the road crosses the Christiana River into Wilmington.

⁶⁸ Larson and Bodo, 91.

⁶⁹ James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Moylan, PA: The Whimsie Press, 1977), 60-65.

⁷⁰ Still, 346, 348, 493-494.

Segment 4: Gateway to Freedom:

This segment takes the traveler throughout the city of Wilmington, and connects to State Route 52, or Kennett Pike, which is part of the Brandywine Scenic and Historic Byway.

The fourth segment of the route carries the traveler through the city of Wilmington. In many ways, Wilmington was the lynchpin of Delaware's Underground Railroad system. As the home and workplace of Thomas Garrett, it was an important destination for almost every Freedom Seeker traveling through the area; more than 2,700 passed through Garrett's hands in his years as a station master on the Underground Railroad.⁷¹ The city was also home to an important and thriving free black community that often provided solace to escaped slaves. Some of the earliest African American churches were founded here, and abolitionists held meetings in several of the city's municipal and social facilities. Although some structures, such as Garrett's home and store, are no longer standing, Wilmington offers a rich opportunity to experience important sites and, through historical markers, to connect with the figures who were so important during this time.⁷²



Peter Spencer Plaza, N. French Street, Wilmington, New Castle County

The segment begins at the endpoint of State Route 9, where New Castle Avenue meets South Heald Street. After passing a few blocks of small, densely packed homes, the route crosses the Christiana River over the 4th Street Bridge. Just after crossing the bridge, the route makes a right onto Swedes Landing Road, passing some industrial sites and winding close to the Christiana River. Swedes Landing Road ends at a T intersection with East 7th Street, and a brief detour to the right brings the traveler to Fort Christina Park, the site of the first permanent settlement in Delaware by the Swedes in 1638 which celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1938.



The Rocks-Fort Christina State Park, E. 7th Street, Wilmington, New Castle County

The park, a designated **Network to Freedom** site, includes a courtyard enclosed by brick walls, a granite monument by Carl Milles commemorating the settlement, and a short distance to the west, the traveler can view a replica of the first ship that the Swedes used to travel to Delaware, the *Kalmar Nyckel*. In addition to its significance to Delaware's colonial history, the site also figures in at least one Underground Railroad account. In a letter to William Still dated March 23, 1856, Thomas Garrett announced that Captain Fountain had arrived in Wilmington with fourteen fugitive passengers and landed with them at the Rocks.⁷³ In memory of Captain Fountain, who made many daring voyages in conjunction with the Underground Railroad, this site is included as part

⁷¹ Essah, 56.

⁷² For more information about the African American community in the nineteenth century in Wilmington, see Peter T. Dalleo. "Thrifty and intelligent, moral and religious': Wilmington's Free African American Community as Portrayed in the Blue Hen's Chicken, 1846-1852," *Delaware History* 28:1 (Spring-Summer 1998).

⁷³ Still, 336.

of the route.

After the brief detour to Fort Christina State Park, the route backtracks to the intersection with Swedes Landing Road and continues straight along East 7th Street, turning right on North Buttonwood Street. This street was once the home of Severn Johnson who lived in Wilmington and participated in Underground Railroad activities.⁷⁴ The route then turns left onto Taylor Street. On the northeast corner of Taylor Street and Church Street is the former site of the home of George Wilmer, another Underground Railroad participant. Wilmer was an enslaved person for a long time, and he was active as a conductor on the Underground Railroad even while he was enslaved, as his owner gave him a great amount of freedom to travel about the state. He was active in the mid- to late 1850s, and at one point in 1855 ferried 25 freedom seekers to Wilmington in four months. After he was set free in 1858, he moved to this site in Wilmington with his wife, Margaret, and probably continued his antislavery activities until they were no longer needed with the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment.⁷⁵ Although the homes of Wilmer and Johnson are no longer standing, the sites are in a neighborhood that has some structures similar to those that may have been the homes of these men. Their contribution to the cause is an important part of Wilmington's Underground Railroad story.



From Taylor Street, the route makes a left onto Bennett Street and then a right onto East 8th Street, a cross street that will carry the traveler through the town. The road passes many historic homes and other structures of different eras, creating a variety of views and patterns among the many architectural styles. The route turns right on North Walnut Street, and the route then makes a left onto East 12th Street and then a left onto North French Street. The site of the non-extant home of Comegys Munson is on North French Street between East 12th Street and East 13th Street. Munson was another Underground Railroad operator and was mentioned in at least one letter from Thomas Garrett to William Still, written on June 9, 1857. Garrett, in writing about a mother of twelve children seeking refuge and solace at Munson's house after a difficult journey, identifies Munson as a man who labored at a regular job by day and began his Underground Railroad job upon going home for the evening.⁷⁶ As with the sites of Wilmer and Johnson, Munson's former home is important to remember as part of the African American resistance to slavery.

The traveler passes Peter Spencer Plaza on North French Street, another site of commemoration for the Underground Railroad route. Peter Spencer, a former slave who escaped from slavery in Maryland, was the founder of the first Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington in 1813. He founded the church as a response to discrimination against African Americans in white-led churches.⁷⁷ Spencer was also the creator of the Big Quarterly Festival in 1814, which gave African Americans an opportunity to socialize and to celebrate their culture.⁷⁸ Spencer and his wife are buried in the plaza, which contains a plaque listing his accomplishments. A sculpture of a man and child titled *Father and Son*, representing Spencer's

⁷⁴ McGowan, 97.

⁷⁵ Larson and Bodo, 90.

⁷⁶ McGowan, 143.

⁷⁷ Williams, *Slavery and Freedom in Delaware*, 224-225.

⁷⁸ Lewis V. Baldwin, *The Mark of a Man: Peter Spencer and the African Union Methodist Tradition, The Man, the Movement, the Message, and the Legacy* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1987), 4-5.

teachings about good family life and commemorating the founding of the church, marks his grave. The plaza is located on the former site of the church he founded.⁷⁹

After passing Peter Spencer Plaza, the route makes a right on East 8th Street, followed by a left onto North King Street. The main route then makes a right onto East 4th Street, but as an optional detour, the traveler can continue down North King Street until it ends at Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, a designated **Network to Freedom** site. The walk from the Peter Spencer Plaza to Tubman-Garrett Park commemorates these two titans of the Underground Railroad in Delaware. Historical markers remember the achievements of Tubman, Garrett, and Peter Spencer, and the park gives the traveler an opportunity to stroll along the bank of the Christiana River. The location of the park near the Market Street Bridge was chosen partly due to the connection of this particular river crossing with the Underground Railroad. The current bridge was built in 1927 to replace a bridge that was built in 1883, but in the antebellum era another bridge stood on just this location. This was the only bridge into town, meaning that any freedom seeker hoping to reach Thomas Garrett had to consider a plan to cross it. One famous story from 1856 has Harriet Tubman with a party of five fugitives making the crossing in a false-bottomed wagon supplied by Garrett.⁸⁰ To return to the main route, as many of the streets in Wilmington run one way, the traveler can head southeast along East Front Street and make a left onto North Walnut Street, which crosses East 4th Street.

As East 4th Street approaches North Market Street, the visitor must find parking because the Walking Discovery Area is about to begin. To begin the Discovery Area, the traveler makes a right on North Market Street, passing the Delaware History Museum, which houses rotating exhibits on the state's history that often include a facet of African American history. The first site on the walking portion of the route is the Wilmington Old Town Hall. Built in 1798,



Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, N. King Street,
Wilmington, New Castle County

this structure served as the town's main municipal building until 1916. In the antebellum era, it was often a site for abolitionist meetings.

After passing Old Town Hall, the tour makes a left onto East 7th Street, followed by another left onto North Shipley Street. On this road, the traveler passes the site of Thomas Garrett's house and store, a designated **Network to Freedom** site. This spot was the focal point of the journeys of many freedom seekers traveling through the state of Delaware.⁸¹ At this site, Thomas Garrett helped more than 2,700 fugitives realize their goal of freedom. Although the

structures are no longer standing, this site is one of the most important along the route, providing an opportunity to reflect on the hundreds of freedom seekers who risked so much to reach this very spot. This spot is the last stop on the walking tour, and after viewing it the traveler returns to his car to finish the drive through Wilmington.

⁷⁹ The traveler may also choose to visit the descendant church of Peter Spencer, the Mother African Union Church, at 8th Street and Franklin Street to see the "Peter Spencer Heritage Hallway," an exhibit on Peter Spencer and African American history.

⁸⁰ Robin Bodo, *Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application Form: Market Street Bridge and Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park* (January 14, 2003).

⁸¹ McGowan, 132-133.



Elwood Garrett House, N. Washington Street, Wilmington, New Castle County

The driving route continues along East 4th Street and makes a right onto West Street, beginning a loop that brings the traveler through Quaker Hill. Quaker Hill is one of Wilmington's historic areas, and, as the name implies, was once the nexus of the city's Quaker community. The area was listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, with an additional area added in 1985.⁸² The neighborhood is filled with brick

homes that date back to the nineteenth century, and the pleasant, tree-lined streets provide a welcome contrast to the more urban areas of downtown Wilmington out of which the route has just passed. On West Street, the route passes the Wilmington Friends Meeting House, a designated **Network to Freedom** site and the place of worship where Thomas Garrett attended services regularly and married his second wife, Rachel Mendenhall.⁸³ This unassuming structure was built in 1817 on a site that had been home to Quaker meetings since 1738. Garrett is buried in the adjoining graveyard, marked by a simple gravestone and resting under one of the cemetery's stately old trees.⁸⁴ Both of his wives are buried nearby. In addition to its connection to Thomas Garrett, the Meeting House is important as a site where abolitionist Quakers gathered, networked, and spread their ideas. Many members of this meeting were at the heart of Underground Railroad operations in the city.

After passing the Meeting House, the route makes a left onto West 8th Street and another left onto North Washington Street, where it drives past the home of Elwood Garrett, located at 609-11 Washington Street. (Listed on **National Register of Historic Places** as part of NR historic district.) Born on December 19, 1815, Elwood Garrett was the eldest son of Thomas Garrett and his first wife, Mary Sharpless. Elwood, originally trained as a machinist, started a daguerreotype business in Wilmington in 1850. This house is one of the few Underground Railroad-related properties in the city of Wilmington that is still standing. Maintaining Elwood Garrett's house is particularly important because his father's house and store no longer exist, making this structure the only remaining connection to the Garrett family. While there are no particular stories involving Elwood Garrett, it is believed that he followed in his father's footsteps and was active on the Underground Railroad, perhaps using this site as a haven for fugitives. After passing the Elwood Garrett house, the route turns left onto West 4th Street and then left again onto West Street.

After turning onto West Street, the route brings the traveler past the sites of the homes of two Underground Railroad workers. Neither building is still standing, but once again, the associations that come along with these sites are very important to the overall route. The traveler turns right onto West 9th Street and



View from Kennett Pike, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County

⁸² National Register of Historic Places, "National Register of Historic Places," available from <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/DE/New+Castle/state7.html>. Internet.

⁸³ McGowan, 46.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 130.

then makes another right onto North Tatnall Street. On this block, between 8th and 9th streets, once lived two Underground Railroad conductors, Joseph Walker and Henry Craige. Both of these men were dedicated to helping their fellow men in seeking freedom. Born of a West Indian father and an English or Irish mother, Joseph Walker was a member of the African American community in Wilmington, where he made a living as a laborer.⁸⁵ He is the only African American collaborator with Thomas Garrett mentioned in Professor Wilbur Siebert's records, and he worked as a trusted conductor, bringing freedom seekers from Wilmington to the Pennsylvania border.⁸⁶ Henry Craige was a brick maker living in Wilmington at the height of the Underground Railroad and a trusted friend and conductor who worked with Garrett. In a letter to William Still in 1856, Garrett gave Craige high praise, saying, "Thee may take Harry Craige by the hand as a brother, true to the cause; he is one of our most efficient aids on the Rail Road, and worthy of full confidence."⁸⁷ Although not much is known about these sites, it is possible that these men used their homes to shelter escaped slaves forwarded to them by Thomas Garrett. They also may have been involved in conducting fugitives out of the city to locations in Pennsylvania using several different escape routes out of Wilmington. After passing these two sites, the route turns right onto 8th Street, followed by a right onto West Street.

After this section the route continues along West Street and then makes a left onto West 10th Street. When this street ends at Delaware Avenue, the route merges with Delaware Avenue, traveling through a city neighborhood that offers a wide variety of architectural views. Shortly after merging onto Delaware Avenue, the route merges left onto Pennsylvania Avenue (This area is listed on the **National Register** of Historic Places as a historic district). The segment ends as Pennsylvania Avenue passes the intersection with Rising Sun Lane and becomes Kennett Pike, the final segment of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway.

Segment 5: On to Pennsylvania: The last segment follows State Route 52/Kennett Pike, to the Pennsylvania border, concluding the trip.

The last section of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway runs concurrently with the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway on Kennett Pike, with a total distance of 5.5 miles. Kennett Pike runs through a landscape that maintains a high level of scenic and historic quality despite the fact that some parts of the route are densely populated. As part of the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway, Kennett Pike is closely associated with the DuPont family and other prominent Delaware families, and it links several cultural features.⁸⁸ During the nineteenth century, the road may have been the last leg of the journey for freedom seekers looking to reach free soil in Pennsylvania. Kennett Pike links Wilmington Underground Railroad sites with sites just across the Pennsylvania border, such as the Longwood Progressive Friends Meeting House and abolitionist safe houses in Kennett Square. As some form of road has traveled along this route since at least 1811, when Kennett Pike was first established as a turnpike, this may have been



View from Kennett Pike, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County

⁸⁵ William J. Switala, *The Underground Railroad in Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia* (Stackpole Books, 2004), 54-55.

⁸⁶ McGowan, 15, 127.

⁸⁷ Still, 20.

⁸⁸ John Milner Associates, Inc. and Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, PC, *Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway: Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Nomination Application* (April 2002).

the very route that Thomas Garrett took on trips between Wilmington and the Pennsylvania abolitionist sites. As the road carries the traveler to the state line, it passes through a number of visually distinctive areas that provide a variety of views in this last segment of the Underground Railroad route.

The segment begins at the intersection with Rising Sun Lane, which marks the city limit of Wilmington and the point at which Pennsylvania Avenue becomes Kennett Pike. In the first part of the segment, the road is a four-lane highway with several traffic lights. The beginning of the route is characterized by the athletic fields of the Tower Hill School, which provide open views. As the road passes through a residential area, there are many open lawns and mature deciduous street trees, such as sycamores, that are planted at regular intervals along the road. Some of these historical neighborhoods date from the early twentieth century. After passing through these neighborhoods, the road is divided by a median strip planted with a number of different types of vegetation, including winterberry. In the winter, this shrub loses its leaves but maintains its bright red berries, creating a glorious impression upon the landscape. After passing these shrubs, the road comes to an intersection with Barley Mill Road (State Route 141).



After crossing Barley Mill Road, Kennett Pike enters the village of Greenville. The road is straight through the town and maintains its four lanes through almost the entire length. During the nineteenth century, this area was agricultural, but today it has developed into a suburban shopping area with several strip malls. Recent street improvements include the planting of median vegetation and trees and the inclusion of brick crosswalks and sidewalks, as well as new lighting fixtures. These improvements add a quaint air to the segment and soften the impact of the recent developments, which would otherwise disturb the fabric of this historic area. Just before leaving the village, the road merges into a two-lane highway.

Just after Kennett Pike passes Brook Valley Road, the landscape begins to change. Here, the road is relatively straight in horizontal alignment and flat in vertical alignment as it passes through a landscape of rolling fields and mature woodlands. Starting in this area and continuing to the state line, this road has been designated the Kennett Pike Greenway in recognition of its popularity with walkers, joggers, and bicyclists. As the road passes through the landscape, the traveler is offered a variety of view types, from open fields and lawns to filtered views of farmsteads through lines of tall, evenly spaced evergreens.

The landscape in this part of the segment is dominated on the eastern side by views of the grounds of the Wilmington Country Club and the Winterthur Museum and Country Estate. These two properties offer views of gently rolling hills that have been carefully landscaped, with neat lawns, impeccably groomed hedgerows, and mature trees. Small structures that dot the landscape help to enhance the view. These fields are some of the most striking views in this segment.

After passing the intersection with Old Kennett Road, the route continues on Kennett Pike's relatively straight horizontal alignment, but the vertical alignment begins to dip up and down as the road climbs small hills. The first and most striking view after passing Old Kennett Road is the Lower Brandywine Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, which appear on the western side of the highway as the segment begins. Built in 1859 and renovated in 1890 and 1928, the church stands on a small hill facing the road and would have been present on Thomas Garrett's journeys at the end of the antebellum era.⁸⁹ The church grounds include a historic graveyard and a modern cemetery, both of which are visible from the road.

After passing the church, the road passes through an area that is largely screened by trees, with some filtered views of large-lot properties, both historic farmsteads and contemporary subdivisions. Stands of predominantly conifer trees line both sides of the road. . Wooden fences and decorative brick walls add to the private and enclosed feeling in this section of the road. Shortly before entering the village of Centreville, there is a view of a nineteenth-century bank barn on a hill above a small pond.

Announced by a sign that sits in the middle of a center island planted with shrubs, Centreville is a small village that is popular for its shops, residences, and businesses (Listed on the **National Register** as a historic district). The village offers views of several historic structures, and designated bicycle lanes make it a destination for recreation. A view that has been recognized by the Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway nomination is that of Canby Park, a small recreational park on the eastern side of the road. Centreville is also remembered as the site of an altercation between a group of twenty-eight freedom seekers who had escaped together from



Lower Brandywine Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, Kennett Pike, New Castle County

Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1857 and a gang of Irishmen intent on causing them mischief. In the course of the struggle, one of the Irishmen was wounded; one source said he was shot but was likely to survive,⁹⁰ while another maintains that he died from a stab wound. Desperate for their freedom, these fugitives did what they needed to do to survive. As the traveler leaves the town, the road passes a high stone wall on the western side that provides visual interest.

After leaving the village, Kennett Pike carries the traveler to the state line. It passes through rolling pastures that offer a high level of visual quality, including a pasture that was originally part of the Oberod estate, located just after

Snuff Mill Road. The pastures are often screened by tall, evenly spaced trees, and there may be

⁸⁹ Zebley, 127-128.

⁹⁰ Still, 663.

occasional views of farm animals, such as sheep. The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway ends at the state line, marked by a sign welcoming the traveler to Pennsylvania. At this point, the fugitive knew he finally stood on free soil, but there was still a long way to travel before total safety could be achieved in Canada.

APPENDIX 1: INTRINSIC QUALITY FORMS

The following pages consist of intrinsic quality forms for all of the historic sites along the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The forms have been arranged according to the geographic locations of the sites when driving from south to north.

Segment 1: State Route 10, Camden and Dover (The Gauntlet)

Segment 2: State Route 15 (Making Choices)

Segment 3: State Route 9 (The Bold Move)

Segment 4: Wilmington (Gateway to Freedom)

Segment 5: Kennett Pike (On to Pennsylvania)

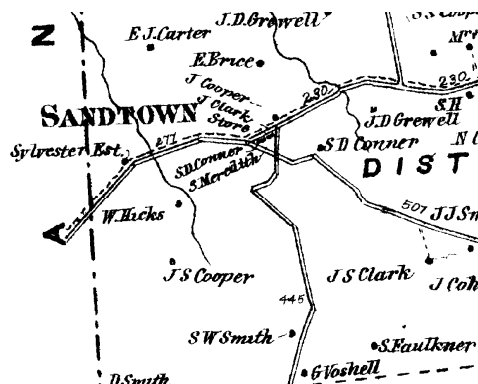
Types of Underground Railroad Historic Intrinsic Quality Sites. From the inventory, evaluation and research, four types of sites have been identified reflecting historic intrinsic qualities conveying the experience of the Underground Railroad and its context to the traveler.

- **Underground Railroad Sites (U):** These sites have verified association between individuals, events, and places with the Underground Railroad in Delaware. These locations are not necessarily site specific but sometimes refer to a general location or generalized community identified by an important informant. (For example, Willow Grove in Kent County was identified by Harriet Tubman as a place she stopped and has association with the Dover Eight incident. There is a mile-long stretch of road connecting the nucleated segregated settlements both identified as Willow Grove along State Route 10. It is known that this area was important but not the specific location within this general area.)
- **Cultural Context Sites (C):** Connotes a site or area that is related to broad themes of the Underground Railroad historic context such as the growth of free black communities and churches, abolitionist Quaker families and meetinghouses, African Americans in the Civil War and others.
- **Commemorative/Interpretive Sites (I):** Sites that commemorate specific Underground Railroad events or interpret the Underground Railroad across the state or in a specific locale such as museums and historical markers.
- **Evocative Landscape Site (E):** Connotes a site or area that visually evokes the period during which Underground Railroad activity took place as the historic landscape of this part of Delaware generally shows minimal signs of intrusion.

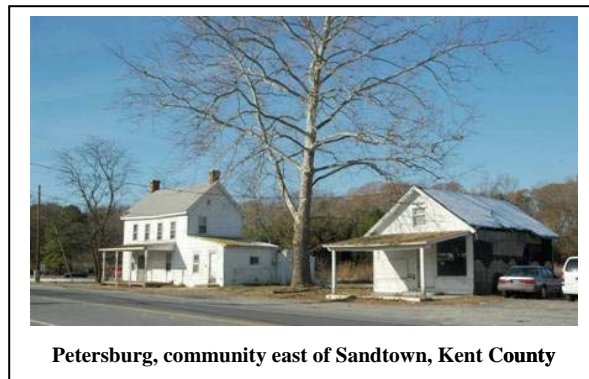
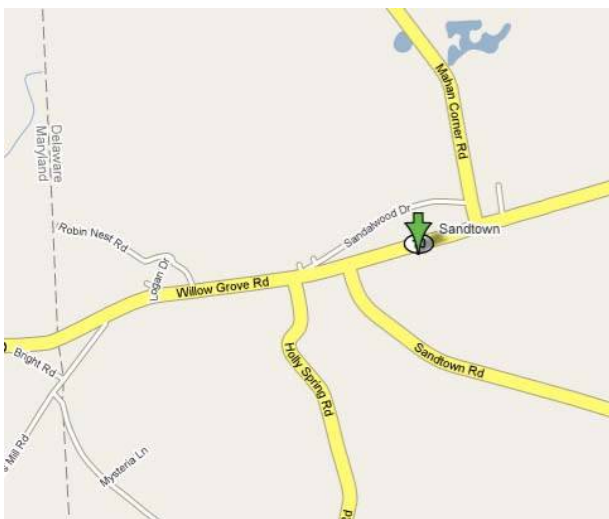
Name: Sandtown

Segment: 1

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Harriet Tubman is one of the best known figures in the history of the Underground Railroad. After freeing herself from slavery and escaping to Canada, she made multiple trips back to Maryland to help other members of her family escape, traveling from Maryland through Delaware up to the Pennsylvania border. Parts of her route through Delaware can be retraced from the evidence provided by nineteenth century publications such as William Still's *The Underground Railroad* of 1871 or Wilbur Siebert's 1898 *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*. Siebert conducted an interview with Tubman in 1897 during which she mentioned Sandtown as one of her Delaware stops. She led enslaved people north "by way of Poplar Neck, Cambridge, where her father and mother were, and Baltimore where her cousin Tom Tubman was. Thence she would take a boat with her travelers and get off at some convenient landing in Delaware. This small town, only 1.5 miles from the Maryland border, still exists today although few examples of antebellum nineteenth century architecture are visible."⁹¹



⁹¹ For further information, see *The Friend; A Religious and Literary Journal*, September 11, 1852.

Name: State Route 10 Agricultural Landscape

Segment: 1

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that are similar to the way they would have appeared in the antebellum era. These landscapes help the traveler to imagine the freedom seeker's experience trying to move stealthily through farmlands, wetlands, and woods. The areas also have a powerful scenic function, adding breathtaking moments of beauty to the highway.

From Sandtown to Camden, with a brief break when passing through Willow Grove, State Route 10 passes a series of farms and wide open fields. These farms help to evoke the period of the Underground Railroad, when this area would have been used by farmers much as it is today. Freedom seekers had to figure out a way to pass through this landscape; the open fields did not provide much cover and it was difficult to know who could be trusted. Farm buildings, such as sheds and barns, were sometimes sources of shelter during the day.



Name: Henry Cowgill Farm Site

Segment: 1

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Quakers were an integral part of the Underground Railroad, with religious beliefs that considered slavery immoral. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of Quakers were living in southern Pennsylvania and New Jersey as well as in northern Maryland and Delaware. The relatively high concentration of Quakers in Delaware helped establish an Underground Railroad network in the state. The Cowgills were a prominent Delaware Quaker family, owning rural properties like this one as well as properties in more urban areas like Camden. According to oral history passed down through his descendents, Henry Cowgill helped fleeing slaves by housing the fugitives in the family's home or barn and providing them with much needed food, rest, and clothing during their stay. Although there are no extant structures from the Cowgill farm, the land use remains agricultural and a visitor can envisage the mid-nineteenth century landscape. An abolition pocket piece Henry Cowgill once owned is on display at the Camden Friends Meeting House six miles northeast in Camden. The medallion is a metal oval disk about 2-3 inches at the longest diameter with the standard design of the kneeling slave in chains with the words "Am I not a Man and a Brother."



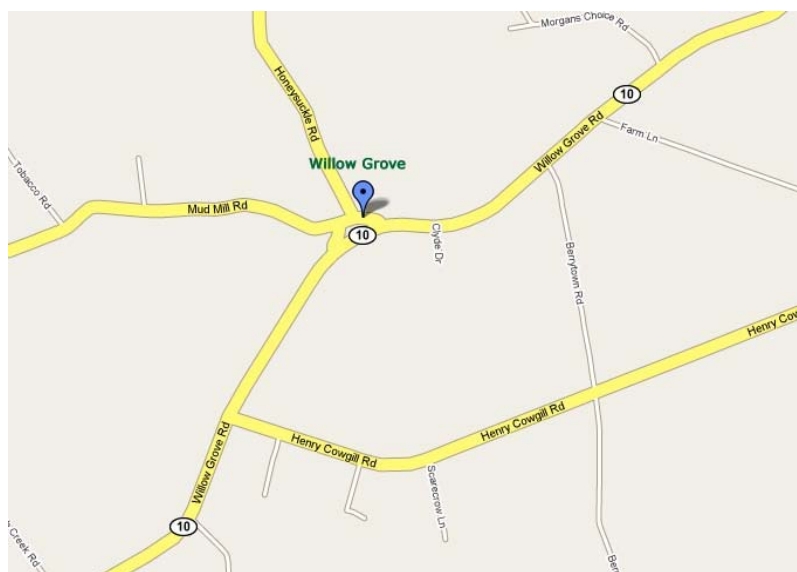
Name: Willow Grove

Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context;
Underground Railroad



While researching his 1898 book, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*, Wilbur Siebert interviewed legendary Underground Railroad figure Harriet Tubman. Tubman recounted the route she followed through Delaware from her starting point in Maryland. The transcript recorded that she went northward from “Baltimore where her cousin Tom Tubman was. Thence she would take a boat with her travelers and get off at some convenient landing in Delaware. If she reached the Maryland line, she put up with Sam Green. At Sand Town, in Delaware she found refuge with Will Grove...”⁹² There is no evidence that a man named “Will Grove” existed and it is likely Tubman meant she stopped in the town of Willow Grove, roughly six miles east of Sandtown. However, it should be noted that the entire mile long corridor was referred to as Willow Grove that connected the white community and the Black community to the east. It is unknown exactly where Underground Railroad activity occurred. But, that Willow Grove was involved in the Underground Railroad is confirmed in an 1857 article, “Excitement in Delaware: Unsuccessful Attempt to Capture Fugitive Slaves,” from the *Dover Reporter*. Recounting the travails of the Dover Eight, the reporter narrates how after being captured and subsequently escaping from jail “six of them were tracked to a house in Camden, but the officers could not enter for the want of a sufficient warrant which the magistrates said they had no power to give. On Tuesday night is currently reported, the six were conveyed to the house of a man residing near Willow Grove, whence they were forwarded up the country by the forest roads, or rather on the underground railroad.”⁹³



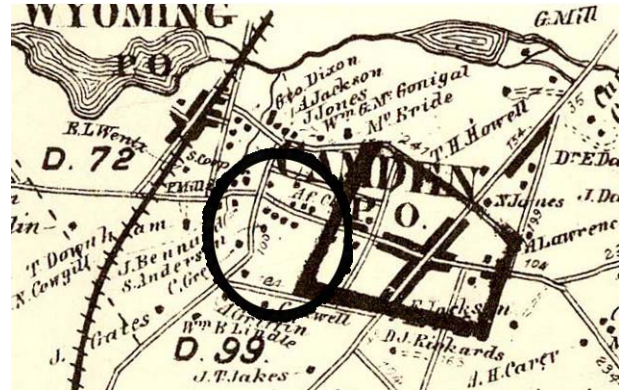
⁹² Material Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus. Manuscript Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Call Number US5278.36.25.

⁹³ “Excitement in Delaware”, *Provincial Freeman*, March 21, 1857, Accessible Archives.

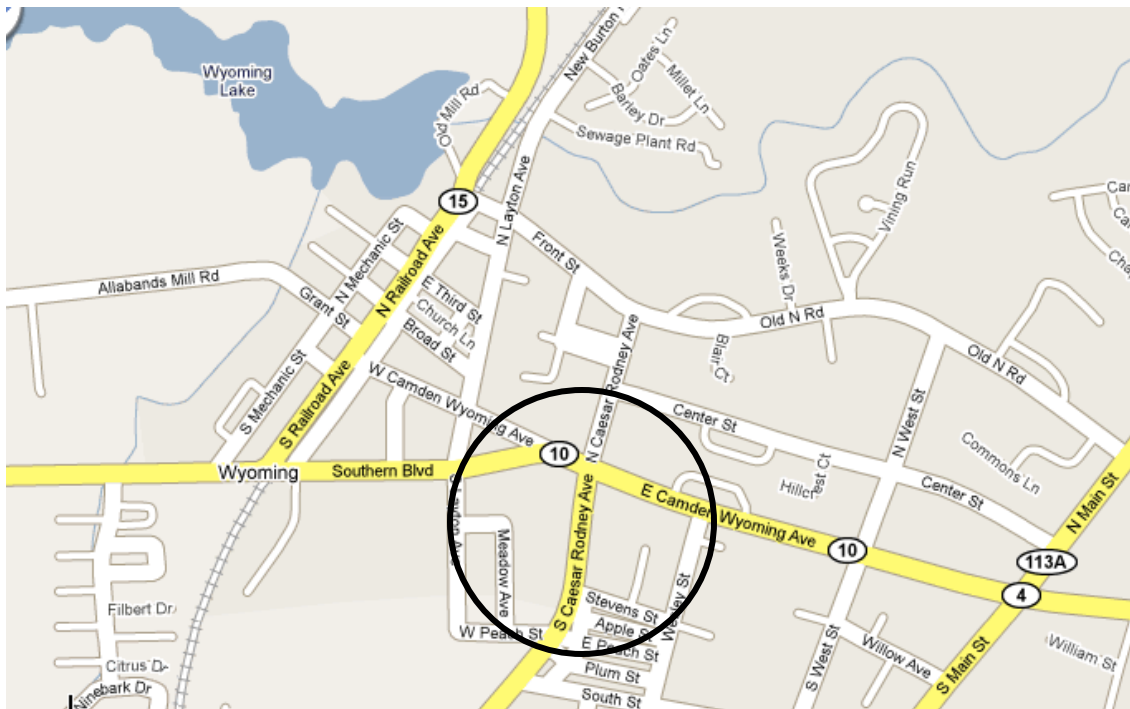
Name: Free Black settlement west of Camden

Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context



Although there were many ways to enter and travel through Delaware, certain locations played central roles in the Underground Railroad. Those in Wilmington recognized the importance of their southern counterparts; the *Blue Hen's Chicken*, a newspaper sympathetic to the abolition cause, reported in 1849 they “have reason to believe that the above are not all the slaves who have made their escape through our city [Wilmington] recently. The abolitionists are extremely active, and we have every reason to believe that the Underground Railroad extends a considerable distance down the State and that branches have even entered Maryland.”⁹⁴ One important reason Camden was such an influential Underground Railroad stop were the numerous free black communities, including Star Hill to the east, Brinkley Hill to the north, and the area to the west of Camden. As increasing numbers of African Americans were manumitted, numerous small, free black communities sprung up all over Delaware. These communities were crucial parts of the Underground Railroad. Unlike Maryland, where in 1860 only 49 percent of the African American population was free, roughly 92% of Delaware’s African Americans were free.⁹⁵ Because of this, individual communities, such as this one to the west of Camden, were able to aid freedom seekers in journeying further north.



⁹⁴ “Running Away from Happiness”. Article reprinted in *The North Star*, (Rochester, New York) November 23, 1849 and transcribed in the Accessible Archives database.

⁹⁵ Essah, 38-39.

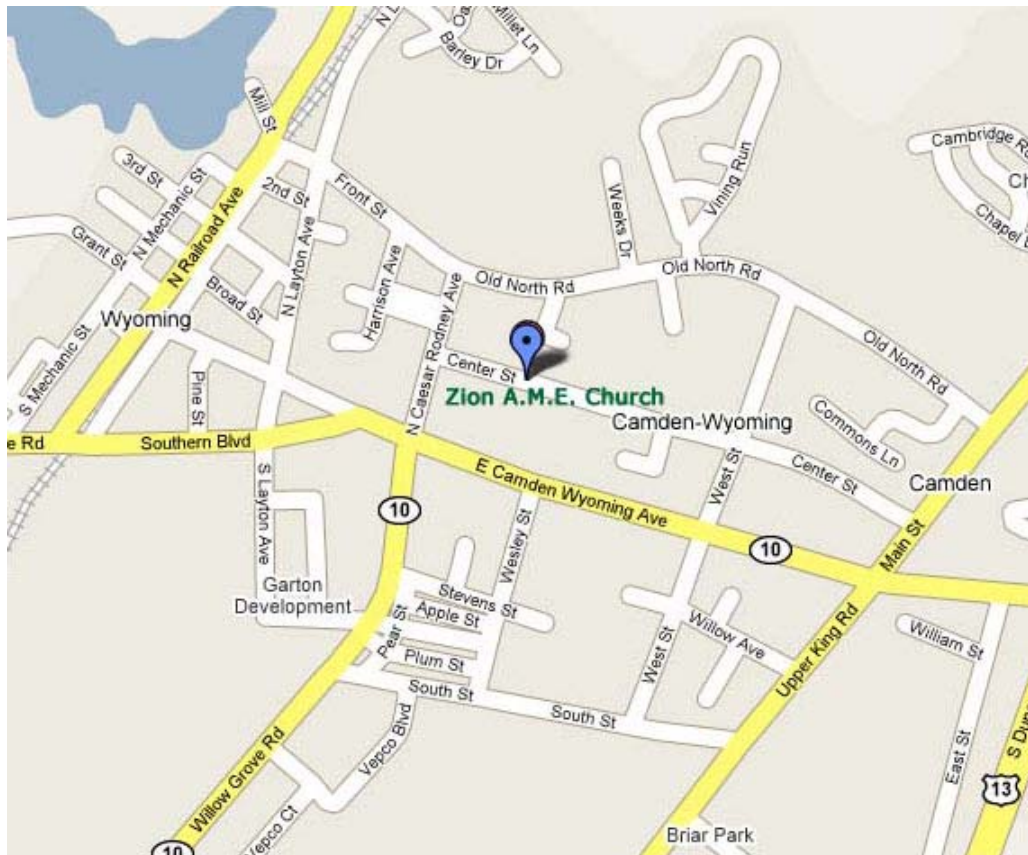
Name: Zion AME Church

Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context



Although the records of church attendance do not survive, Zion AME Church was the only independent African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Camden area when formed in 1845. The church is thought to be connected to the descendants of Absalom Gibbs, the patriarch of a large family and a mason who accumulated a substantial estate by his death in ca. 1840. His son, Abel Gibbs, also a mason by trade, changed his name to Abraham soon after the Civil War ended. It is this Abraham Gibbs that Harriet Tubman referred to in her interview with Wilbur Siebert in 1897, where she recalled him as one of her helpers in Camden. His son Abraham was a musician and a private in the 41st Regiment of the United States Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn in September, 1864. This regiment was present at Lee's Surrender at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. Private Gibbs is buried in the cemetery adjoining the Zion AME Church.



Name: Camden Historic District

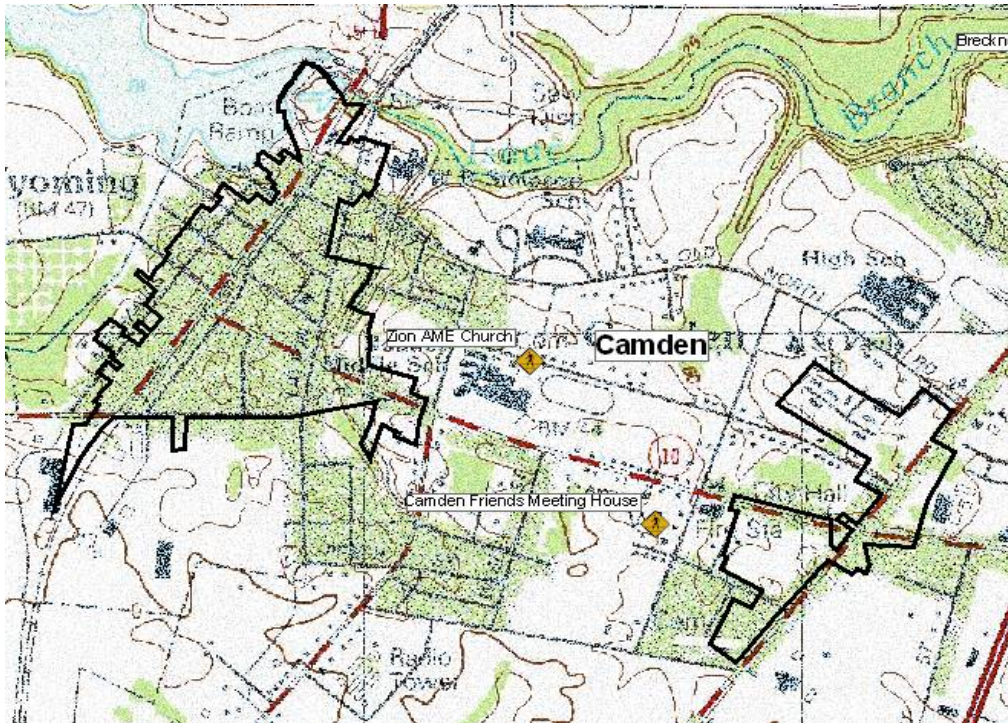
Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that are similar to the way they would have appeared in the antebellum era. These landscapes may be natural landscapes, such as fields, forests, or wetlands, but they may also be concentrations of historic structures that date to or before the height of Underground Railroad activity. Historic districts help to preserve the look and feel of towns that were important stops on the Underground Railroad.

The Camden Historic District was recognized on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 for its collection of historic structures that date from the 1750s to the end of the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ The district encompasses 65 structures on 316 acres along Camden-Wyoming Avenue and Main Street. When the Underground Railroad was in operation, Camden was an important stop because of the many free black communities surrounding the town and because of the Quaker supporters in the area.



⁹⁶ National Register of Historic Places, "Delaware, Kent County."

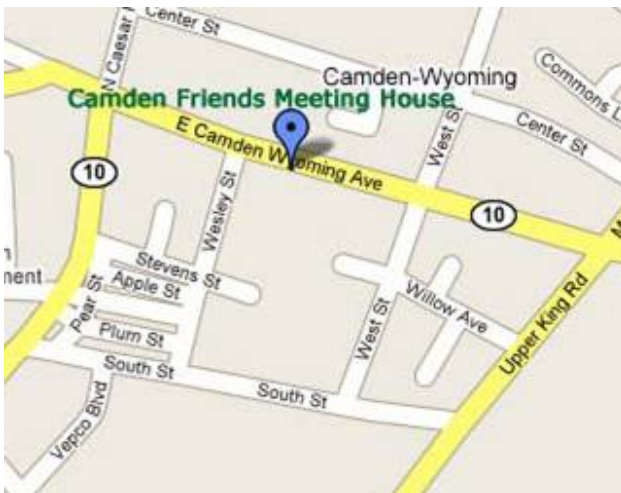
Name: Camden Friends Meeting House

Segment: 1

Site Type:
Cultural Context;
Commemorative/Interpretive



Although built in 1804 as the last meetinghouse to be constructed in Kent County,⁹⁷ the Camden Friends Meeting House quickly became the center of religious life for members of the anti-slavery Hicksite branch of the Society of Friends from Odessa south to Lewes. Along with Little Creek Meeting in far eastern Kent County, Camden shared designation as the regional monthly meeting from 1830. These monthly meetings gathered individuals from across the region for worship and fellowship. These relationships were undoubtedly critical parts of the network of Underground Railroad connections south of Wilmington. Families with documented Underground Railroad associations who attended the Camden Monthly Meeting included the extended Hunn, Alston, Jenkins, and Cowgill families. John Hunn, named “Chief Engineer” of the Underground Railroad in Delaware in William Still’s book, *The Underground Railroad*,⁹⁸ is buried in the adjoining cemetery. Historical markers describing his connection to the Underground Railroad are placed here as well.



⁹⁷ Zebley, 224.

⁹⁸ Still, 745.

Name: Whatcoat Methodist Episcopal Church (Morningstar Institutional Church of God in Christ)

Segment: 1

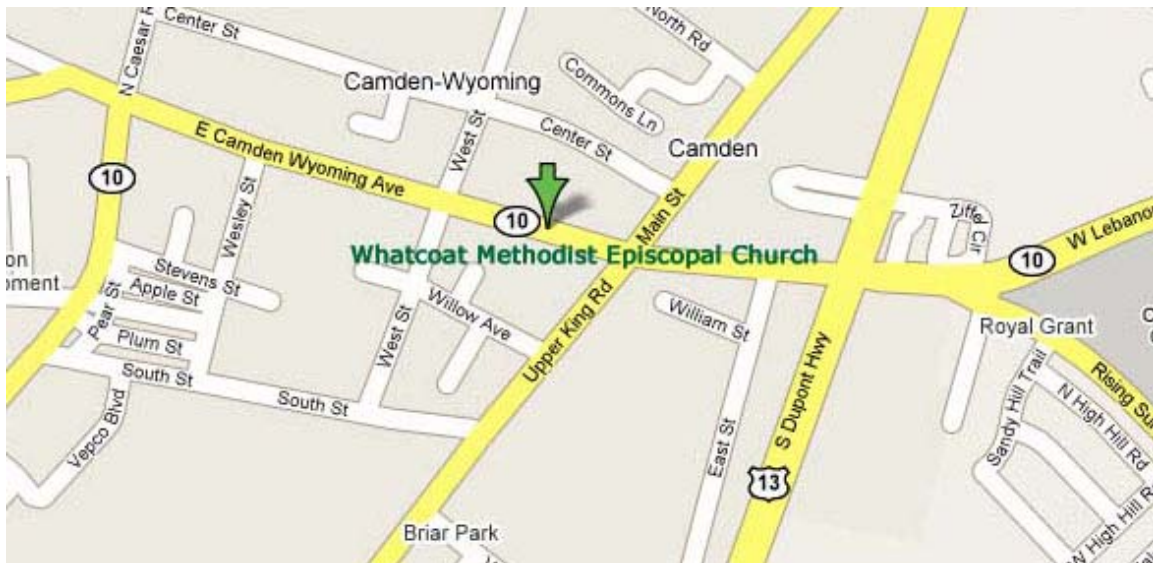
Site Type: Cultural Context



Religion is known to have played a significant role in the Underground Railroad. In addition to the Quakers, the Methodists were the most vociferous religious advocates for abolition. The Whatcoat Methodist Episcopal Church was built on land purchased from Thomas Mifflin in 1856 and dedicated on July 26, 1857.

The church was built by Abel Gibbs (later Abraham), a mason who Harriet Tubman mentioned as a connection in Camden during her 1897 interview with Wilbur Siebert. Members of the Gibbs family are known to have worked on the Underground Railroad, with Absalom's son Abel (later Abraham) specifically mentioned by Harriet Tubman as one of her associates. Abraham Gibbs, son of Abel and grandson of Absalom, fought in the Civil War with the United States Colored Troops.

Oral history suggests that this church may have been more than a place of worship, serving as a hiding place for freedom seekers in the last years before the beginning of the Civil War. Today, the building is the home of the Morningstar Institutional Church of God in Christ, which bought it in 1986.



Name: Brinkley Hill (Free Black Settlement north of Camden)

Segment: 1

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Brinkley Hill was a free black community north of Camden. It was named after the community's own Brinkley family which included William and Nathaniel Brinkley, both noted Underground Railroad conductors. Harriet Tubman mentioned them in her 1897 interview with Wilbur Siebert, recalling that "at Camden her helpers were William and Nat Brinkley (colored) and Abraham Gibbs." The Abraham Gibbs mentioned is Abel Gibbs who later changed his name to Abraham. Tubman also remembered feeling "safe and comfortable" with them. William Brinkley is further known for several of his letters which were printed in William Still's book, *The Underground Railroad*. One letter confirms Brinkley used his home to help escaping slaves.⁹⁹ He also helped to submit a petition to the state legislature in 1849 objecting to the restrictions on the movements of free African Americans in and out of Delaware.¹⁰⁰ A majority of the signers were from Brinkley Hill, and their desire to travel freely, especially to Philadelphia, suggests that Brinkley Hill was an important Underground Railroad stop.

Although the only resource extant from the nineteenth century is the Demby Cemetery, there are also later, historic structures including two early twentieth century vernacular dwellings. The Demby Cemetery was connected with the Colored People's ME Church, built in 1883 and demolished for the extension of State Route 13 in the 1960s, which Frank R. Zebley cites as "at Brinkley Hill."¹⁰¹



⁹⁹ Brinkley's letter: "CAMDEN, DEL., MARCH 23D, 1857. DEAR SIR:-I tak my pen in hand to write to you, to inform you what we have had to go throw for the last two weaks. Thir wir six men and two woman was betraid on the tenth of this month, thea had them in prison but thea got out was conveyed by a black man, he told them he wood bring them to my hows. as he was told, he had ben ther Befor, he has com with Harrett, a woman that stops at my hous when she pases tow and throw yau. You don't no me I supos, the Rev. Thomas H. Kennard dos, or Peter Lewis. He Road Camden Circuit, this man led them in dover prisin and left them with a whit man; but tha tour out the winders and jump out, so cum back to camden. We put them through, we hav to carry them 19 mils and cum back the sam night wich maks 38 mils. It is tou much for our littel horses. We must do the bes," Still, 60.

¹⁰⁰ John H. Bracey, Sharon Harley and August Meier, *Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks: Series I, Petitions to Southern State Legislatures, 1777-1867*, ed. Loren Schweininger (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1998), Reel 2, 659-662.

¹⁰¹ Zebley, 222.

Name: Brecknock Park

Segment: 1

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



Located across the street from what became the free African American community of Brinkley Hill, Brecknock Park was at one time the estate of Thomas Howell. The history of Brecknock stretches back into the seventeenth century when Alexander Humphreys received 600 acres of land. In the 1740's a mill was established on the site which remained in use for nearly two centuries. In the nineteenth century, Brinkley Hill's western boundary was established by Main Street and the Howell land.¹⁰² Brecknock was included in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and in 1993 part of the land was set aside for recreational use and dubbed Brecknock Park. Thomas Howell's original farm house, a tenant farm house, and the ruins of the mill survive in the park, now administered by Kent County. The park is a place in which travelers can rest and an excellent opportunity to implement interpretive signage along the route. The evocative aspects of this property include the main house that was present during the Underground Railroad period, and the nature trail that allows the visitor to explore the wooded area along Isaac's Branch, the site of the milling operation that helped establish the prosperity of the owner.



¹⁰² Bernhardt, 121.

Name: Great Geneva

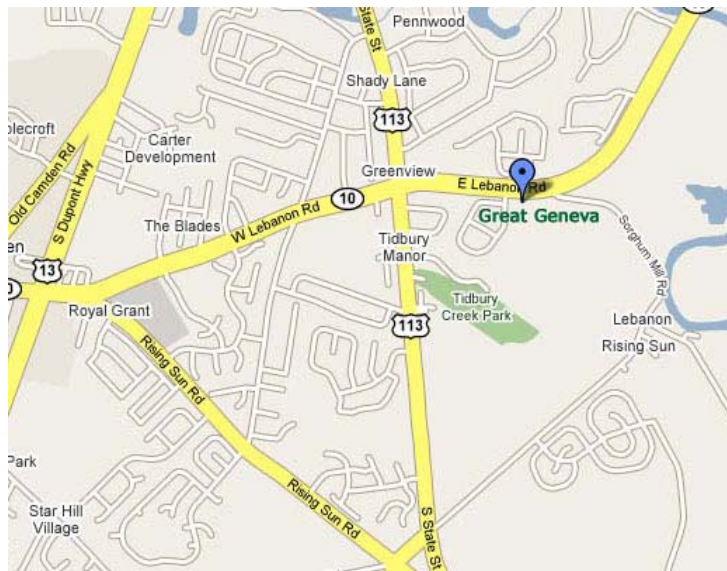
Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context



Great Geneva was the finer of the two homes built by the Hunn family of Kent County at Forest Landing. Made of brick with Flemish Bond and glazed headers, this house showcases the prosperity of the Hunn Family who built it in ca. 1765. Hunn family members settled in Kent County in the seventeenth century and Jonathan Hunn purchased the tract called Great Geneva from Alexander Humphrey's in ca. 1765. Members of the Society of Friends, Hunn family members met with other local Quaker families for worship at the Murderkill Friends Meeting House, established near Magnolia, Delaware in ca. 1760. There are several family members buried in the graveyard which is all that survives at the site of this early meeting house.

This home relates to the Underground Railroad in its importance in the life of abolitionist John Hunn. Hunn was most likely born here. Orphaned by the age of three, he was put into the guardianship of Patience Hunn Jenkins, his oldest half-sister and inheritor of this house at the death of her father, and her husband, George Washington Jenkins. John Hunn had been dubbed the "Chief Engineer" of the Underground Railroad in Delaware in William Still's book, *The Underground Railroad*.¹⁰³ He assisted a great number of freedom seekers, most notably the Hawkins family in 1845. For his participation in this escape, he and Thomas Garrett were convicted and fined in 1848 by the United States District Court. Despite the financial burden of this conviction and other related fines, Hunn continued to be active in the Underground Railroad. His activities eventually left him destitute but he never desisted and during the Civil War worked with the Port Royal Relief Committee on St. Helena Island in South Carolina.



¹⁰³ Still, 745.

Name: Wildcat Manor

Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural Context



It is an unusually built house with a multitude of irregular spaces and additions. Wildcat Manor was inherited by John Hunn's half brother Ezekiel who gave it to his intended bride as a betrothal gift.

The tract containing Wildcat Manor was a part of a holding called Great Geneva that was patented to Alexander Humphreys in 1682. Jonathan Hunn and his brother Raynear Hunn purchased Wildcat Farm and Forest Landing from Robert Wilcox in 1761. Across Tidbury Creek, the Hunn family had constructed a milldam and saw mill in the 1790s. The landing became a small industrial complex that hosted two granaries or store houses and two tenant houses which became Hunn Town, a free black community at the landing. At the death of Ezekiel Hunn in 1821, Wildcat Manor was willed to his son, also named Ezekiel Hunn, John Hunn's half brother. Ezekiel was a merchant in Philadelphia and gave the property to his prospective bride, Lydia Sharpless.¹⁰⁴ The house became a summer home for the family. Under the stewardship of Lydia Hunn, the farm grew and prospered during the early to late nineteenth century. The foundation was retrofitted, new additions were added, and new outbuildings were constructed. It appears that after the close of the Civil War, Lydia Hunn actively invested in increasing the capacity of the tenant housing at Forest Landing. Hunn Town continued to be an active community well into the first half of the 20th-century. The house stayed in the ownership of the Hunn Family until early this century when it was purchased by Kent County for development into a county recreation facility and park.



¹⁰⁴ For further information, see "Biography of Ezekiel Hunn," *Historical and Biographical Encyclopedia of Delaware*, Wilmington, DE: Aldine Publishing, 1982, 511.

Name: Happy Valley

Segment: 1

Site Type: Cultural
Context



Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

From 1853 to 1862, Happy Valley was the home of Quaker John Hunn, a key operative in the Underground Railroad. Located at the southern end of the site of the F. Niel Postelthwait Middle School, near the Cypress Branch Creek, Happy Valley was a 280 acre farm straddling the road from Dover to Magnolia, now South State Street Extended. The main house was located on the east side of the street, with the larger parcel of farm land located across the road and approximately one half mile south of the intersection with Sorghum Mill Road.

John Hunn's story illustrates the illusiveness of documenting Underground Railroad activities. Although known as the "Chief Engineer" of the Delaware Underground Railroad, assisting hundreds of freedom seekers and being convicted of the same in a well-documented trial, little is known about how he operated during the 1850s. He ordered the records he kept of his activities over the years be destroyed by his son, soon to be Governor John Hunn, in front of him as he lay dying in 1894.

In 1845 it was on his farm near Middletown that Hunn first became involved in the Underground Railroad by assisting the escape of the Samuel Hawkins family. Tried and convicted in 1848 under the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, he sold his farm to pay a \$3,500 fine. Hunn later wrote about this experience in a letter, later published in William Still's Book, *The Underground Railroad*: "I was twenty-seven years old when I engaged in the Underground Rail Road business, and I continued therein diligently until the breaking up of that business by the Great Rebellion."¹⁰⁵

In 1853, John Hunn and his wife Mary Swallow Hunn purchased the Happy Valley farm south of Dover. Living there until 1862, this farm was his home during his most active period of Underground Railroad work. Mary Swallow Hunn died in January 1854 and Hunn married Annie Jenkins in November 1855.

In 1862, he traveled to St. Helena and the Beaufort area of, South Carolina with teachers Charlotte Forten and his daughter Elizabeth to assist the newly free people there. Hunn and his wife Annie would not return to Delaware until the 1880s. The Happy Valley property was sold at a Sheriff's Sale in 1864. Unfortunately, the house no longer stands.

¹⁰⁵ Still, 739.

Name: Star Hill AME Church and Museum

Segment: 1

Site Type:
Commemorative/
Interpretive



One important theme on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is the growth of free black communities, independent towns or neighborhoods where freemen congregated and lived. The appearance of these communities was important to the operation of the Underground Railroad and to communal life among African Americans. Star Hill was a free black community that grew up on the outskirts of Camden in the antebellum era. Local oral tradition suggests that this community was active in the Underground Railroad, and that the area was settled by a number of prominent black families who were Underground Railroad supporters, especially members of the Gibbs family.

Today, the neighborhood is marked by the Star Hill AME Church and Museum. This church was initially built in 1866, with the three-bay structure to the rear remaining from the first period of construction. A newer church, the one in use today, was built in 1905.¹⁰⁶ Although the church postdates the Civil War, it serves as a marker of the community that flourished here in the early nineteenth century. The church and museum have been placed on the **Network to Freedom** list for its interpretive programs on the Underground Railroad.



¹⁰⁶ Zebley, 228.

Name: Dover Green

Segment: 1

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



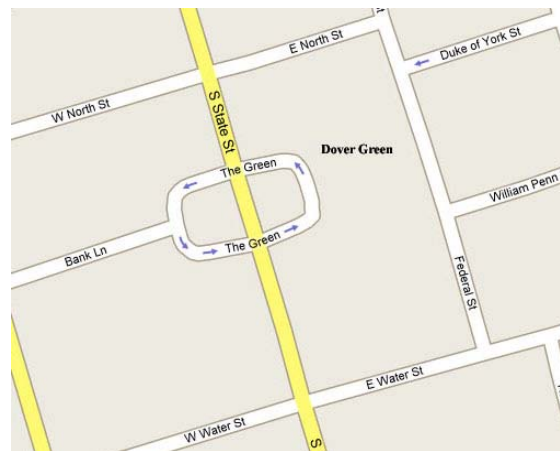
Courtesy of the University of Delaware Library, Newark, DE

The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells its story not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes such as “The Green” in Dover. Established as a court town for Kent County in 1683, Dover was planned by William Penn around a central public square, called “Court House Square” which later became “The Green.” Laid out in 1717, and the site of the Kent County court house, the Green became the central public space in Delaware when the state capital moved to Dover in 1777.

Although no activities directly associated with the Underground Railroad can be yet tied to the Green, three buildings where important legal actions related to slavery took place lined its eastern edge: the Old State house of 1792 where the abolition of slavery was debated and defeated; the Kent County Court house where those who accused of being Freedom Seekers or assisting them were tried; and the Kent County jail where the accused were held or slave-catchers deposited captives before returning them to their enslavers.

As a public square where holidays, such as the Fourth of July, were celebrated and public demonstrations held, it was also likely a place where people gathered to hear outcomes of debates in the legislature, trials in court, or to await the release of prisoners.

Although the Green has changed since the Underground Railroad period, its present character of an open park-like square under a canopy of tall trees enclosed by building facades was set when it was redesigned as a city park in 1846. Although many the buildings abutting it were constructed or remodeled in the decades after the Civil War, the northeastern corner is particularly evocative with the Old State house, the 1728 Parke-Ridgely house, and the Greek Revival Todd buildings of the 1850s. Entering the Green from State Street has always announced to the traveler that they are at the political center of the State.



Name: Delaware State House

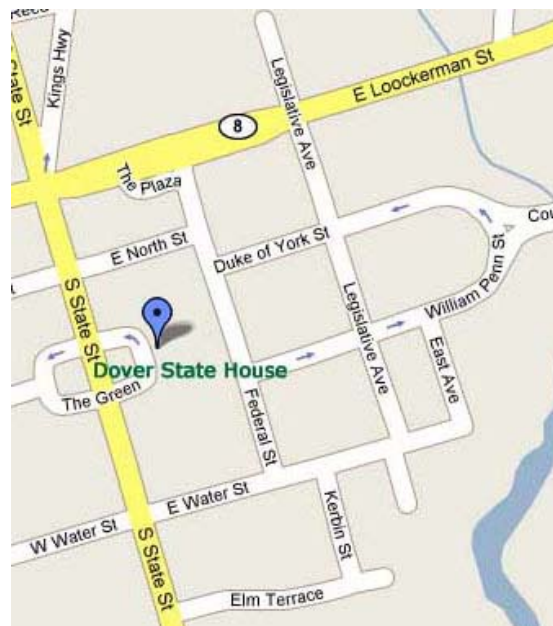
Segment: 1

Site Type: Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/Interpretive



In the antebellum period the Delaware State House had to deal with the legal ramifications of abolition efforts. The building was the site of one of the best known of the resultant cases, the trial of famed Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris. Burris was born west of Camden in the Willow Grove area and at the time of his trial was a teacher in Wilmington, and his family lived in Philadelphia. John Hunn reported that, through him, Burris helped hundreds of enslaved African Americans to freedom.¹⁰⁷ In July 1847, Burris was arrested for aiding in the escape of Maria Matthews. He was tried and sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment, after which he was to be sold out of the state as a slave. The sale took place in early 1848, but, fortunately, Burris was rescued by Wilmington Quaker Isaac Flint, who posed as a slave trader, bought him with funds from the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, and set him free.¹⁰⁸ Despite this harrowing experience, Burris continued his activities with the Underground Railroad, and he was eventually forced to move to California for his safety, where he spent the rest of his life.

Today, the State House is open to the public, and visitors here can experience an interpretive program about Burris's life and trial. The site has been placed on the **Network to Freedom**.¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁷ Still, 742.

¹⁰⁸ Larson and Bodo, 62-66.

¹⁰⁹ For further information, see Beverly Laing, "National Park Service *Network to Freedom* Application for the State House Museum," 2003.

Name: Hawkins Route to the Hunn Farm

Segment: 2

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



In 1845 the Hawkins family, consisting of free African Americans Samuel Hawkins and Emeline Hawkins and their enslaved children, left the farms of slaveholders Charles W. Glanding and Elizabeth Turner on the Eastern Shore of Maryland to reach freedom in the north. The family was able to secure the help of Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris along the way. Burris guided them from Ezekiel Jenkins' house in Camden to Jenkins' cousin John Hunn's farm near Middletown. Hunn recalled the arrival of the freedom seekers along with a letter "from my cousin, Ezekiel Jenkins, of Camden, Delaware, [that] stated the travelers were fugitive slaves, under the direction of Samuel D. Burris (who handed me the note). The party consisted of a man and his wife, with their six children, and four fine-looking colored men....This was the ... first time I had ever been called upon to assist fugitives from the hell of American Slavery."¹¹⁰ However, the story was not to end at the Hunn farm, but rather became an increasingly difficult situation that would be resolved through several other sites on the route.

¹¹⁰ Account written by John Hunn after the event differed over time in precise detail. This account was collected via a letter to William Still from John Hunn in 1871 when he had been living on the Sea Islands of South Carolina since 1862, working to assist the freedmen there. Still, 713-714.

Name: Landscape of Blackbird State Forest

Segment: 2

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that are similar to the way they would have appeared in the antebellum era. These landscapes help the traveler to imagine the freedom seeker's experience trying to move stealthily through farmlands, wetlands, and woods. The areas also have a powerful scenic function, adding breathtaking moments of beauty to the highway.

North of Dover and Blackbird, State Route 15 passes through a succession of farms, separated by lines of trees as well Blackbird State Forest. These farms help to evoke the period of the Underground Railroad, when this area would have been used by farmers much as it is today. Freedom seekers had to figure out a way to pass through this landscape, in which the open fields did not provide much cover and it was difficult to know who could be trusted. Farm buildings, such as sheds and barns, were sometimes sources of shelter during the day. Blackbird State Forest consists of nine tracts of land totaling over 4,800 acres.¹¹¹ This area is very similar to the way it would have looked at the height of Underground Railroad activity, when Harriet Tubman may have passed through these woods on her way to a safe haven in the free black community near the town of Blackbird.



¹¹¹ State of Delaware, "State of Delaware: The Official Website of the First State," available from <http://dda.delaware.gov/forestry/forest.shtml>. Internet.

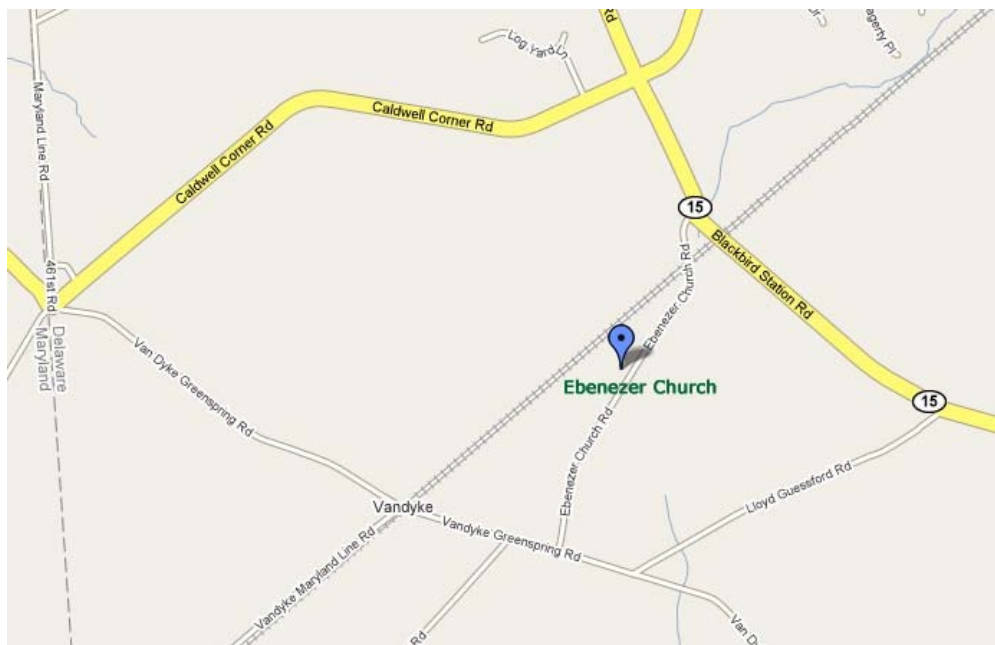
Name: Ebenezer Church

Segment: 2

**Site Type: Evocative
Landscape**



Although started in 1867 and completed in 1873, this modest Gothic Revival African-American church, known as the Forrest Methodist Episcopal Chapel until 1913, is the sole surviving building and reminder of a free black community that once existed in this area from the mid-nineteenth century. Although there is no evidence of a connection with the Underground Railroad, this lone building is a reminder of free black communities that formed around their churches in this marginal forested area. The approach and the site give the traveler as sense of remote, isolated areas where free blacks lived and the type of forest through which freedom seekers fled.



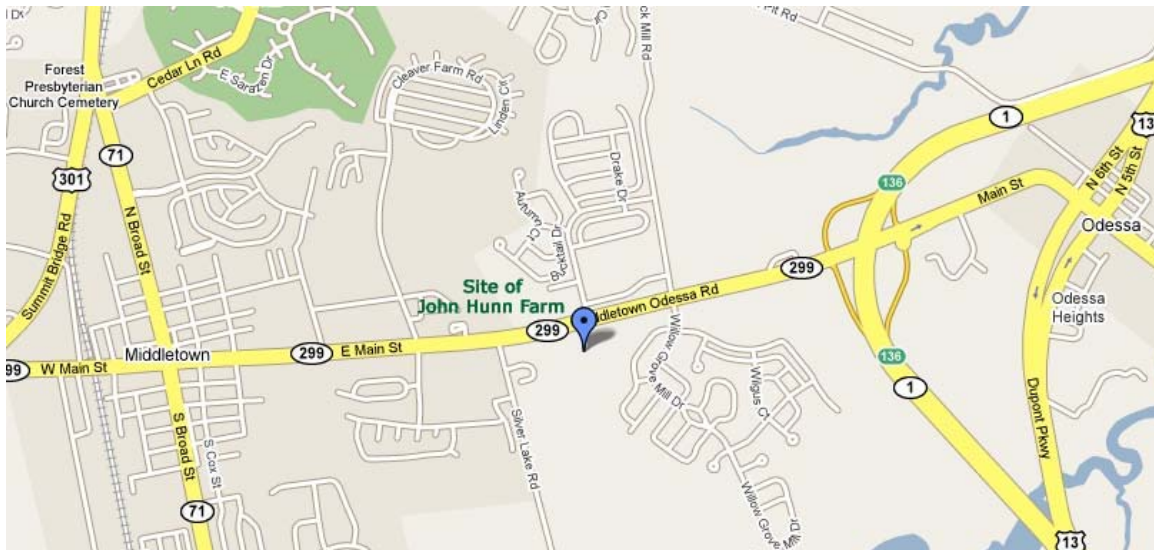
Name: Site of the Farm of John Hunn, now Middletown High School

Segment: 2

Site Type:
Underground Railroad



In 1845 the Hawkins family set out from Maryland to find freedom in the north. For much of their route through Delaware they were ably assisted by the Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris. Burris led the family from the house of Ezekiel Jenkins in Camden to that of his cousin John Hunn near Middletown. Hunn later recalled that “this was the ... first time I had ever been called upon to assist fugitives from the hell of American Slavery. The wanderers were gladly welcomed, and made as comfortable as possible until breakfast was ready for them.”¹¹² Unfortunately for the embattled family, Hunn’s neighbor, Thomas Merritt, noticed the unusual group and alerted Middletown’s magistrate, William Streets. The story was not to end at the Hunn farm, but rather became an increasingly difficult situation that would be resolved through several other sites on the route. Although the farm does not still exist the site is important as the origin of one of the most publicized incidents in Delaware’s Underground Railroad history.



¹¹² Accounts written by John Hunn after the event differed in precise detail over time. This account was collected via a letter to William Still from John Hunn in 1871 from the Sea Islands of South Carolina where he had been working to assist the freedmen there since 1862. Still, 713-14.

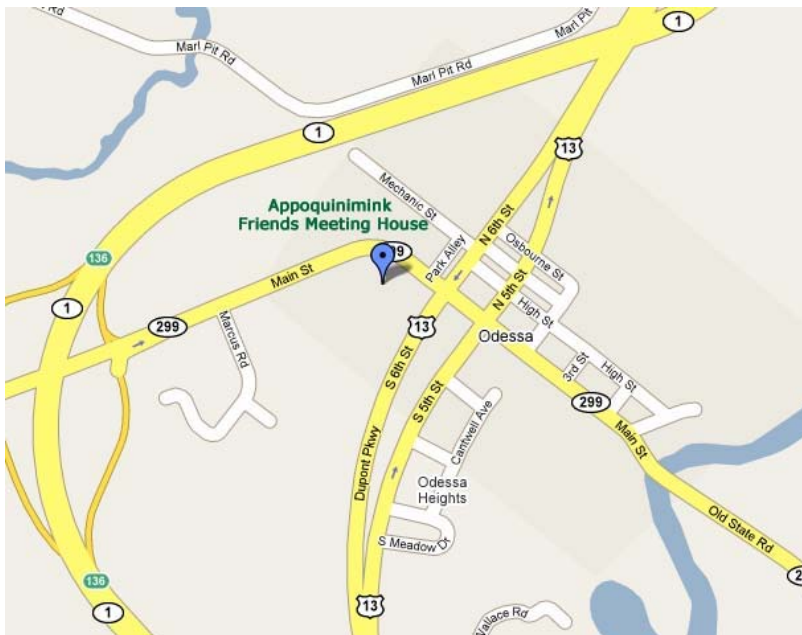
Name: Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House

Segment: 2

Site Type: Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/Interpretive



The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, built in 1785 by David Wilson, is located on the outskirts of Odessa. Local oral tradition suggests that it functioned as a stop on the Underground Railroad using the eave closet in the upper story as the hiding place. The weekly preparative meeting here was attended by known Underground Railroad operatives John Hunn and John Alston. The building survives with a high degree of integrity today and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. It is also part of the National Register of Historic Places' "Aboard the Underground Railroad" Travel Itinerary, and it has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.



Willard Stewart Collection, University of Delaware Library, Newark, DE.

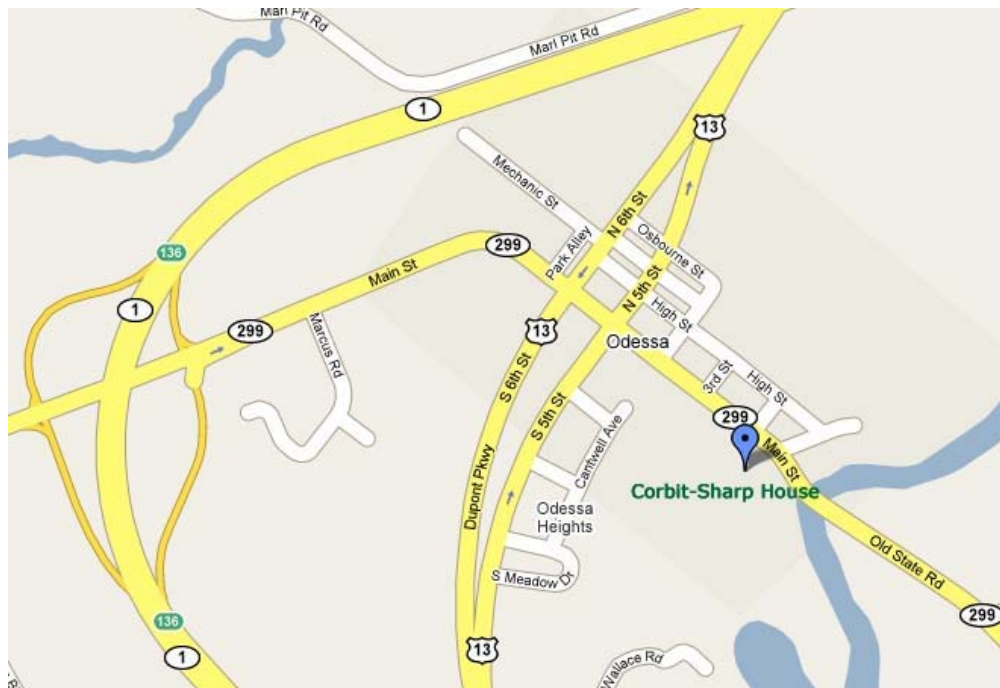
Name: Corbit-Sharp House

Segment: 2

Site Type:
Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/
Interpretive



The Corbit-Sharp House was built between 1772 and 1774 by Robert May for William Corbit, an important Quaker merchant, tanner and farmer at the community of Appoquinimink Crossroads, later named Cantwell's Bridge, and then called Odessa. His youngest son, Daniel Corbit, was known to be sympathetic to the cause of abolition and a supporter of Underground Railroad activities. The reminiscence by Daniel Corbit's youngest daughter, Mary Corbit Warner in 1914 talked about her mother assisting a fugitive, Sam, into an eave closet in the house and recounts the tour her mother gave to the quickly pursuing sheriff of the house, opening all the doors allowing the sheriff to see inside.¹¹³ The sheriff declined to look in the eave closets because he was sure Sam was too large a person to fit through such a small door.¹¹⁴ The site has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site, and the property has also been designated a National Historic Landmark for its architectural importance.



¹¹³ Mary Corbit. "Incident at the Corbit House."

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Name: Delaware State Route 9 Landscape

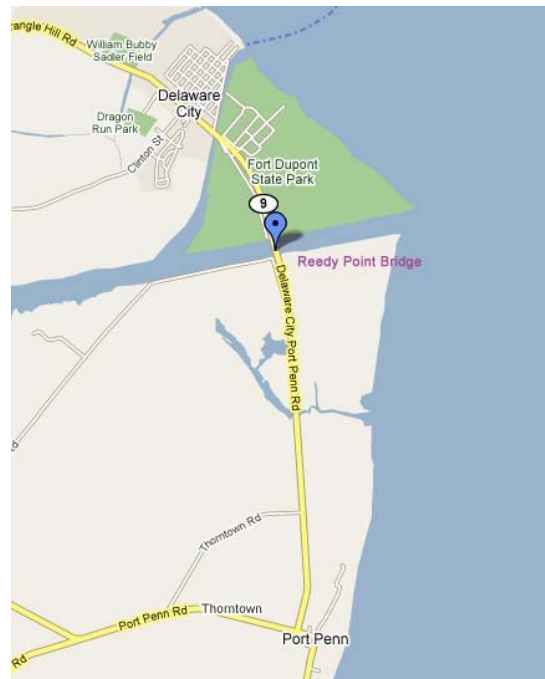
Segment: 3

Site Type: Evocative Landscape



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that are similar to the way they would have appeared in the antebellum era. These landscapes help the traveler to imagine the freedom seeker's experience trying to move stealthily through farmlands, wetlands, and woods. The areas also have a powerful scenic function, adding breathtaking moments of beauty to the highway.

State Route 9, much of which has been designated as the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway by the Delaware Department of Transportation, travels through one of the largest areas of preserved coastal marshland in the eastern United States, including some areas that look almost just as they did when the first European settlers arrived in the area.¹¹⁵ Because of this, it evokes the experience of freedom seekers who chose water routes to freedom, looking for passage to New Jersey and Philadelphia along Delaware's coasts. One of the most breathtaking views in the area is at the Reedy Point Bridge near Delaware City, which gives the traveler a 360-degree view of the surrounding wetlands. Additionally, the presence of the Ashton Historic District adds to the evocative qualities of the landscape with several eighteenth century structures: the Robert Ashton House, and the John Ashton House.



¹¹⁵ Route 9 Steering Committee, 2.

**Name: Stewart Street in Port Penn
(Free Black settlement)**

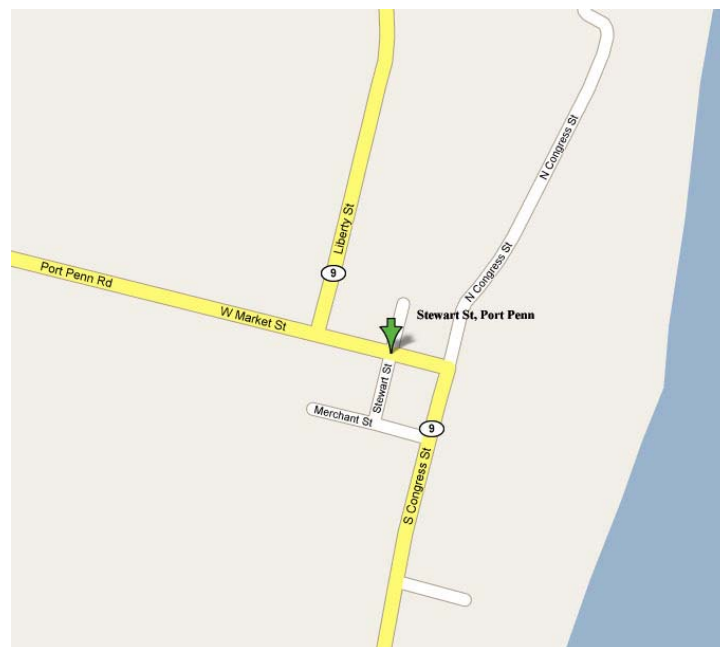
Segment: 3

Site Type: Cultural Context



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that help to tell the story of African Americans living in Delaware in the antebellum era. The rich history of Delaware's African American population helps to inform the Underground Railroad story, and thus the route encompasses all of this history. One important theme on the route is the growth of free black communities, independent towns or neighborhoods where free blacks congregated and lived. The appearance of these communities was important to the operation of the Underground Railroad and to communal life among African Americans.

One such community grew up on Stewart Street in Port Penn. Evidence of this community is present in the form of St. Daniel's United Methodist Church, which has been in the hands of an African American congregation since 1920, when the congregation that had been occupying it ceased to function. The structure was built in 1891.¹¹⁶ Further, there is also evidence that as early as the 1850s, there was a free black community in Port Penn as John W. Tillman used the cover of a nearby camp meeting as an opportunity to escape.¹¹⁷ Although there is no evidence that this community was active on the Underground Railroad, its presence on the route helps to tell the story of the growth of such communities.



¹¹⁶ Zebley, 177.

¹¹⁷ Life and Travels of John W. Tillman.

Name: Polktown near Delaware City (Free Black settlement)

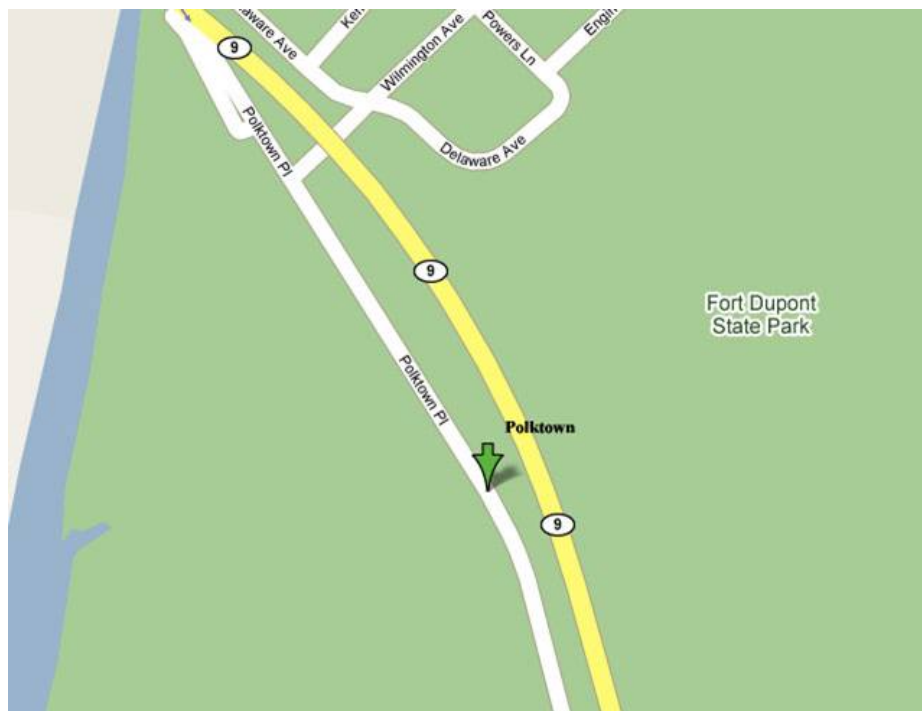
Segment: 3

Site Type:
Cultural Context; Evocative Landscape



The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway tells the story of this important period in history not only through historic sites but also through evocative landscapes that help to tell the story of African Americans living in Delaware in the antebellum era. The rich history of Delaware's African American population helps to inform the Underground Railroad story, and thus the route encompasses all of this history. One site that relates to general African American history in the state is Polktown, a small group of structures on the outskirts of Delaware City that was one of the earliest settlements of free blacks in the state. First settled in 1835, it marks the spread of manumission in the state.¹¹⁸

Polktown also has a connection to another important aspect of African American history, that of the Civil War service of black troops. In total, about 180,000 blacks served the Union army during the war, and 954 of these were from Delaware.¹¹⁹ In Polktown, a small cemetery includes the graves of several veterans of the United States Colored Troops.



¹¹⁸ Route 9 Steering Committee, 21.

¹¹⁹ Essah, 180.

Name: New Castle Court House

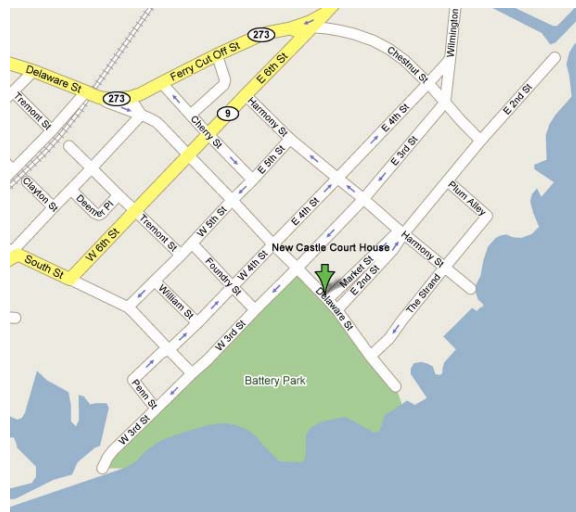
Segment: 3

Site Type: Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/Interpretive



Located in the heart of historic New Castle, the New Castle Court House was constructed in 1732 and is one of the oldest surviving courthouses in the United States. In 1881, the county seat was moved to Wilmington, and a new courthouse was constructed for the county in that city. Today, the New Castle Court House is a museum where visitors can view the chamber where the 1848 trials took place, and, currently, there is an exhibit that chronicles the Hawkins' family story. However, it should be noted that the courthouse is still occasionally used for court proceedings, and the building itself has continuously been in use since its construction. Additionally, it has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.

In 1845 the Hawkins family set out from Maryland to find freedom in the north. For much of their route through Delaware they were ably assisted by the Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris. Burris led the family from the house of Ezekiel Jenkins in Camden to that of his cousin John Hunn near Middletown. Unfortunately for the embattled family, Hunn's neighbor, Thomas Merritt, noticed the unusual group and alerted Middletown's magistrate, William Streets. Unfortunately, two representatives of their enslavers had just arrived in Middletown with a notice calling for their capture, and the magistrate decided that the family should be taken to New Castle and held there until the truth could be discovered. Meanwhile, Hunn wrote a letter to Thomas Garrett in Wilmington apprising him of the situation, and the letter was delivered by Burris. On December 7, 1845, Thomas Garrett arrived in New Castle and was able to convince Chief Justice James Booth that there was not enough evidence to hold the family. The Hawkins family was released, and Garrett quickly spirited them away to Wilmington and then Pennsylvania. Later, Hunn and Garrett were prosecuted by the owners of the enslaved members of the Hawkins family. In 1848, at the New Castle Court House, both men were convicted of all charges and fined heavily, a consequence that made their lives more difficult for a time but did not daunt their will to aid fugitives. According to many accounts, at the conclusion of the trial Thomas Garrett gave a speech vowing to redouble his efforts to end slavery.¹²⁰



¹²⁰ Ibid., 63-65.

Name: The Rocks-Fort Christina State Park

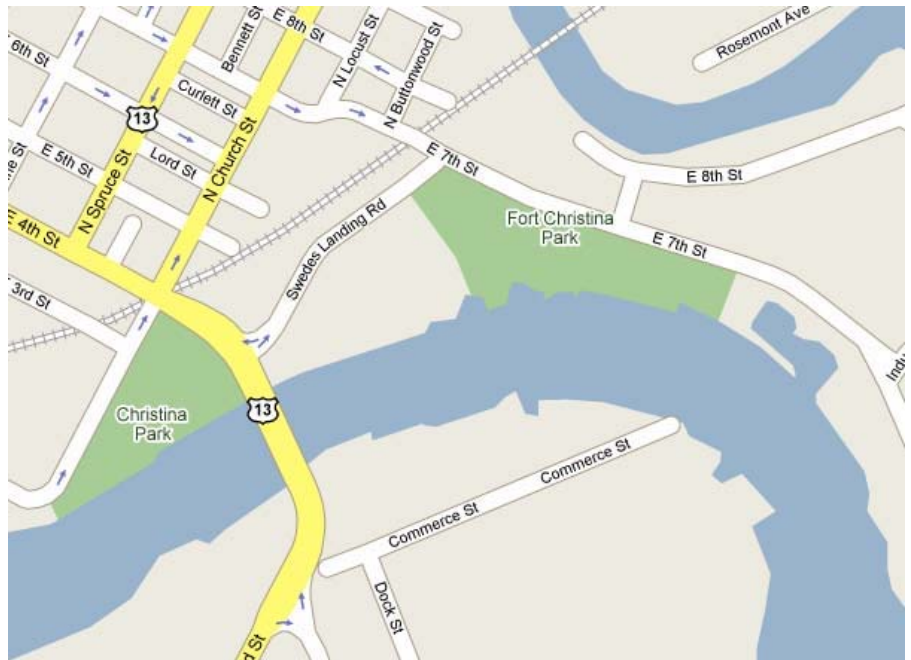
Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Located on the banks of the Christiana River, Fort Christina State Park marks the location of the first permanent settlement by European settlers in Delaware. First settled by the Swedes in 1638, the area today includes a courtyard enclosed by brick walls, and a granite monument by Carl Milles commemorating the settlement. Also a replica of the first ship that the Swedes used to travel to Delaware, the *Kalmar Nyckel*, is docked nearby. Today, visitors can tour the replica ship to remember this early period in Delaware History.

The Rocks at Fort Christina were mentioned as a landing place for Captain Fountain, a fearless Underground Railroad boat captain, in a letter from Thomas Garrett to William Still. Dated March 23, 1856, the letter states that Captain Fountain landed at the Rocks with fourteen freedom seekers on board and handed them over to the custody of one of Garrett's agents.¹²¹ For this reason, the site has been recognized on the **Network to Freedom**. The site is also a National Historic Landmark in honor of its association with Sweden's history in the New World.



¹²¹ Still, 336.

Name: Severn Johnson House

Segment: 4

Site Type:
Underground Railroad



Thomas Garrett may be the best known of the Wilmington Underground Railroad operators, but his network depended on the help of several friends living in various parts of Wilmington, many of them African Americans. Like Garrett's home, many of the houses of these conductors do not survive, but the sites where they lived are an important part of the story of the Underground Railroad in Wilmington.

Severn Johnson lived in Delaware and worked with Thomas Garrett as a conductor on the Underground Railroad; from Garrett's letters, it is known that he was involved in the Underground Railroad by 1857.¹²² He has been variously identified as a laborer and an oysterman,¹²³ and his home was on Buttonwood Street between Taylor Street and Brandywine Creek, only about a block from the house where George Wilmer, another conductor, lived after he moved to Wilmington. Garrett referred to him as a "true man" and often sent him with letters to William Still.¹²⁴ Johnson's home is no longer standing.



¹²² McGowan, 144, 146.

¹²³ Switala, 54-55.

¹²⁴ McGowan, 122.

Name: George Wilmer House

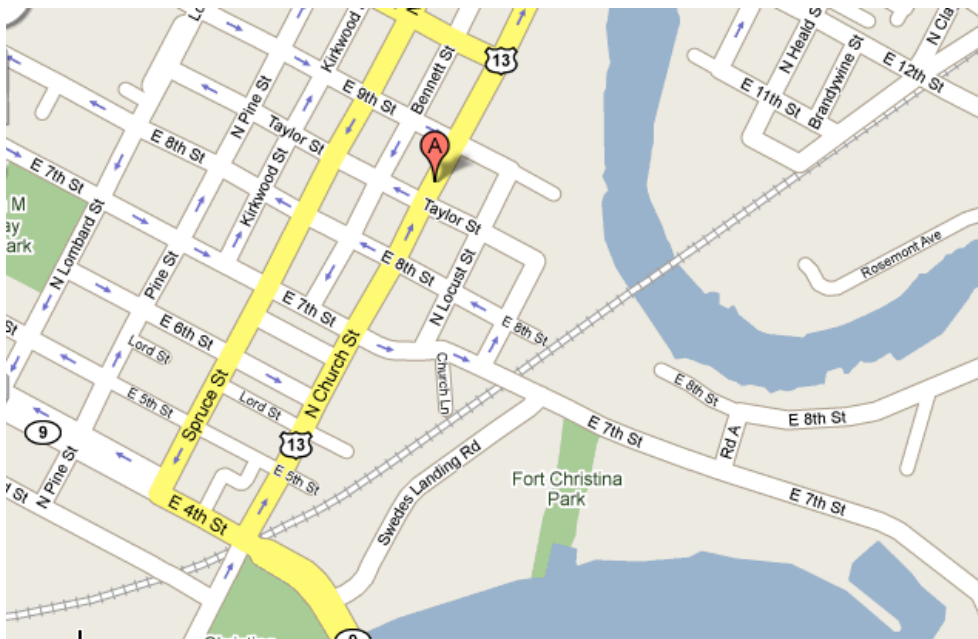
Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Thomas Garrett may be the best known of the Wilmington Underground Railroad operators, but his network depended on the help of several friends living in various parts of Wilmington, many of them African Americans. Like Garrett's home, many of the houses of these conductors do not survive, but the sites where they lived are an important part of the story of the Underground Railroad in Wilmington.

George Wilmer was a slave near Georgetown Crossroads on the Sassafra River in Kent County, Maryland, a location that he used to become the best-remembered enslaved conductor on Delaware's Underground Railroad. Making use of the liberties granted to him by his enslaver Eben Welch, he ferried runaways from Maryland to Wilmington during the mid- to late 1850s. In one period of four months in 1855, he forwarded 25 runaways.¹²⁵ After he was freed in 1858, he moved to Wilmington with his wife and set up residence at 832 Church Street, where he probably continued his Underground Railroad activities.¹²⁶ Wilmer's home is no longer standing.



¹²⁵ Still, 661.

¹²⁶ Larson and Bodo, 90.

Name: Comegys Munson House

Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Thomas Garrett may be the best known of the Wilmington Underground Railroad operators, but his network depended on the help of several friends living in various parts of Wilmington, many of them African Americans. Like Garrett's home, many of the houses of these conductors do not survive, but the sites where they lived are an important part of the story of the Underground Railroad in Wilmington.

Comegys Munson, a free laborer living in Wilmington at the height of Underground Railroad activity, was a trusted helper of Thomas Garrett, and his home was mentioned as a safe house in at least one letter from Garrett to William Still. In June 1857, Munson provided shelter to an old woman whose children had been sold south, and who had been clothed in garments belonging to Garrett's wife.¹²⁷ Munson once lived on French Street between 12th and 13th Streets, but his home is no longer standing.



¹²⁷ McGowan, 143.

Name: Peter Spencer Plaza

Segment: 4

Site Type:
Commemorative/Interpretive



Born a slave in 1792, Peter Spencer relocated to Wilmington after the death of his owner and became the founder of the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1805, the first church in the United States fully and independently organized and controlled by African Americans. In founding the church, Spencer was responding to racism in white-controlled churches, in which African Americans could not hold leadership positions and were often forced to sit in sequestered sections of the churches. In addition to founding the church, Spencer organized the first Big Quarterly Festival in August 1814, which focused on black spiritual and cultural life and is still held today. Some accounts suggest that Spencer opened the doors of his church to freedom seekers, providing shelter and support to them as they traveled. In fact, there is at least one escape narrative, that of James Williams, that links the Quarterly to freedom seekers.¹²⁸

Spencer and his wife are buried in Peter Spencer Plaza, a commemorative space in Wilmington located on the site where his groundbreaking church once stood. Marking their graves is a sculpture of a man and child, *Father and Son* by Charles C. Parks that represents Spencer's teachings about good family life and commemorates the founding of the church.



¹²⁸ Peter T. Dalleo, *Researching the Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Select Descriptive Bibliography of African American Fugitive Narratives* (Wilmington: The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware & the City of Wilmington, June 2008), 29.

Name: Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and Market Street Bridge

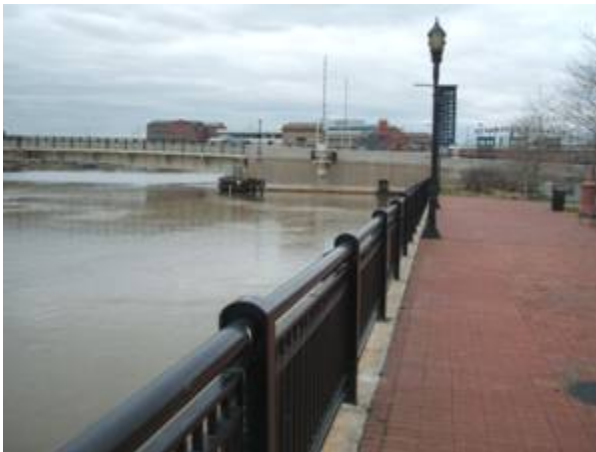
Segment: 4

Site Type: Cultural Context;
Commemorative/Interpretive



Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garrett were two of the most important figures working on the Underground Railroad in Delaware. In 1997, the city of Wilmington recognized the lack of physical remains of structures where Tubman and Garrett operated and resolved to build a park in their memory, which was completed in the next year. The park offers a walkway along the Christiana River and several interpretive plaques that honor the Underground Railroad and other topics in the history of African Americans in Wilmington.

The location of the park near the Market Street Bridge was chosen partly due to the connection of this particular river crossing with the Underground Railroad. The current bridge was built in 1927 to replace a bridge that was built in 1883, but in the antebellum era, another bridge was located on just this location. This was the only bridge into town, meaning that any freedom seeker hoping to reach Thomas Garrett had to consider a plan to cross it. One famous story from 1856 has Harriet Tubman with a party of five fugitives making the crossing in a false-bottomed wagon supplied by Garrett.¹²⁹ The park is on the **Network to Freedom** because of its function as a site commemorating Delaware's Underground Railroad heroes.



¹²⁹ Bodo, 3.

Name: Wilmington Old Town Hall

Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/Interpretive



Built in 1798, Old Town Hall served as the town's municipal building until 1916, when it became necessary to move to a larger structure. During the antebellum era Old Town Hall was the scene of some of the extremes of the slavery debate. By law, constables were not allowed to detain runaways in the basement jail cells, they were supposed to be immediately taken to New Castle, and to be held for being a "fugitive from labor" in the county jail. However there were continuous accusations that runaways were often held in the Old Town Hall's cells during the 1840s through the early 1860s. This controversial decision allowed the abolitionists to keep the issue of slavery at the forefront of discussion and helped to promote their cause. The City Council inconsistently allowed the Delaware's abolitionists permission to use Old Town Hall for meetings, but at other times denied them access (for example, in 1848, the Delaware Anti-Slavery Society request to use it for a Frederick Douglass assembly which was denied by the City Council). Among those who participated in meetings at the Old Town Hall were the white abolitionists Thomas Garrett, Isaac Flint, Lucretia Mott, and C.C. Burleigh, as well as the black abolitionist Robert Purvis— these individuals were not only Underground Railroad operatives but assisted freedom seekers in their homes or places of business.¹³⁰

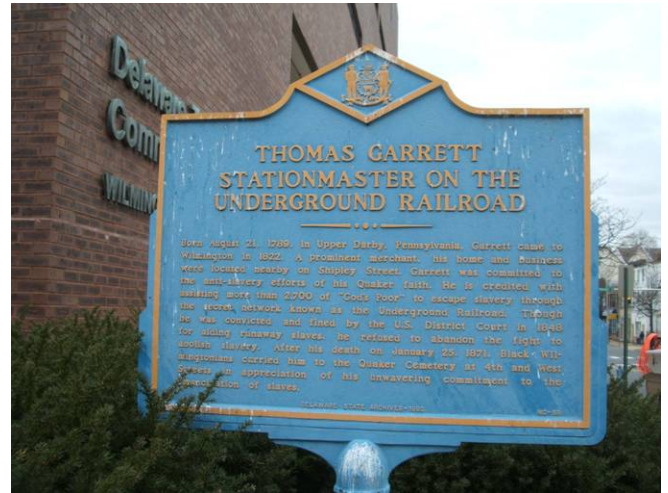


¹³⁰ Peter Dalleo, "Black Activists, Thomas Garrett and Social Justice in Delaware" (unpublished typescript, April 2007).

Name: Thomas Garrett Home Site

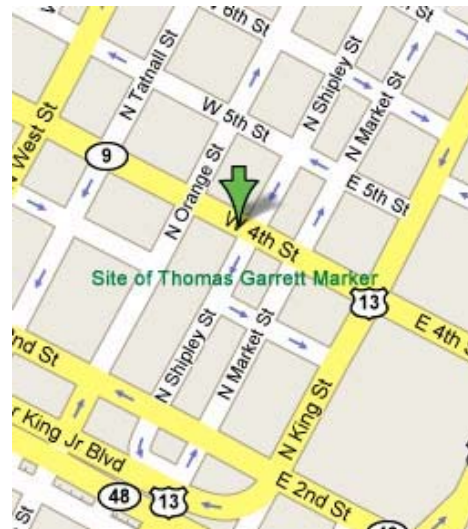
Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad;
Commemorative/Interpretive



One of the most important figures working on the Underground Railroad in Delaware was Thomas Garrett, a prominent Wilmington Quaker who devoted his life to saving more than 2,700 enslaved people by the time the Civil War ended in 1865.¹³¹ His house in Wilmington was an important destination for many freedom seekers traveling through Delaware, and the assistance he provided by way of food, clothing, shelter, and guidance on to free soil in Philadelphia was invaluable to the individuals who received this help. For example, in his narrative, freedom seeker Thomas Smallwood wrote that he received help at the home of "Thomas Garrott."¹³² Not only did Garrett shelter fugitives in his own home, but he also worked with a network of activists in the city to make sure that there was always a place for freedom seekers to stay. Garrett's contribution to Underground Railroad efforts is a towering achievement.

Garrett's house and store once stood at 227 Shipley Street in central Wilmington.¹³³ Today, both house and store are gone; all that is left to mark Garrett's presence in this area is a historic marker placed by the Delaware Public Archives. However, the site is considered to be an important part of the Underground Railroad route, and has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.



¹³¹ Essah, 56.

¹³² Peter T. Dalleo, *Researching the Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Select Descriptive Bibliography of African American Fugitive Narratives* (Wilmington: The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware & the City of Wilmington, June 2008), 26.

¹³³ McGowan, 132.

Name: Quaker Hill Historic District

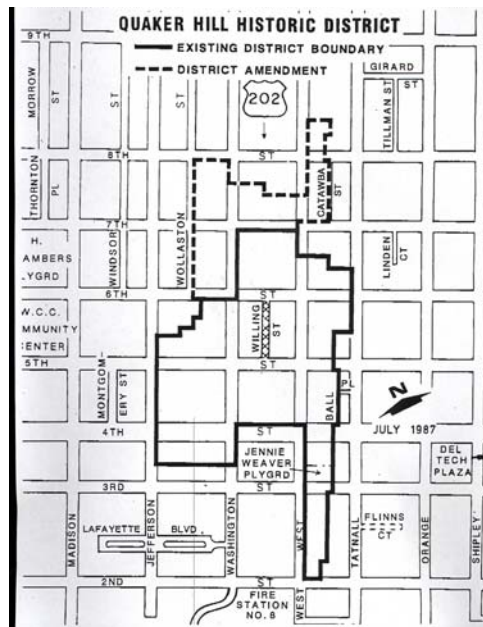
Segment: 4

Site Type: Cultural Context; Evocative Landscape



With religious beliefs that taught them slavery was inherently evil and in violation of natural law, Quakers were an important part of the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1776 sanctioned disownment for slaveholding Friends who refused to manumit their slaves, and Quakers in Delaware moved quickly to comply.¹³⁴ Delaware Quakers did everything they could in the last three decades of the eighteenth century to end slavery in the state, petitioning the legislature on multiple occasions to ask for an end to the interstate slave trade and a gradual opposition law. When these measures failed, some Quakers turned to illegal means to resist slavery, and became instrumental in aiding fugitive slaves on their way north to freedom.

The Quaker Hill area in Wilmington, home of many prominent abolitionists including Thomas Garrett, was listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, with an additional area added in 1985.¹³⁵ The district was created to recognize the high concentration of historic structures in the area, including many from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today, the area retains much of its historic character.



¹³⁴ Essah, 43.

¹³⁵ National Register of Historic Places, "Delaware, New Castle County."

Name: Wilmington Friends Meeting House and Cemetery

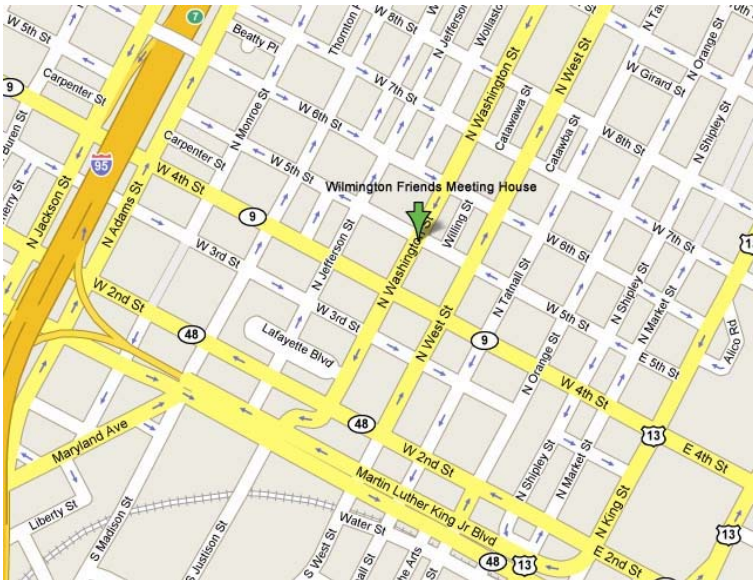
Segment: 4

Site Type:
Underground Railroad; Cultural Context; Commemorative/ Interpretive



Built in 1815, the current Wilmington Friends Meeting House was the third structure built on the site by the Wilmington Quaker community, following earlier meetinghouses in 1738 and 1748. With religious beliefs that condemned slavery as immoral, Quakers were an important part of the Underground Railroad network throughout the United States. The Wilmington Meeting may have been somewhat conservative in its views toward resistance to slavery, but it was one of the meetings attended by Thomas Garrett, one of the lynchpins of Delaware's Underground Railroad network. Garrett married his second wife, Rachel Mendinhal, in this Meeting House in 1830, and after his death in 1871 he was buried in the adjoining cemetery.¹³⁶

Today, this Meeting House is still in use by the Wilmington Quaker community, largely unchanged from the era in which Thomas Garrett worshipped there. His grave lies under one of the grand old trees in the burial ground, marked by a simple Quaker headstone. Additionally, it has been designated a **Network to Freedom** site.



¹³⁶ McGowan, 46, 130.

Name: Elwood Garrett House

Segment: 4

Site Type:
Cultural Context



Because so many sites related to the Underground Railroad in Wilmington are no longer standing, the rare structures that are extant are especially important to the interpretation of this historic moment. The Elwood Garrett House on Washington Street in the Quaker Hill Historic District is an example of one such structure. Born on December 19, 1815, Elwood Garrett was the eldest son of Thomas Garrett and his first wife, Mary Sharpless. Elwood, originally trained as a machinist, started a daguerreotype business in Wilmington in 1850. Like his father, he attended the Wilmington Friends Meeting House, and he probably shared in his father's abolitionist leanings and activities.

While it is unclear what role, if any, Elwood played in Underground Railroad activities, his home is significant as one of the few buildings with a possible Underground Railroad connection that still stands in Wilmington. This structure is the only remaining site linked to the Garrett family in the city.



Name: Joseph Walker House

Segment: 4

Site Type: Underground Railroad



Thomas Garrett may be the best known of the Wilmington Underground Railroad operators, but his network depended on the help of several friends living in various parts of Wilmington, many of them African Americans. Like Garrett's home, many of the houses of these conductors do not survive, but the sites where they lived are an important part of the story of the Underground Railroad in Wilmington.

Born of a West Indian father and an English or Irish mother, Joseph Walker was a member of the African American community in Wilmington, making a living as a laborer.¹³⁷ He is the only African American collaborator with Thomas Garrett mentioned in Professor Wilbur Siebert's records, and he worked as a trusted conductor, bringing freedom seekers from Wilmington to the Pennsylvania border.¹³⁸ Walker once lived on Tatnall Street between 8th and 9th Streets, near Henry Craige, another conductor working with Garrett. Walker's home is no longer standing.



¹³⁷ Switala, 54-55.

¹³⁸ McGowan, 15, 127.

Name: Centreville

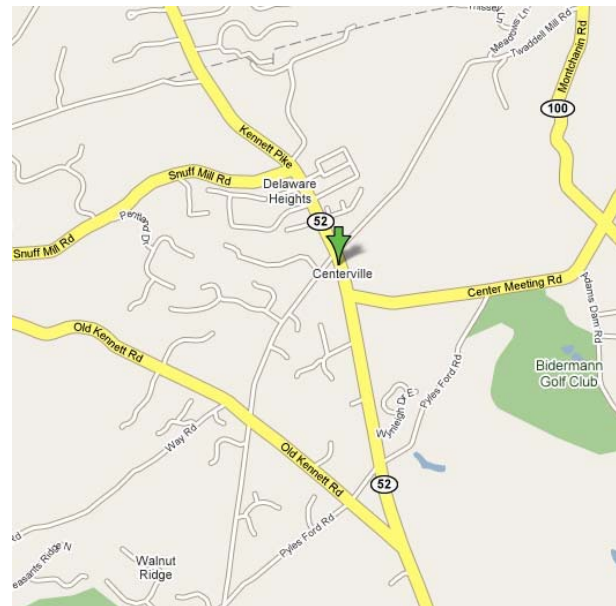
Segment: 5

Site Type:
Cultural Context



As one of the central hubs of Underground Railroad activity in Delaware, Wilmington was not only the ultimate destination for freedom seekers fleeing through the state but was also one of the first places where slaveholders and slave catchers would look for escaping runaways. Because of this, high-profile fugitives sometimes had to avoid Wilmington altogether, waiting in towns five or ten miles from the center of town for messengers from Thomas Garrett to forward them on to their next stop on the journey. One such group was a party of 28 from Dorchester County, Maryland, who fled in the fall of 1857 and made their way through Delaware with the help of William Brinkley. The party included seventeen children, among them two infants.¹⁴⁰

Because the news of the escape had already reached Wilmington, Brinkley brought the party to Centreville, near the Pennsylvania border. While in the town, eighteen members of the group had a violent altercation with a mob of Irishmen that left one of the Irish attackers seriously wounded; one source said he was shot but survived, while another maintains that he died from a stab wound.¹⁴¹ After this unfortunate occurrence, the freedom seekers were conducted safely to Canada.



¹⁴⁰ Larson and Bodo, 81-82.

¹⁴¹ Still, 663; Robert Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*, (Lancaster, PA: Office of the Journal, 1883), 276-277.

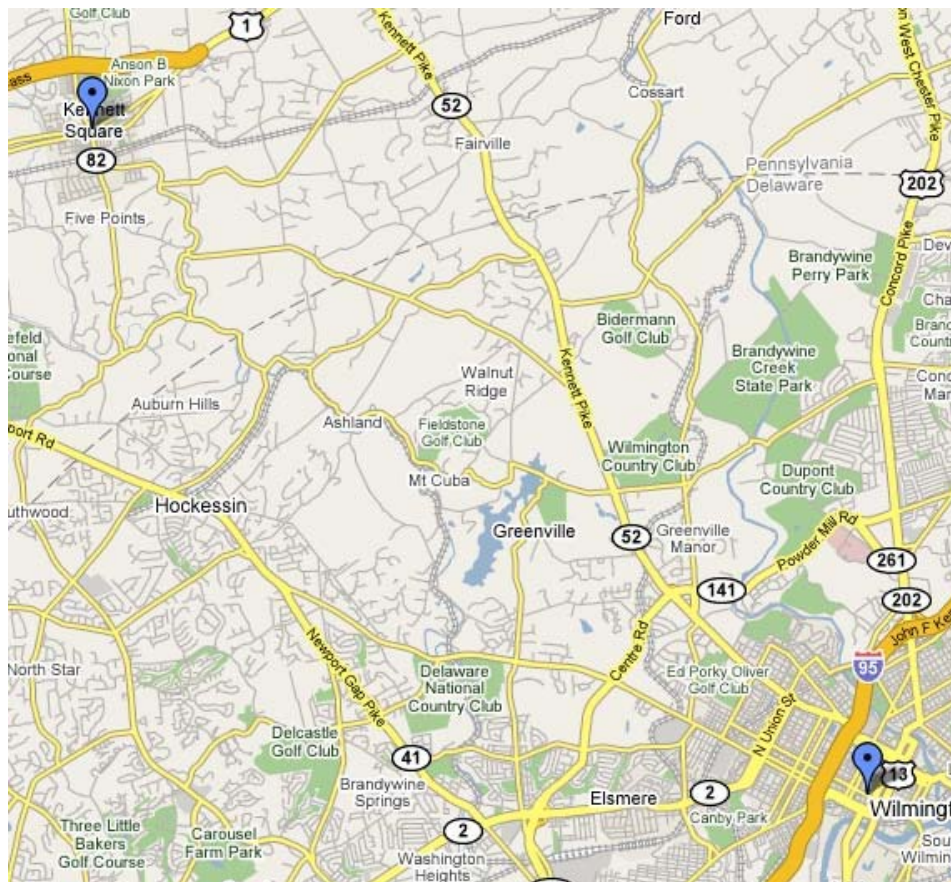
Name: Thomas Garrett Route to Longwood

Segment: 5

Site Type: Cultural Context; Evocative Landscape



In bringing the proposed Underground Railroad route to a close at the border with Pennsylvania, there were several possible early historic roads to consider. Kennett Pike, Concord Pike, and Philadelphia Pike were all constructed and operating by the early nineteenth century and any may have been used as a conduit for freedom seekers to the first available free state. Kennett Pike, which has existed in this location in some form since 1811, was ultimately chosen as it links Wilmington with abolitionist sites in Philadelphia, PA such as Kennett Square and the Longwood Progressive Friends Meeting House. When providing directions to Oakdale, the home of his wife's cousins, Isaac and Dinah Mendenhall, Thomas Garrett often sent travelers along Kennett Pike. He also probably used this road to travel to the Longwood Meeting.



APPENDIX 2: UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORIC PROFILES

The following profiles were prepared as supplementary material to the nomination for the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. They have been divided into two parts: profiles related to important Underground Railroad figures in the state, and profiles related to other topics.

Part 1: Underground Railroad Participants

Harriet Tubman
Thomas Garrett
William Still
William Brinkley
Samuel D. Burris
John Hunn
Peter Spencer

Part 2: Other Topics

The Quaker Role in the Abolitionist Movement
Slave Catchers in Delaware
African American Involvement in the Civil War
African American Settlements and Churches

Part 1: Underground Railroad Participants

Profile: Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman is one of the seminal figures whose experience helped to shape the Underground Railroad in Delaware. The most famous of all Underground Railroad conductors, she was not a Delaware native, but she used the state many times as a highway for her daring rescues. Harriet Tubman is so famous that her story has generated many legends, and it is sometimes difficult to tell fact from fiction. The challenge in this nomination has been sifting through all of these stories to find the facts. The scenic highway route is partly based on Tubman's travels as recounted to historian Wilbur Siebert in 1896, in which she mentioned Sandtown, Willow Grove, Camden, Dover, New Castle, and Wilmington among her stops along the way. Tubman and Thomas Garrett, who was a dear friend and supporter, anchor the Delaware route.

Harriet Tubman was born Araminta Ross sometime around 1822 in Dorchester County, Maryland, where she spent the first twenty-five years of her life as a slave. In her teen years she suffered an injury that would affect her for the rest of her life. An overseer threw a dry goods store weight at her, striking her in the head. This near fatal injury caused her to suffer from seizures and dream-like visions for the rest of her life, symptoms that suggest that she may have been suffering from Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. As a young adult, she changed her name to Harriet in honor of her mother, and around 1844, she married John Tubman, a free man who opted not to go with her when she escaped slavery for the north. Harriet first fled with two of her brothers on September 17, 1849, only to return for fear of capture. Several weeks later, she fled on her own, managing to elude capture even when she returned to the South again and again to rescue family members and friends, bringing many of them to St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

Some accounts have numbered Harriet Tubman's rescues in the hundreds, but the real number is probably around seventy people across thirteen trips, with another seventy who escaped on their own based on her information. Many of her journeys took her through Delaware, and the records of her travels have brought to light the names of many African American Underground Railroad operators who might otherwise not be known. These included William and Nathaniel Brinkley and Abel Gibbs (later Abraham), all from the Camden area. Her friendship with Thomas Garrett is well documented. Some of the most notable escapes that Tubman guided

through Delaware included three of her brothers, Ben, Robert, and Henry, along with Ben's fiancée Jane Kane in 1854, the slave Tilly by steamboat through Seaford in 1856, and her parents in 1857. Late in her life, Tubman asserted the fact that she had never lost a passenger in all her years as a conductor on the Underground Railroad.

When the Civil War broke out, Tubman knew that she wanted to help the war effort in any way that she could. In January 1862, she traveled to South Carolina to offer her services to the Union army as a spy, nurse, cook, launderer, and coordinator of supplies sent for newly freed slaves by Northern charitable organizations. Shortly after arriving in South Carolina, Tubman set up a "wash house" where she could teach African American women the particular cooking, washing, and sewing skills required by the Union Army and through which they could earn money for themselves. As time went on, Tubman gained the trust of many high-ranking Union officials, including General David Hunter, who was committed to freeing slaves in occupied areas of the south and forming regiments of black troops. With her ability to move about undetected and to inspire the trust of African Americans living in the South, Tubman proved herself to be an excellent scout, often bringing important information about terrain and rebel troop movements to Union officials. On June 1, 1863, she became the first woman to lead an armed expedition during the Civil War when she spearheaded a campaign to destroy Confederate outposts, collect materials for the army, and free slaves while traveling up the Combahee River. She also worked as a nurse for black troops, and was present during the assault by the famous black regiment, the 54th Massachusetts, on Fort Wagner.

After the war, Harriet Tubman returned to her home in Auburn, NY, where she lived with her elderly parents. She continued to work in support of rights for African Americans and women, speaking often about her experiences on the Underground Railroad and becoming involved with the movement for women's suffrage. Her home was always open to those who needed her, and she was generous with the resources she had almost to a fault. In 1908, the Harriet Tubman Home for Aged and Infirm Negroes, a project that had been dear to Tubman for many years, opened its doors, and eventually an aging and deteriorating Tubman went to live there. Harriet Tubman died of pneumonia on March 10, 1913, with many friends and relatives by her side.

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Profile: Thomas Garrett

Thomas Garrett was one of the most important figures in the history of the Underground Railroad in Delaware. From his home and business in Wilmington, Garrett helped hundreds of freedom seekers in their self-liberating journeys, collaborating with such other celebrated figures as Harriet Tubman, William Still, and famed white New England abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Born a Quaker, Garrett absorbed that denomination's values concerning the equality of all people before God and the necessity of abolition, but he departed somewhat when he supported a military end to slavery. Garrett's tireless efforts to fight slavery on any and all fronts made Delaware a highway to freedom during the antebellum era.

Thomas Garrett was born on August 21, 1789 in what is now Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, to Quaker Thomas Garrett and his second wife Sarah Price. He was one of thirteen children. In 1813, Garrett had an experience that would shape his life when a free African American woman working for his family was kidnapped by a man who intended to sell her into slavery. Garrett tracked the kidnapper and we believe was able to restore the woman to freedom. This one event opened his eyes to the horrors of slavery and instilled in him a desire to set captives free. That need would guide him throughout his life.

In 1813, Garrett married his first wife, Mary Sharpless, and in 1822 he moved his young family to Wilmington, where he would live for the rest of his life. At this time, Wilmington was a town rapidly growing into a city that offered many opportunities for a young man and his family. Garrett opened an iron and hardware store on Shipley Street very close to his home, and occasionally worked as a blacksmith as well. He began worshipping at the Friends Meeting House on West and 4th Streets. In 1828, his first wife died and was buried in the cemetery of the meetinghouse. In 1830, Garrett married his second wife, Rachel Mendinhall who supported his abolitionist activities.

Throughout the years in which he nurtured his family and established himself as a businessman in Wilmington, Garrett worked toward the abolition of slavery. In 1818, while still living in Pennsylvania, he joined the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race. This was the first society in the country devoted to abolition, and its members were chiefly concerned with ending slavery through legal means, such as sending petitions to Congress. Garrett, however, had other forms of resistance in mind, and at some point he began helping runaways in their escapes. He made no secret of his open opposition to slavery or of his activities on what became the Underground Railroad, but his plain Quaker appearance and calm fearlessness in the face of danger kept him relatively safe from harm.

In 1845, Garrett assisted in an escape that would lead to legal action against him for his activities. This was the famed escape of the Samuel Hawkins family, a narrative that has helped to define the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. Under the guidance of Samuel D. Burris, the Hawkins family stopped in Camden, Delaware. Ezekiel Jenkins gave Burris a letter to present to other Quakers in New Castle County. After the Hawkins family was captured at John Hunn's farm in Middletown and brought to a holding cell in New Castle, Garrett intervened and persuaded officials that there was not enough evidence available to hold the family in bondage. With Garrett's help, the family was freed and able to proceed to Pennsylvania. For their part in the escape, both Garrett and Hunn received summonses in May of 1846 and went to trial in May of 1848. As a result of the trial, Garrett was sentenced to pay \$5,400 in damages to the four slaveholders who sued him, of which he eventually paid \$1,500 after compromises. Even though this outcome was a hardship for him, Garrett did not slow his antislavery activities, even vowing at his trial to continue his practice of aiding fugitives.

And continue he did. By his own estimation, he had helped over 2,700 freedom seekers by the time the Civil War broke out in 1861. Due to the decline in the number of freedom seekers, Garrett concentrated on other abolition efforts during the war. His letters indicate that he was preoccupied with the war and its outcome and convinced that a war was necessary to bring about the end of slavery. After the war, which brought him joy and public recognition from blacks and whites on the Delmarva Peninsula, Garrett lived to see the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. He died on January 25, 1871, and his funeral was attended by many friends who recognized his great work, black and white alike. Garrett's contributions were essential to the operation of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.

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Profile: William Still

William Still was an abolitionist who was an important part of the Underground Railroad network. He was born a free man in Burlington County, New Jersey in 1821, to Levin and Charity Still. His father had bought his freedom and moved to New Jersey, while his mother had liberated

herself and her four children to follow her husband. Charity and her family were captured and returned to slavery, but she managed to escape again with her two daughters. Her sons, not including William, who was born later, were sold into the Deep South.

William Still moved to Philadelphia in 1844 and began working with the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery as a clerk. In 1852, the group formed a General Vigilance Committee, with Still as the chairman of the four-man Acting Committee, to watch for and aid freedom seekers who made their way into the city. As part of his job, Still kept careful records of all the fugitives who passed through his office, interviewing them and writing their stories down. He made sure to keep as much information as possible, because he hoped that through his records, people would be able to find or at least hear news of their loved ones.

He was personally rewarded for his efforts when he made a remarkable discovery. One day in 1850, Still met a man who had just arrived in the city, and began talking to him. The man had left his bondage in Alabama, where he had been brought as a child after being separated from his mother. In talking to this man, Still discovered that he was his long lost brother, Peter Still. Peter was reunited with his family after forty years of separation.

Although William Still lived in Philadelphia rather than in Delaware, he is an important part of the Delaware Underground Railroad story. He was a close associate of Thomas Garrett, and Garrett habitually forwarded freedom seekers from Wilmington to Still's Philadelphia offices. Still also knew and often worked with Harriet Tubman. Because of his records, many Delaware stories are known that otherwise would have been lost, and brave conductors such as William Brinkley are remembered today. Still's narratives contribute to a much greater understanding of the history of the Underground Railroad in Delaware and elsewhere.

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Profile: William Brinkley

William Brinkley was a prominent free African American man and Underground Railroad conductor who lived in the north Camden community of Brinkley Hill, which was named after his family. He and his brother Nathaniel were favorites of Harriet Tubman, who told Wilbur Siebert in her 1896 interview that she felt "safe and comfortable" with them. William Brinkley's name appears in conjunction with several known Underground Railroad cases, particularly the story of the Dover Eight.

Brinkley knew Thomas Otwell, the conductor-turned-traitor who attempted to turn in the Dover Eight for the reward money. Brinkley wrote in a letter to William Still that Harriet Tubman had vouched for Otwell, and so Otwell was trusted. After the betrayal, six of the eight overtook Otwell and threatened him, until Otwell agreed to conduct them to the next stop along the way, Brinkley's home in Camden. Brinkley escorted the group nineteen miles past Dover and Smyrna to the next stop, using his ingenuity to keep them from getting caught. With the help of Brinkley, Thomas Garrett and others, six of the Dover Eight reached safety and liberty in Canada.

Brinkley also played a part in many other escapes. He often provided aid to Harriet Tubman in her trips through Delaware. One notable occasion was a trip in the fall of 1856, when Tubman brought the slave Tilly from Baltimore to Seaford by steamboat, using subterfuge to convince various captains that the two women were free to travel. After reaching Seaford and

narrowly avoiding capture, Tubman and Tilly made it to Camden, where Brinkley was ready to help them on their way to Wilmington. In the fall of 1857, Brinkley again made himself useful in a high-profile case when the party of 28 escapees from Dorchester County, Maryland, reached Camden and needed his help. He conducted the group from Camden all the way to the outskirts of Wilmington, and the entire group eventually reached safety in Ontario.

William Brinkley is an example of one of many free African Americans living in Delaware who risked their lives and liberty to participate as conductors on the Underground Railroad. His name is known because of his interaction with William Still, Thomas Garrett, and Harriet Tubman, all of whom provided extensive information about their activities. Through his story, it is possible to imagine the many others that have gone unrecorded and unsung.

Sources

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Profile: Samuel D. Burris

Samuel D. Burris was a free African American conductor on the Underground Railroad in Delaware who helped several freedom seekers to escape during the 1840s. His name appears in many documented escape stories, such as the celebrated case of the Hawkins family in 1845 and an occasion in 1846 when he helped a female freedom seeker to escape. Burris was also arrested in 1847 for his activities, and his subsequent trial and sentencing is an illustration of the great risk that conductors, especially African American conductors, took when choosing to participate in the Underground Railroad.

Burris lived in Kent County and was active in escapes that involved the Camden and Dover area. His role in the Hawkins family story was as the conductor who brought the family to Camden and then on to the farm of John Hunn. While in Camden, he obtained a letter of introduction for the family to John Hunn, which was written by Ezekiel Jenkins, one of Hunn's cousins. According to a letter written after the fact by John Hunn to William Still, this was Hunn's first time helping freedom seekers and meeting Samuel D. Burris, but it would not be his last, as he wrote that Burris later helped hundreds of people to find him. Later, after the Hawkins family was captured and brought to prison in New Castle, it was Samuel D. Burris who brought a letter from John Hunn to Thomas Garrett in Wilmington asking for help in freeing the family.

After aiding in the escape of the Hawkins family, Burris continued to help freedom seekers until the summer of 1847, when he was arrested for attempting to aid Maria Matthews in escaping from her enslaver. This put him in extreme danger, because according to Delaware law, any person of African descent who was found aiding an escaped slave could be sold out of the state as a slave for a period of seven years. In aiding the freedom seekers who came to him for help, Burris put his own freedom in jeopardy. At his trial, he was sentenced to ten months of imprisonment, after which he was to be sold as a slave out of the state.

While Burris languished in the Dover jail, his white abolitionist friends, including Judge James Booth, J.J. Milligan, and Martin W. Bates, worked tirelessly to petition Governor of Delaware William Tharp to reverse the decision to sell Burris as a slave. They promised that in return for this reversal, Burris would leave the state, with the understanding that if he ever returned to Delaware, he would be sold as a slave. Governor Tharp did not take action on this petition, so Burris's friends had to try another tactic.

In 1848, the sale of Samuel D. Burris took place. The Philadelphia Abolition Society had been able to raise \$500 to buy Burris, and Isaac Flint successfully bid against the slave traders from Baltimore to secure his freedom. Burris settled with his family in Philadelphia and continued to aid freedom seekers, probably even going back into Delaware to continue his role as a conductor. In 1849, following a petition that mentioned Burris as a person who aided escaping

slaves, a new law was passed in Delaware giving free blacks who assisted fugitives twenty-four hours to leave the state, on pain of punishment of sixty lashes.

Burriss left the Delaware area for San Francisco in 1852, where he settled with other former residents of Delaware. After the Civil War, he worked to raise money for the cause of freedmen who had been released from their bonds by the war and needed aid in finding jobs and homes. Burriss died in San Francisco in 1869.

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Profile: John Hunn

Called the “Chief Engineer” of the Underground Railroad in Delaware by William Still in his book, *The Underground Railroad*, John Hunn aided hundreds of escapees on their paths to freedom. Born in 1818 and raised a Quaker, John Hunn was a member of a rich and prominent family whose ties reached beyond the borders of the state to Philadelphia and across the region. He attended the Camden Monthly Meeting of Friends from which other community members of like mind created a network of Underground Railroad connections that stretched from Sussex County to Wilmington and into Pennsylvania. Wildcat Manor and Great Geneva, two estates in the Lebanon, Delaware vicinity, are also associated with the extended Hunn family and have strong oral traditions linking them to the Underground Railroad as well.

Although apprenticed to a merchant in Philadelphia along with an elder brother, John Hunn wanted to be a farmer so in October 1840 he married and moved to a farm he owned near Middletown to begin his family. Although it is not known when Hunn first heard of the Underground Railroad, his first acknowledged active participation occurred on December 5, 1844 in assisting the escape of the Samuel Hawkins family, and four men—one of the shaping narratives of the proposed byway. An announcement offering the reward for capture of the wife and two of the children of Samuel Hawkins had already reached Middletown, along with William Chestnut and the constable William Hardcastle from Maryland, representing the owners of the enslaved property. One of Hunn's neighbors reported the unfamiliar group to the marshal in Middletown. Although Hawkins and his wife had papers supporting their claim of being free, the family was taken to New Castle jail. The rest of the party was not detained so Hunn sent a letter to Thomas Garrett in Wilmington with Samuel Burriss and the other four men. Garrett met the group in New Castle and offered transportation for Mrs. Hawkins and her small children. The judge found the warrant was not correctly executed and was insufficient to detain the Hawkins family. The party traveled with Garrett to Wilmington and then, uneventfully, into Pennsylvania and to freedom.

Under the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 John Hunn and Thomas Garrett were sued by the enslavers of the two Hawkins children for assisting in their escape. Hunn did not contest the indictment and was fined \$2500. Garrett did plead innocent but was found guilty in May 1848 and fined \$3,500. Both vowed to continue fighting slavery and aiding freedom seekers regardless of legal consequences. Hunn paid his fine, which required the seizure and sale of all of his property in the Middletown/Odessa vicinity and in Camden. Garrett eventually paid only \$1,500 of the original fine, which was still a hardship. Today, \$1,500 is approximately equivalent to \$190,000.

Hunn relocated his family to a farm called Happy Valley located on the main road between Dover and Magnolia, Delaware in Kent County and continued to participate in the Underground Railroad. In June 1852, along with his elder sister Patience H. Jenkins, he preached about the evils of slavery at the Northwest Fork Monthly Meeting in Maryland. Both he and his sister were granted the title of “minister” in the Quaker faith as recognition of their anti-slavery preaching.

John Hunn continued to assist African Americans during the Civil War by traveling to the Sea Islands of South Carolina to work among the newly freed population there. In 1862, after the successful assault on the fortification of Port Royal Harbor by the Union Navy, the slave-holding population fled the Sea Islands of the South Carolina/Georgia border. Approximately 10,000 slaves were left on the Sea Islands. Once the source of the most valuable cotton produced in the South, the Sea Islands were isolated from mainland. A Philadelphia philanthropic organization, the Port Royal Relief Association, under the direction of the white Reverend J. Miller McKim of Philadelphia organized volunteers to work among the newly freed slaves. John Hunn traveled there with his daughter, Elizabeth, leaving Philadelphia on October 21, 1862. She was to teach school with Laura Towne, and he was to run a store catering to the needs of the newly free. Annie Jenkins Hunn and his son who was to become Governor of Delaware, John Hunn with his wife Sally Emerson, joined him shortly thereafter. The elder Hunn and his wife stayed in South Carolina the longest of the family, returning to Delaware in 1884.

Hunn died on July 6, 1894 at age 76 and was buried in the Camden Meeting Cemetery. After the Civil War John Hunn was remembered for the role he played in the Underground Railroad, and today there is a historical marker in front of the Camden Friends Meeting House commemorating his work. Among the Delaware Quakers who fought against slavery, Hunn is second only to Thomas Garrett in fame and in the influence he had on the outcome of many escape attempts.

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Profile: Peter Spencer

Peter Spencer was born a slave in Kent County, Maryland in 1792. Upon the death of his master in the 1850s he was manumitted, and relocated to Wilmington, Delaware, a city which had a substantial free African American population. His occupations are listed in the census as a laborer and eventually a mechanic. Throughout his life Peter Spencer gained the respect of both African Americans and European Americans. The white Thomas Gilpin was responsible for providing Spencer with the land he needed to build a church in 1805. With this land, Spencer became the founder of the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington.

The Union African Methodist Episcopal Church was the first independent church fully controlled and organized by African Americans in the United States. The church was founded as the result of the actions of members of the Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington. Blacks were not allowed to sit on the main floor of the sanctuary during Sunday service; instead they were restricted to the balcony. The only time they were allowed to use the area was during small meetings known as "class meetings" where they were given the opportunity to share the joys and sorrows of their spiritual journey. Peter Spencer and another black minister, William Anderson, were not allowed to speak from the pulpit of the church. Upon the accusation that the black members of the church did not clean up the sanctuary after a meeting they were confined to the balcony for all future class meetings. After this affront, Peter Spencer, William Anderson, and forty black members founded Ezion, an all-black Methodist Episcopal Church. Spencer's desire

for complete control of the church led to the founding of the Union African Methodist Episcopal Church. The church was also known as the Mother AUMP, African Union Church, Old Union, the Union Church, Union Church of Africans, and the African Union Methodist Church. During Spencer's leadership under the name "Old Union", the church renounced the Methodist Episcopal label, choosing to be known only as Methodist. This was the creation of the first independent denomination completely controlled by blacks.

Spencer's belief that African Americans needed to have a sense of belonging led him to establish the Big Quarterly Festival in 1814. The first festival was held on the last Sunday in August. The festival originally was religious and focused on service at the African Union Church, but it would eventually expand to include more cultural and social dimensions. The event played host to thousands of free blacks as well as a large portion of enslaved blacks who were permitted to attend by their masters. It is believed that the idea of the Big Quarterly Festival was the result of the Yearly Meeting held by Quakers and Methodists in order to "asses the past, quicken spiritual life in the present, and lay plans for the future." This festival was started by Spencer in Wilmington in order to unite and uplift African Americans throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. After the death of Peter Spencer in Wilmington on July 25, 1843, the festival added a tribute to the activities. A march was held leading to his burial site and a wreath was placed on his grave. He was held in such high esteem upon his death by blacks as well as whites that he was written about in newspapers throughout the city and state.

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Part 2: Other Topics

Profile: The Quaker Role in the Abolitionist Movement

The Society of Friends, members of which are called Quakers, was a major force in the abolition of and resistance to the institution of slavery in Delaware and across the United States. Belief in the abhorrent nature of slavery was rooted in the Quaker concept of an inner light, the presence of God, which inhabits all people. Shortly after the Society of Friends was founded in the seventeenth century, some Quakers began to question whether the religion's tenets stood in direct conflict with slavery. By 1776, the North American Yearly Meetings required that members free their slaves or be disowned from the Religious Society of Friends. Both earlier and from this point on, many Quakers worked tirelessly to end slavery. While few Quakers were as active as Thomas Garrett or Warner Mifflin, the overall climate of equality and manumission that they endorsed had a major impact on the decline of slavery in Delaware and on the thriving Underground Railroad that passed through the state.

Quakers were attracted to settling in the American colonies because they hoped to escape the persecution of their beliefs that was happening in England. In 1681, William Penn established the colony of Pennsylvania as a haven for religious freedom and especially for Quakers, and Quakers responded by settling in the new colony in large numbers. At this time, Delaware was part of the Pennsylvania colony, but the three counties split off to form a separate government at the turn of the eighteenth century. From their arrival in the New World, some Quakers were uneasy about the institution of slavery, questioning whether or not the practice of owning slaves interfered with their religion. Some Quakers at this time did buy, own, and sell slaves. In 1696, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took the first tentative step toward an antislavery

movement when it advised members not to import slaves. From this beginning, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting took more steps throughout the eighteenth century to restrict the practice of slavery, culminating in 1776 when they allowed slaveholding Quakers to be disowned. Quaker meetings throughout the new country followed the lead of the Philadelphians in working against slavery.

Delaware Quakers followed the national pattern to an extent, first expressing ambivalence toward slavery before adopting a strongly antislavery stance in the mid-eighteenth century. The two nexuses for antislavery thought were Wilmington in New Castle County and Duck Creek in Kent County, led by David Ferris and Warner Mifflin, respectively. These two leaders pushed strong abolitionist agendas, refusing to sympathize with slaveholding Friends. Both meetings went above and beyond the restrictions placed on slavery by the Yearly Meeting, disowning slaveholding Quakers after the 1758 Meeting suggested excluding such members from leadership positions. These meetings also encouraged non-Quaker Delawareans to manumit their slaves, and the Duck Creek Meeting may have been one of the major forces behind the 1790 census data, which shows that 52.7% of African Americans in Kent County were free. Quakers contributed to a culture of voluntary manumission that freed many Delaware slaves.

In addition to encouraging their own members and anyone else who would listen to free their slaves voluntarily, Delaware Quakers were involved in several attempts to enact abolition on a statewide scale. At first, this seemed like a logical conclusion for the state, as all of the Northern states were working on abolition initiatives and the institution had lost its economic viability in Delaware. However, proslavery and antislavery forces in the state were so evenly matched that it was impossible to achieve abolition through legislation. Quakers petitioned the state for a number of antislavery measures, including abolition, in 1786, 1789, and 1796, but were turned down each time. Although they never reached the goal of abolition, these petitions did prompt the passing of several laws that were favorable to Quaker goals, including the ban of trafficking in enslaved people with other states and the relaxation of laws that had once restricted voluntary manumission. Delaware Quakers may not have succeeded in ending slavery through legislation, but laws that were passed due to their influence had a positive effect on the state's African American population.

As it became apparent that the state would not endorse a legal end to slavery, Delaware Quakers began to turn to other means to aid African Americans in bondage. The Underground Railroad became an outlet for many of these people to practice their religious convictions and aid freedom seekers in need. Thomas Garrett was the most outstanding example; by his own estimation, he had a hand in about 2,700 escapes. He was willing to make himself known to all as an operator of the Underground Railroad, though his acceptance of the idea that war was necessary to end slavery was not truly in keeping with Quaker beliefs. Other prominent Quakers, such as John Hunn, Henry Cowgill, John Alston, and the Corbit family, also had a hand in aiding escapes. Although not all Quakers participated in the Underground Railroad, and not all Quaker meetinghouses were attended by Underground Railroad operatives, the meetinghouses that still stand in Delaware are important in this story as sites for abolitionist thought, where groups of people who were committed to ending slavery before the turn of the nineteenth century met and worshipped. The Quaker contribution to the cause of abolition cannot be measured.

Three Quaker meetinghouses on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway are considered significant Underground Railroad sites. The Camden Friends Meeting House was built in 1805 and was attended by many prominent Delaware abolitionists during the antebellum era. It is the burial site of John Hunn, who was laid to rest there following his death in 1894. In Odessa, the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, built in 1785, was also attended by abolitionists. Local legends maintain that it was a stop on the Underground Railroad, and it is an important marker of the community of antislavery activists who worshipped within its walls. The current Wilmington Friends Meeting House was built in 1815 on a site that was in use by Quakers beginning in 1738. Thomas Garrett attended the Wilmington meeting, and after his death in 1871 he was buried in the adjoining graveyard. These three sites, with their meetinghouses that would

stood during the peak of Underground Railroad activity, help to evoke the history of Quaker participation in this groundbreaking movement.

Sources

Essah, Patience. *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865*.

Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996.

Larson, Kate Clifford and Robin Bodo. *The Underground Railroad: A Research Context, Draft 5*. Manuscript, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, 2007.

Profile: Slave catchers in Delaware

The trip through Delaware on the Underground Railroad was a dangerous one for the freedom seekers who traveled it, with many possible threats to life and liberty. The most persistent threat was capture, usually with the undesired result of a return to the original slave owner, but sometimes with a further repercussion of sale to the deep south. Rewards for capturing and returning fugitive slaves were often substantial, and roving bands of vigilantes made a living collecting these rewards. As one of the northernmost boundaries between slavery and the free North, Delaware was full of these types of people, making the trip for freedom seekers especially hazardous.

Two of the most hated and feared figures for African Americans in antebellum Delaware were Patty Cannon and Joe Johnson, a woman and her son-in-law who together ran the most notorious kidnapping gang in the state. Although the gang members sometimes engaged in returning fugitives for the reward money, their chief occupation was the kidnapping and sale of African Americans living in Delaware into slavery in the Deep South. This did not involve only fugitives, but also free blacks who had settled in Delaware and enslaved people who were "stolen" from their masters. The gang took advantage of the sometimes slow application of due process and a legal system biased in favor of whites to operate their kidnapping ring. Patty Cannon's reign of terror lasted from sometime after 1790, when it was rumored that she settled in Sussex County with her husband, until 1829, when she was arrested and put in prison in Georgetown, Delaware for the murder of a Southern slave dealer who was found buried on a property that she had rented. Patty died in prison on May 11, 1829 under suspicious circumstances; legend holds that she committed suicide by poison. Even after her death, her name remained synonymous with the horrors and injustices of slavery.

Although Patty Cannon's gang operated out of Sussex County, members of the gang were responsible for kidnappings all across the state and even in other states, including the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Patty Cannon may be the most famous opponent to the Underground Railroad in Delaware, but she was certainly not the only one. The threat of capture by unnamed bands of men carries through many of the stories of escapes through Delaware. This threat increased after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, which increased the penalties for persons found to be aiding or sheltering freedom seekers. In addition, under the new law, sheriffs were paid a bounty for every slave returned to his owner, increasing the rewards for following the law and placing fugitives in further jeopardy.

Because of the many risks, freedom seekers had to be very careful about whom they trusted when attempting their escapes. Until assured otherwise, they had to assume that every person they met was a foe, even fellow African Americans. No one was immune to the temptation provided by the large rewards offered for the return of fugitive slaves. Patty Cannon was known to employ African American members of her gang as decoys to lure the unsuspecting into traps; this tactic led to the capture of many enslaved people and free blacks. There are some stories of treacherous people posing as conductors on the Underground Railroad and then betraying their charges at the first possible moment. Even trusted conductors sometimes gave in to temptation. In 1857, the Dover Eight put their trust in Thomas Otwell, a friend of none other than Harriet

Tubman, expecting that he would help them to freedom. Instead, Otwell betrayed the Eight, taking them to the sheriff in Dover, and it was only through their quick thinking and bravery that they were able to escape. In a climate where even avowed Underground Railroad activists could become betrayers and slave catchers were around every corner, escape from slavery was a dangerous prospect indeed.

Sources

Essah, Patience. *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865*.

Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996.

Larson, Kate Clifford and Robin Bodo. *The Underground Railroad: A Research Context, Draft 5*. Manuscript, Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, 2007.

Roth, Hal. *The Monster's Handsome Face: Patty Cannon in Fiction and Fact*. Vienna, MD: Nanticoke Books, 1998.

Profile: African American Involvement in the Civil War

After the Civil War broke out with the shots fired on Fort Sumter in April of 1861, many African Americans immediately became involved with the war effort on both sides of the conflict, although most identified with the Union cause. For many enslaved people and free blacks, the Civil War was from the outset a war of emancipation, with freedom a result that must follow a Northern victory. Although most Northern whites did not see the war this way at first, emancipation became inevitable as the years of the war stretched on. The question of arming blacks was hotly debated in both the North and the South, with the Union army beginning enlistments in 1862 and the Confederacy not approving black troops officially until 1865, much too late to turn the tide of the war. For African Americans, it was important to become involved in this fight for freedom, and many distinguished themselves as soldiers, spies, nurses, and others involved in the war effort.

The first enlistments of African American troops came on the heels of the preliminary announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. The proclamation, which applied only to enslaved people held in those states and territories that were in a state of rebellion when it was issued, was issued by Abraham Lincoln as a political measure that took advantage of the additional powers granted to the President during wartime. The measure had two major benefits: first, it would eventually deprive Southern states of much of the manpower that they used to support their war effort, and second, it recast the struggle in a new moral light that was essential in persuading England and France not to join the conflict on the Southern side. Although the proclamation did not free all of the slaves, it was met with warmth by many African Americans, and encouraged them to enlist in the Union army.

In total, about 180,000 African Americans served for the Union in 163 units. They faced widespread segregation and unequal treatment in their efforts. Due to racial prejudice, most of these units were led by white officers, and very few black soldiers were ever made commissioned officers. At first, black troops were paid significantly less per month than their white counterparts, and many units, most notably the celebrated 54th Massachusetts led by Col. Robert Gould Shaw, refused payment entirely as a protest against this unfair measure. These demonstrations, along with the continued valor and dedication exhibited by African Americans in the army, convinced Congress to pass a law on June 15, 1864 stipulating equal payment for all soldiers regardless of race. African American troops also faced severe reprisals from the Confederate troops they fought. Many Confederates operated under a "No Quarter" policy, denying captured blacks troops the status of prisoners of war and often executing them and their black officers on the spot. The most notorious incident occurred on April 12, 1864 at Fort Pillow in Tennessee, where Confederate troops under General Nathan Bedford Forrest slaughtered black and white Union troops while they were trying to surrender.

As it became obvious that enlisting black troops was a boon to the Union war effort, and that the Union's overwhelming advantages in every means of war production would eventually

crush the Southern war effort, the Confederate government began debating whether or not to form black regiments of its own. Many African Americans were already serving the army as laborers and body servants, but the Confederacy was hesitant to take the next step. After the twin defeats of Gettysburg and Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, letters began pouring in to President Jefferson Davis begging him to arm slaves. By February 1865, even General Robert E. Lee lent his public support to the idea, and on March 13, 1865, the Confederate Congress passed a bill that would allow for the arming of African Americans. The measure came too late to save the Confederacy, and Lee surrendered at Appomattox less than a month later.

The issue of arming African Americans in Delaware mirrored the national debate on the subject. Republican Governor William Cannon failed in his early attempts to call for black enlistment, but a need to fill the state's enlistment quotas eventually won the day in favor of black troops. In all, 954 Delaware black men fought for the Union cause. Today, there are traces of this chapter in Delaware's history along the Underground Railroad route, appearing most prominently in the cemeteries of the Zion AME Church in Camden and of Polktown, the free black community that grew up on the outskirts of Delaware City. Here, veterans of the United States Colored Troops have been laid to rest. Although this history is not directly related to the Underground Railroad, it is valuable as a reminder of the measures taken by Delaware's African Americans to win freedom and respect during the Civil War.

Sources

Essah, Patience. *A House Divided: Slavery and Emancipation in Delaware 1638-1865*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996.

Jenkins, William L. *Climbing Up to Glory: A Short History of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2002.

Profile: African American Settlements and Churches

Delaware was a unique state in regards to the lives of African Americans during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of the internal struggle between the reality of slavery and idea of manumission. By 1787 manumission regulations began to be passed in Delaware. However, it is proposed that free African American settlements existed since the 1730's. As slaves began to be manumitted, additional regulations limited their 'freedom' in the sense that additional laws were passed to limit the movement of free African Americans in order to maintain a labor force for agriculture in the state. Furthermore, as African Americans were struggling to achieve freedom, they were also re-defining their role within the traditional Euro-American churches. Religion played an important role in the lives of enslaved people and was perceived by slaves as a way to return to their native lands after death. Due to the sect's tolerance of African Americans, they tended to join the Methodist church. Also, the expressive worship style of the Methodist church most closely resembled that which was practiced in traditional African religions. According to the 1868 Beers Atlas, 16 African American churches existed at this time; however, many of the churches are nameless.

Little is known about the free African American settlements in Delaware. In general the settlements tended to be located near plantations or along rivers or streams. The specific dates of establishment or population within the settlements are largely unknown. As of 1849, the location of African American churches tended to be an indicator of African American settlements but the settlements were not necessarily indicators of African American churches.

Thirty-one rural and urban communities existed within the corridor south of the Chesapeake and Delaware canal along the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. Few specifics are known about these communities other than that they existed. A rural free African American community is defined as "a district or a more or less definitely circumscribed place containing African American members that is located remotely from the nearest Euro-American community, usually found at a crossroad in the countryside." An urban free African American community is defined as "a district or a more or less definitely

circumscribed place inhabited primarily by African Americans located within or near an Euro-American community.” By 1830, free African Americans lived in the Camden area, the Dover area and Odessa. During the mid to late nineteenth century, as slavery began to be abolished, additional free African American communities began to surface, especially in the 1850s as more free African Americans began gaining access to property rights. The following historic free African American communities are located within the study area:

- South Murderkill Hundred
 - Mt. Olive
 - Union
 - Berrytown
- North Murderkill Hundred
 - Starhill
 - Willow Grove
 - Viola/Plymouth
 - Woodside
 - Camden-Wyoming at Center St. (Goat Road) and to the south along Willow grove Road including Stevens, Apple, Peach, and Pear Streets
 - Hunntown (no longer in existence as of the late nineteenth century)
 - Brinkley Hill near Camden in the NE corner along present day State Route 13
 - Guytown Along Almshouse Rd. west of Camden
- West Dover Hundred
 - Lockwood Chapel
 - Sanfield
 - Parker’s Chapel
 - Carisle
- East Dover Hundred (possibly part of Little Creek Hundred)
 - St Jones Neck
 - Dover at Pigeon Hill bound by Water, S. Governors, West, and North Streets (no longer in existence)
 - Dover at West North St to the south to Forest St. to the north to Minima St. on the west
- Little Creek Hundred
 - Muddy Branch
 - Wheel of Fortune
 - Cowgill’s Corner/White Oak
 - Little Creek
- Duck Creek hundred
 - Carrolltown/Raymond’s Neck
 - Clayton at West Street and along Duck Creek Road
 - Smyrna at Monrovia Ave. to Commercial St. extending south along East St. Smyrna at North, Lincoln, East, and Mt. Vernon Streets
- Appoquinimink Hundred
 - Fieldsboro
 - Lee’s Chapel
 - Townsend
 - New Discovery
 - Green Spring
- Blackbird Hundred
 - Thoroughfare Neck: Taylor’s Bridge and Deakneyville
- St. Georges Hundred
 - Summit Bridge
 - Mount Pleasant
 - Middletown at Lockwood and Lake Streets
 - Odessa at 4th and Main Streets
 - Port Penn at Stewart Street

Sources

Beers Atlas (1868)

Skelcher, Bradley. (1995) *African American Settlement Patterns on the Upper Peninsula Zone of Delaware, 1730-1970+/-: Historic Context*. Dover, DE: Department of History and Political Science, Delaware State University, September 1995.

APPENDIX 3: MAPS

Part 1: General Maps

Figure 2: Quaker Meeting Houses Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway

Figure 3: Free African American Settlements Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway South of the C and D Canal

Figure 4: Land Use Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway

Part 2: Route Detail Maps

Figure 5: Segment 1: State Route 10 (The Gauntlet)

Figure 6: Optional Star Hill/Hunn Loop (The Gauntlet)

Figure 7: Segment 2: State Route 15 (Making Choices)

Figure 8: Segment 3: State Route 9 (The Bold Move)

Figure 9: Segment 4: Wilmington (Gateway to Freedom)

Figure 10: Segment 5: Kennett Pike (On to Pennsylvania)

**FIGURE 2:
Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway
Quaker Meeting Houses Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway**

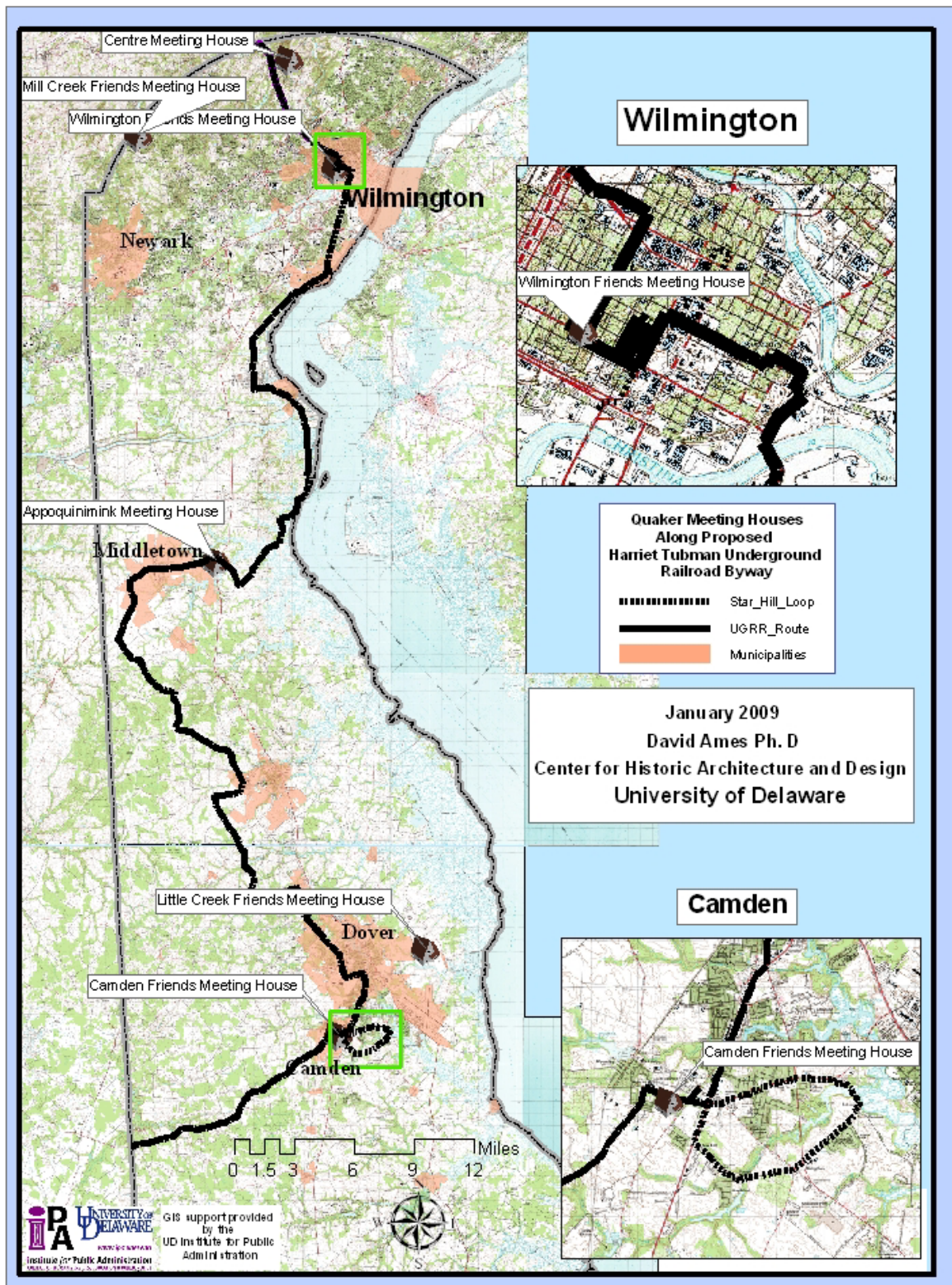


FIGURE 3:
Free African American Settlements Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad
Byway South of the C and D Canal

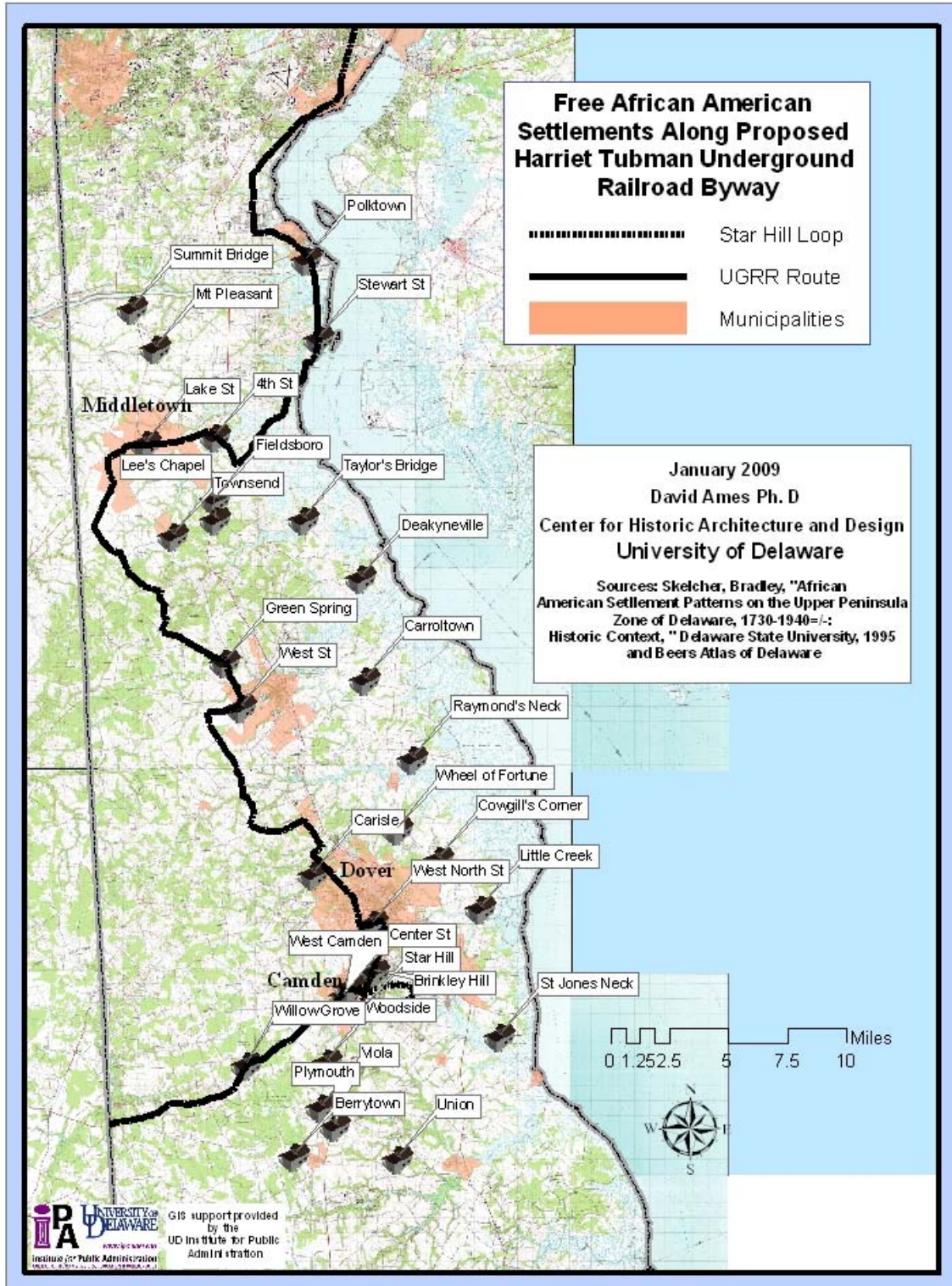


FIGURE 4:
Land Use Along Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway

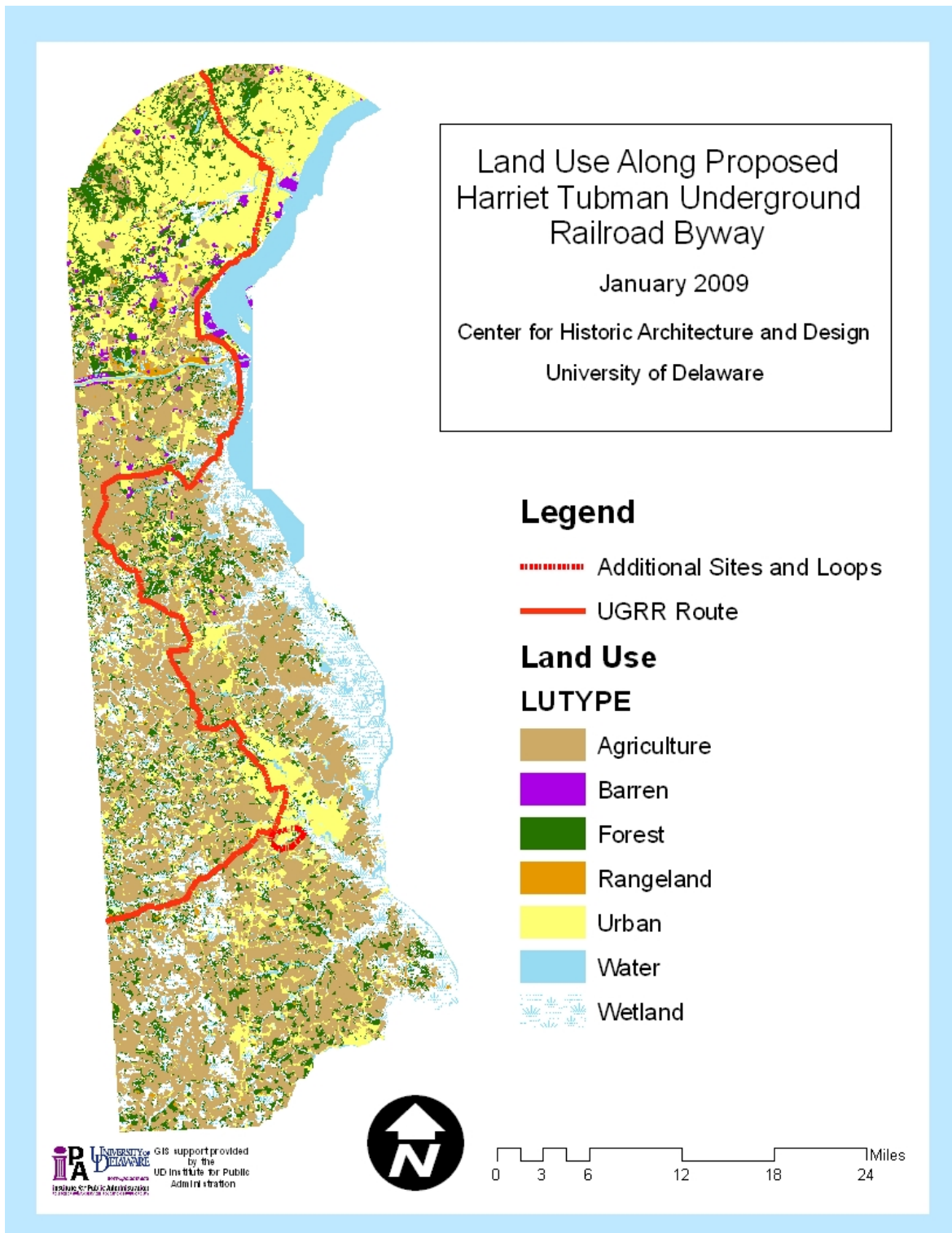


FIGURE 5:
Segment 1: State Route 10 (The Gauntlet)

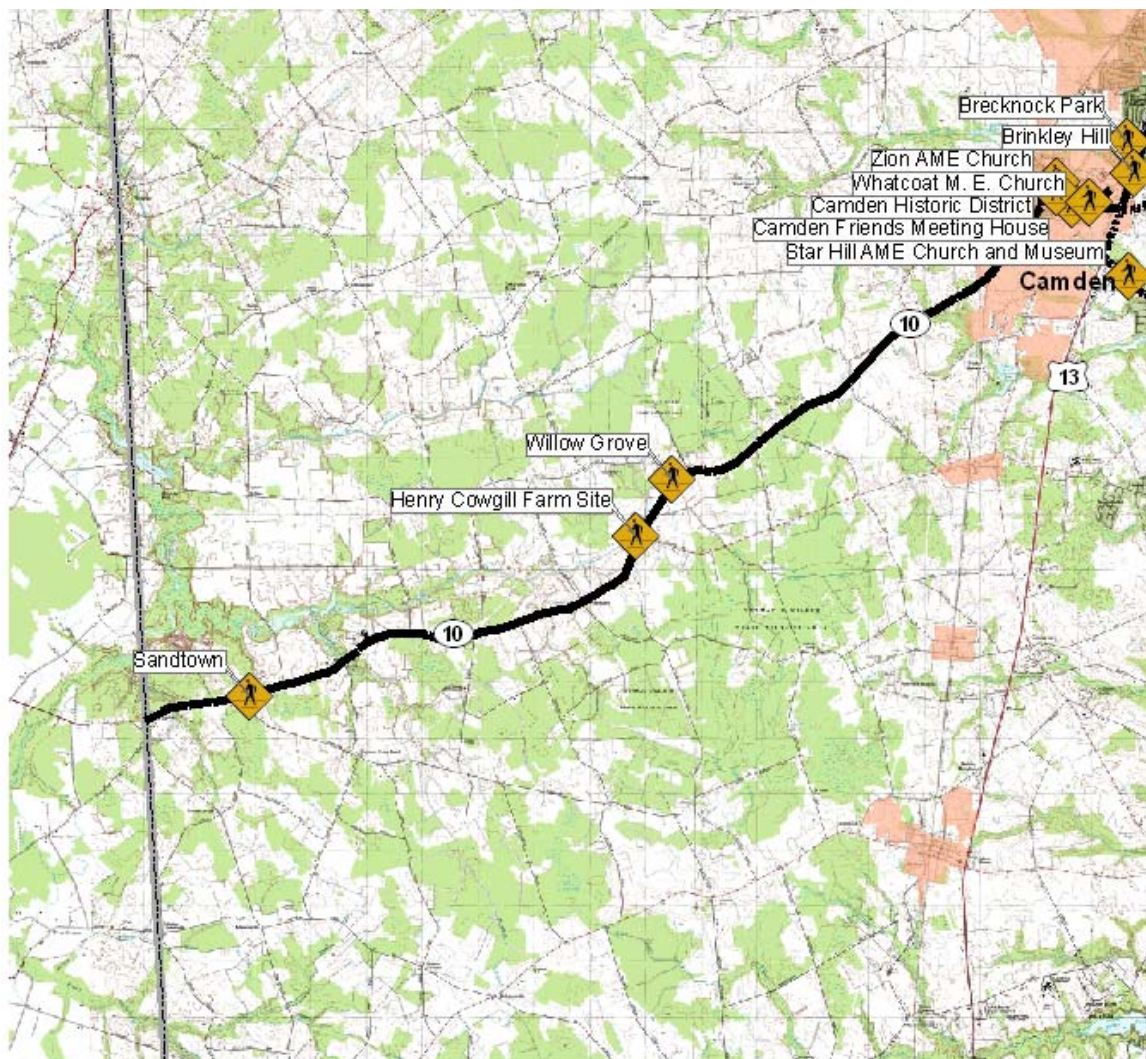


FIGURE 6:
Segment 1: Camden and Optional Star Hill/Hunn Loop (The Gauntlet)

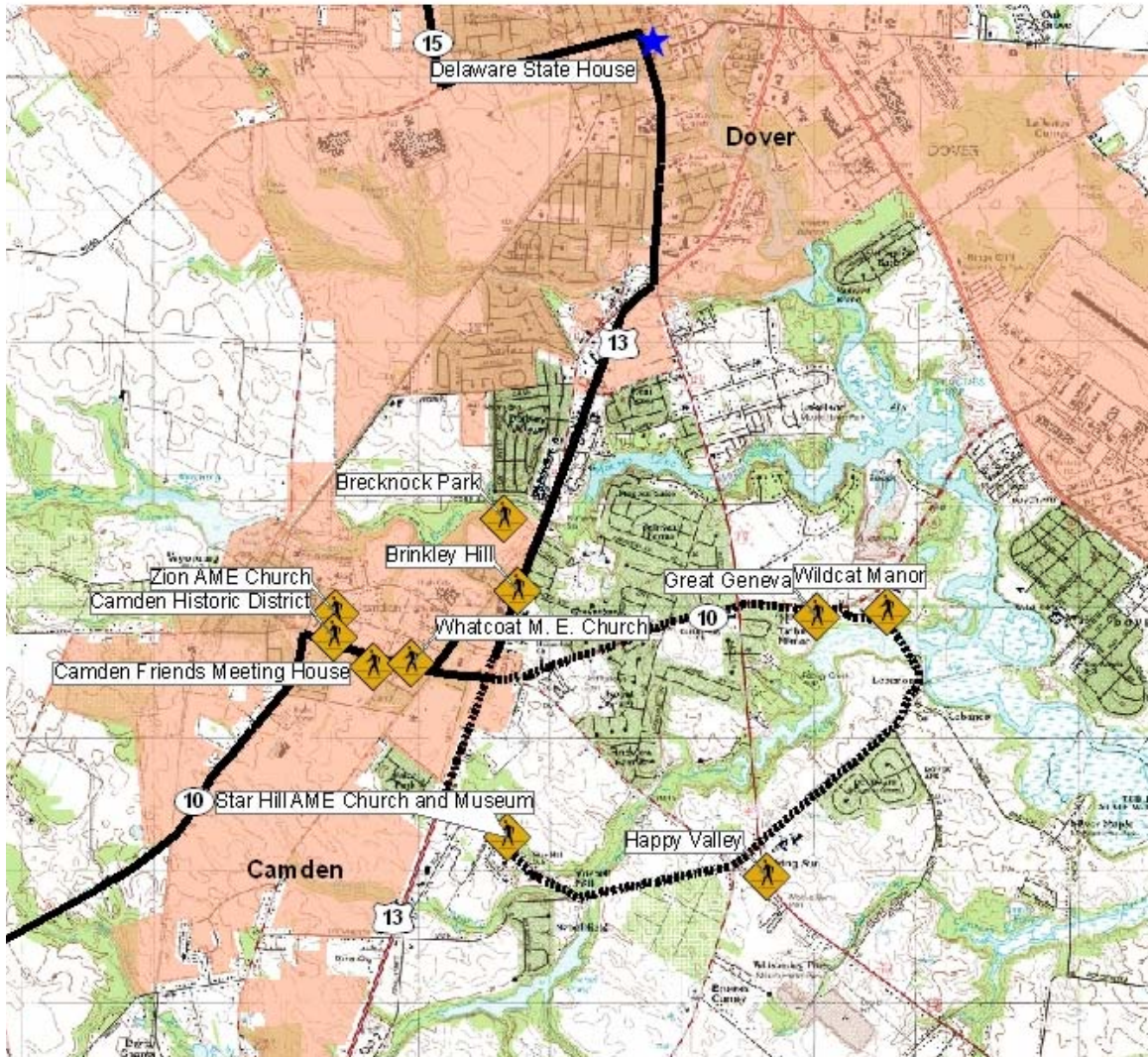


FIGURE 7:
Segment 2: State Route 15 (Making Choices)

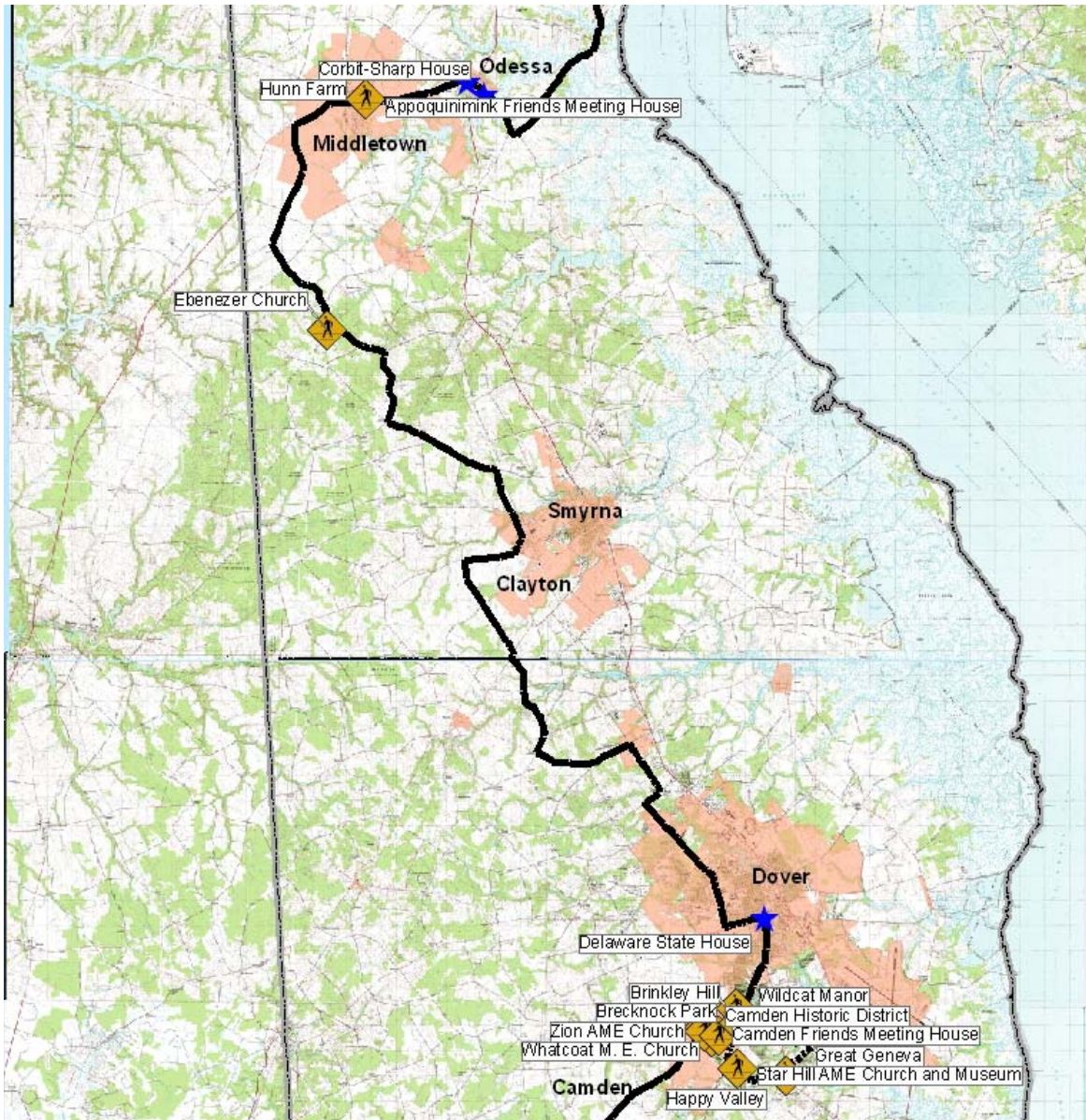


FIGURE 8:
Segment 3: State Route 9 (The Bold Move)

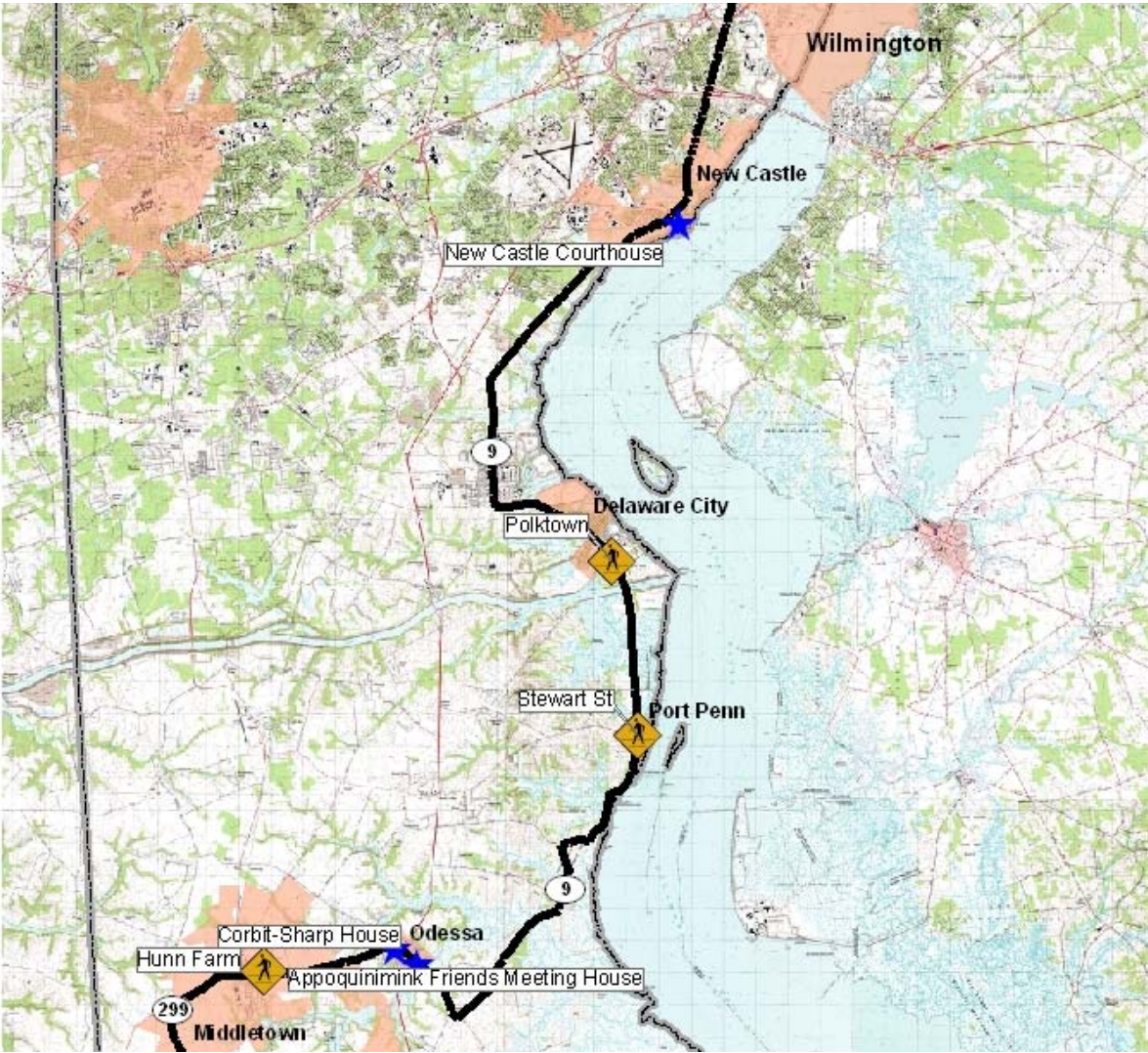


FIGURE 9:
Segment 4: Wilmington (Gateway to Freedom)

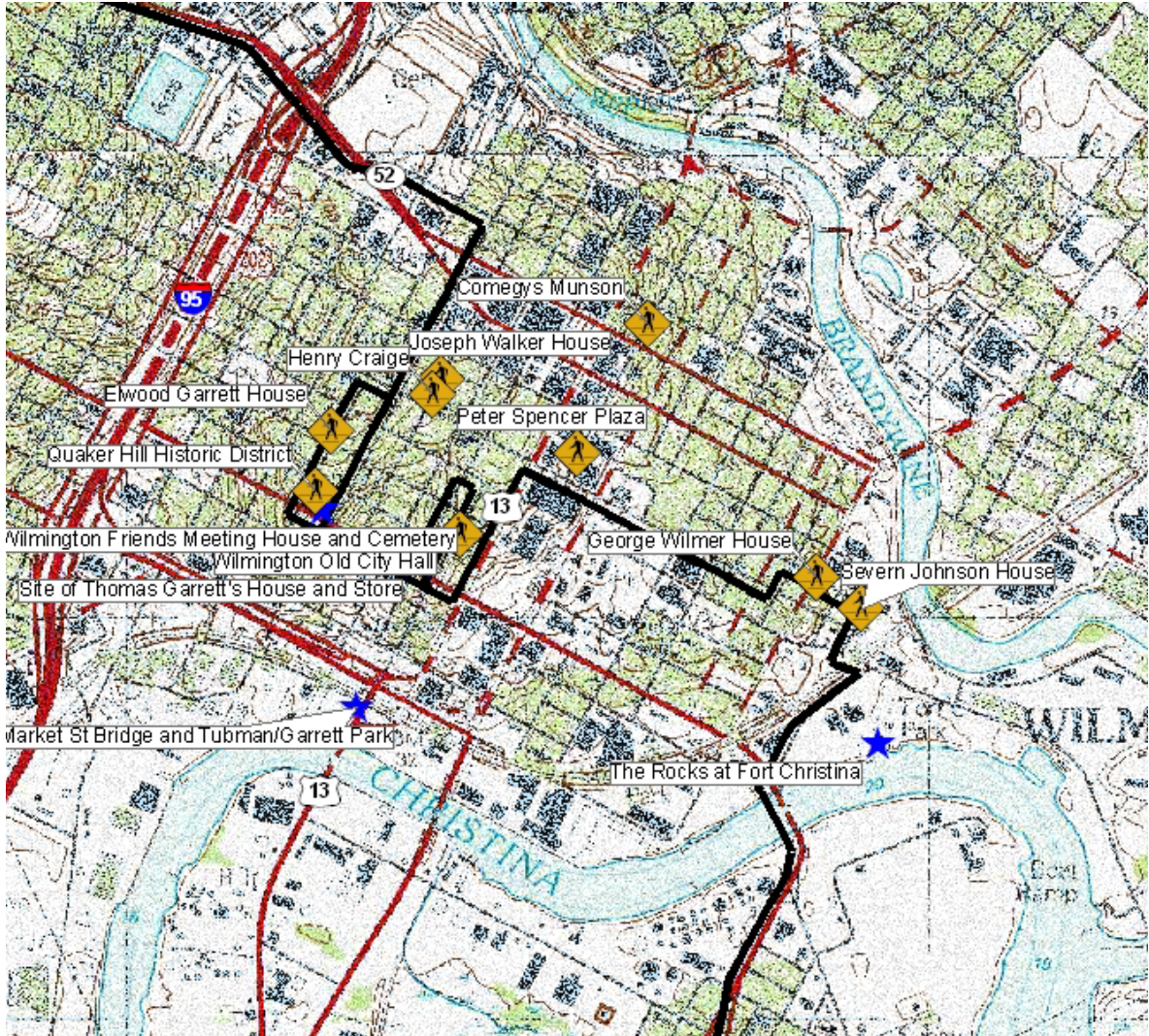
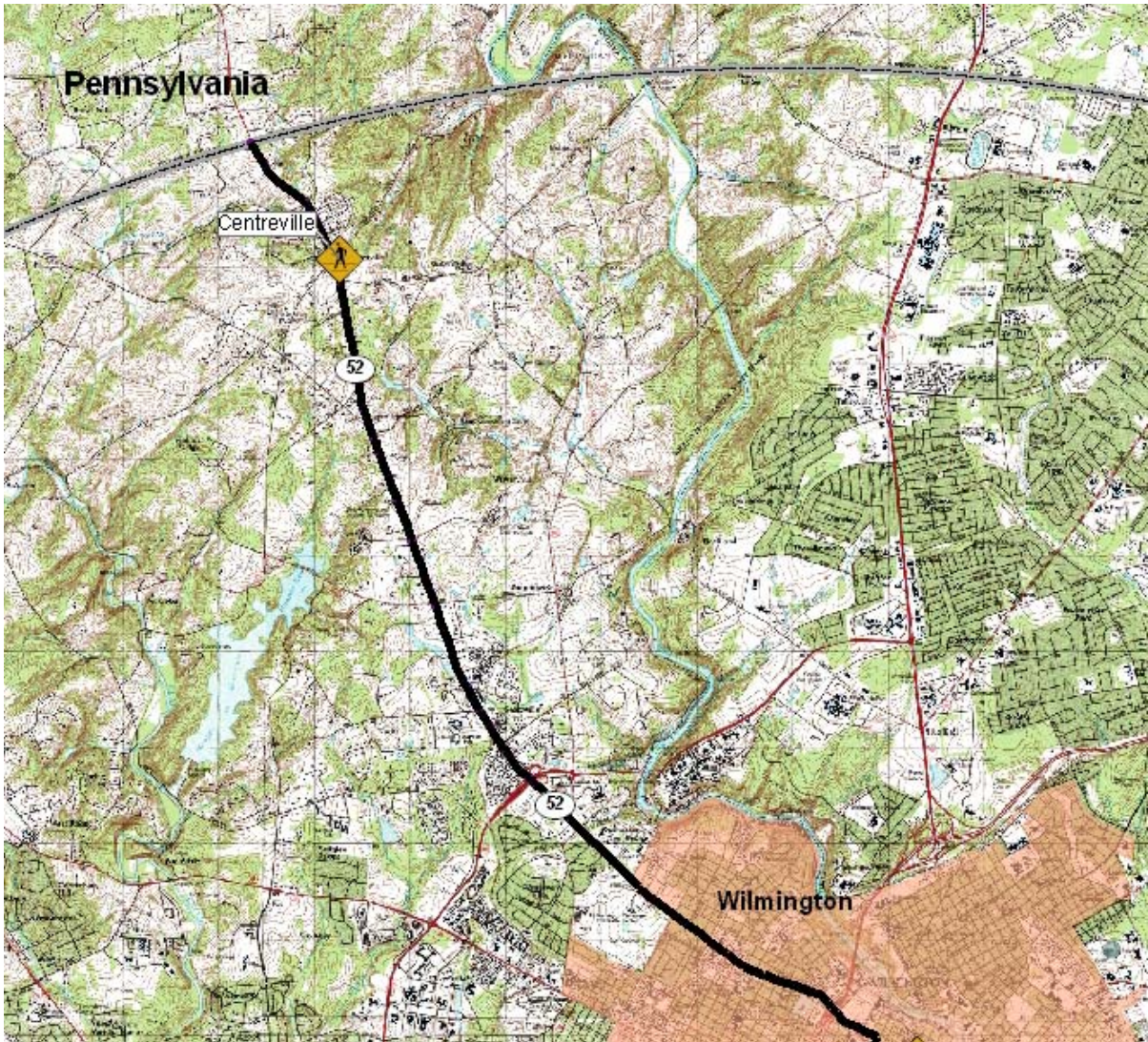


FIGURE 10:
Segment 5: Kennett Pike (On to Pennsylvania)



APPENDIX 4: DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Program is a “bottom-up,” community-based program. A nomination for a Scenic and Historic Highway must have a sponsor which can include local governments, communities, and other organizations associated with and committed to a proposed route.

The primary sponsors of the Nomination for the Harriett Tubman Underground Railroad Historic Byway are the Delaware Underground Railroad Coalition (URCD) and the City of Wilmington. Other communities and groups along the proposed route have been represented through a Scenic Historic Byway Advisory committee appointed by the Delaware Underground Railroad Coalition URCD. The nomination has been prepared by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design at the University of Delaware.

The goals and objectives of the Delaware Underground Railroad Coalition are:

“The specific objectives and purposes of this corporation shall be as follows: The Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware, Inc. (URCD) is an umbrella organization created to support the development of individual, public and private efforts to promote the Underground Railroad across the state of Delaware. It also provides a forum for communication, coordination and assistance for groups that have a common underlying mission to increase public awareness about the history of the Underground Railroad in Delaware through research, education, documentation, commemoration, interpretation and promotion. URCD shall also actively cultivate and form alliances with the nationwide movement to promote the Underground Railroad. This movement includes individuals, grassroots organizations as well as private and governmental sector participation. The overriding purpose is to better understand the significance of the Underground Railroad as a part of American history and to preserve Underground Railroad resources.”

The second sponsor was the City of Wilmington. In addition to its support of the Underground Railroad as an historic byway, the City of Wilmington has the contractual responsibility for a grant to the Underground Railroad Coalition from the National Park Service to help support the development of a nomination.

The nomination was prepared by the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) at the University of Delaware with funding from the National Park Service Grant to the Coalition and under a grant from DelDOT to provide technical assistance to sponsors in the technical preparation of nominations.

Public participation in the preparation of this nomination is documented in four ways:

1. **Scenic Historic Byway Advisory Committee**—CHAD worked with the Scenic Historic Byway Advisory Committee (SHBAC) appointed by the URCD, Underground Railroad coalition, the membership of which represented communities and organizations along route.
 - a. A. The SBHB Advisory Committee was appointed on October 30, 2006 at the meeting of the URCD, Underground Railroad Coalition, at Morningstar Institutional COGIC (Whatcoat) in Camden. The SHBAC met monthly from February 2007 through July 2007 and then as needed, with heavy reliance on email communication.

- b. The membership consisted of:

Rev. Thomas Holsey
Floyd Wells
Charles Vann, Sr.
Margaret Alexander
Teresa Haman
Robin Krawitz, DESHPO
Alta Porterfield
Helene Altevogt
Flavia Rutkosky
Pat Lewis
John Creighton
Deborah Martin, City of Wilmington

2. **Public presentations to groups and organizations during the course of preparing the nomination including:**
 - a. Delaware City Historic Preservation Commission (April, 2007)
 - b. Preservation Delaware Preservation Forum, Wilmington Friends Meeting, Quaker Hill Meeting House (February, 2007)
 - c. New Castle County Heritage Corridor Coalition (May, 2007)
 - d. New Castle County Historic Architectural Review Board (December 2007)

3. **Public Workshops in fall of 2008**—Two workshops were held in New Castle on November 13, 2008 and Dover, Delaware on November 11, 2008. They were widely advertised and organized to solicit public comment from residents from both the northern New Castle County and the southern Kent County segments of the proposed SHTHB. The sign-in sheets and comments for attendees are in Attachment 4a. Announcement of workshop is in Attachment 4b.

4. **Posting draft nomination of the web and inviting public comment**—As part of the advertising for the public workshops, the public was invited to review the nomination at the CHAD website and send in comments whether or not they could attend the workshops. See Attachment 4b for the public workshop information. The comments received are in Attachment 4c.

5. **Letters of Support**—Letters of support were received from the following individuals and organizations. Letters are in Attachment 4d.

Attachment 4A: Letters of Support

Debbie Martin

From: Christopher Densmore [cdensmo1@swarthmore.edu]
Sent: Monday, September 08, 2008 8:49 AM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: Final Draft Comments – On Tubman Byways

Debbie: Sent this to David Ames already.

Chris Densmore

----- Original Message -----
Subject: Final Draft Comments
From: "Christopher Densmore" <cdensmo1@swarthmore.edu>
Date: Sat, September 6, 2008 13:11
To:
Cc: davames@udel.edu

The final (August 2008) draft of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway looks good.

Some minor comments:

Page 7, Paragraph 4 -- on steam railroads, the first commercial rr in the US opened in December 1830, so I would say "after steam railroads had been introduced in the 1830s"

Page 18, Paragraph 2 -- on "hundreds of others" possibly a quibble, but I've never seen figures that even estimate the number of people kidnapped. It certainly was significant enough to be a major focus of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and the New York Manumission Society, to require laws against kidnapping etc., but how many people were kidnapers, we don't know. I would just say something like "many others" or "untold others" or "unknown number of others."

Page 21, Paragraph 3 -- "The first Quakers immigrated.. and settled in the colony of Pennsylvania.. in 1681." The first Quakers came to America in 1655 or 1656, and found people ready to accept the Quaker message. The earliest Quaker meetings established in several areas of America date from the 1650s, a bit more than twenty years before Penn's settlement of Pennsylvania. There are several meetings in southern New Jersey and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland that predate the establishment of Pennsylvania. Maybe something like "Quakers had been a presence in North America since the 1650s, but migration of Quakers from Britain to Pennsylvania beginning in 1681 was an important influence on Delaware.

I'd say that Quaker anti-slavery had more to do with their undersanding of the "Golden Rule" than the "Inner Light" but that's an interpretation.

Page 24, Paragraph 2 -- ERROR. William Still in the 1840s and 1850s was connected with the American Anti-Slavery Society (founded in 1833) and its local branches. He did not become a member of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery (founded in 1775) until 1867. He did work with members of the Abolition Society and its Acting Committee. Should say "member of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society."

Page 24, Para 4 -- "Canada was the most favorable option" Just as a background point, many fugitives remained in Pennsylvania, some very close to the Maryland and Delaware borders.

Page 34-35 -- "Society of Progressive Friends at Longwood" more precisely "the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, also known as Longwood Yearly Meeting." The didn't begin meeting at Longwood until 1855.

Mendinhall should be Mendenhall (e not i)

"as a result of Kennett Meeting's failure to respond to the abolition cause." -- I would say that the reasons for that split are a bit more complicated (see my article on it in Quaker History or my address on the 150th anniversary of Longwood posted on the Kennett Square Underground Railroad website. How about:

"Isaac and Dinah Mendenhall, two leading abolitionists who helped form the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends in 1853. This body built the Longwood Progressive Friends Meetinghouse in 1854-55, which became a center for the discussion and advocacy of anti-slavery and other reforms."

Or just end with "helped form the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends (Longwood) in 1853."

Page 56 -- see earlier note on people remaining in Pennsylvania. This statement is okay, because stopping short of Canada meant the risk of recapture, while being in Canda (after the 1830s) meant being beyond the reach of any legal attempt of recapture.

Page 103, Paragraph 2, lines 1-2 -- I believe Still clerked for the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society rather than the Pennsylvania Abolition Society.

Page 105, last paragraph -- "the title of minister in the Quaker faith as recognition of their anti-slavery preaching." Seems unlikely that someone would be acknowledged as a minister for only one aspect of their ministry.

Patience Hunn was recognized as a minister by Camden Monthly Meeting in 1844. The memorial to her at the time of her death talks about her ministry, but does not refer to her anti-slavery message. (Friends Intelligencer, 6 Mo. 27, 1885, 314-5.) She may indeed had a strong anti-slavery message as part of her ministry (like Lucretia Mott) but (like Lucretia Mott) was unlikely to have been a ministry based solely on this one testimony.

I don't think John Hunn was an acknowledged minister. His obit in Friends Intelligencer doesn't mention it, and a later piece in the Intelligencer that does talk about his connections with the Underground Railroad and anti-slavery also doesn't mention him as an acknowledged minister (Friends Intelligencer, 7 Mo. 14, 1894, 440, 8 Mo. 11, 1894, 505-6)

So I would suggest replacing the last sentence beginning "Both he and his sister..." with "Patience Jenkins was an acknowledged minister of Camden Friends Meeting." (if it is needed)

Well done.

--
Christopher Densmore, Curator
Friends Historical Library
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue

Debbie Martin

From: Krawitz Robin (DOS) [Robin.Krawitz@state.de.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 11, 2008 10:32 AM
To: Debbie Martin; Christopher Densmore
Cc: Ames, David
Subject: RE: Final Draft Comments -- On Tubman Byways

Chris,

Debbie Martin forwarded your comments on the Scenic Byway application. I appreciate your detailed and nuanced review and discussion. I wanted to share the information that led to the attribution of John Hunn as minister in the hopes that you can help me understand what I was reading. The citation came from the minutes of the Camden Monthly Meeting held at Little Creek 12th month, 11th 1854 which I transcribed in 1996.

"CAMDEN MONTHLY MEETING held at Little Creek 12th month, 11th 1854

The friends appointed at our last meeting to nominate to this two suitable Friends to serve this meeting as Clerk and Assistant Clerk report they were unanimous in nominating John Hunn as clerk with which the meeting unites, he is therefore appointed to that station, they were also united in nominating William S. Emerson as Assistant Clerk with which the meeting unites he, is accordingly appointed to that station.

The following communication was received from the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, viz

Southern Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders held at Little Creek 11th month 28th 1854

Camden Monthly Meeting informs, that the subject of recommending John Hunn as a minister of the society of Friends was brought before that meeting through the preparative meeting of ministers and elders, and after due deliberation was united with, with which this meeting unites, the clerk was directed to furnish Camden Monthly Meeting with a copy of said minute,"

Could you please fax copies of the articles from the Friends Intelligencer cited in your email re: John Hunn? I wasn't able to locate an obit in 1996.

Your help and participation in our efforts in Delaware are greatly appreciated. Robin

Robin Krawitz, Historian
Architectural Survey Program Coordinator
Certified Local Government Program Coordinator
Covenant and Easement Program Coordinator
National Register Program Coordinator
Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
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9/11/2008

Debbie Martin

To: Brenchley Elaine M. (DNREC)
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Thanks, Elaine, for the kind words and for reading the document!
We'll add the typo to the "Corrections" file.

Debbie Martin

-----Original Message-----

From: Brenchley Elaine M. (DNREC) [mailto:Elaine.Brenchley@state.de.us]
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 3:02 PM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Debbie,
What an absolutely wonderful document -- many congratulations to all who
contributed.

There is one small correction on page 31, regarding the information on
the Dover Green. The state capital first moved to Dover in 1777, and
became the permanent capital in 1781. The date given on p. 31 is 1771,
which I suspect was a typo.

Elaine

Elaine Brenchley
Project Director
The First State Heritage Park at Dover
102 S. State Street, Dover DE 19901
302/739-9178
Elaine.Brenchley@state.de.us

Debbie Martin

To: Lukezic Craig (DOS)
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

-----Original Message-----

From: Lukezic Craig (DOS) [mailto:craig.lukezic@state.de.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2008 8:09 AM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Neat!
Good work, Debbie.
Why isn't my house one it? :]

I have one minor comment on the one little thing I know about:
Some people involved in the UGR worked or were associated with
Brecknock.
A number of African-Americans worked there at various levels over the
first half of the 19th century. Robin knows the names. I do not know
how detailed you wish to go.
Thanks,

Craig

*Craig Lukezic
Archaeologist
- DE Division of Historical + Cultural Affairs
- Camden resident*

Debbie Martin

To: Lukezic Craig (DOS)
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

-----Original Message-----
From: Lukezic Craig (DOS) [mailto:craig.lukezic@state.de.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2008 9:30 AM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

I was kidding about my house.
Stylistically, it is the same as 15 north main, so, we assume that it was built by the Gibbs family.

I did some research at Breaknock last summer. While a lot of the domestic staff was Black, A black miller also worked there along with Howell.

Craig

-----Original Message-----
From: Debbie Martin [mailto:DMARTIN@ci.wilmington.de.us]
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2008 9:01 AM
To: Lukezic Craig (DOS)
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Brecknock is a tricky one because there is oral history that has evolved that is not substantiated (yet?). Robin worked hard on this one to present the known facts and hopefully establish the base information from which more research can spring. Although it is believed that there was some connection between the estate of Thomas Howell and the Brinkleys, the nature of that connection is unknown. Architecturally, the community of Brinkley Hill is gone, and so the standing buildings related to Howell at the current Brecknock Park serve as reminders of, as others have suggested, the local social landscape of race in 19th century. Robin says that Lucretia Wilson may be able to shed some light on the relationships (if someone can pry it from her!).

I don't know if that makes you feel any better about the subject, but the aim has been to be absolutely clear about the facts and to encourage more research to follow up on the oral traditions. Robin and others have had to do their share of beating to get close to achieving this! Brecknock would be a great place for a rest stop and to host an interpretive facility (passive or active).

What's your house story???

Debbie

Debbie Martin

To: seeley1022@aol.com
Cc: David Ames (E-mail)
Subject: RE: URCD Scenic Byway

-----Original Message-----

From: seeley1022@aol.com [mailto:seeley1022@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 10:42 PM
To: Robin.Krawltz@state.de.us; Debbie Martin; kwbailey@harringtonera.com
Subject: URCD Scenic Byway

Robin,

Just read some of the wonderful work done by many people in Delaware. I can not wait to read more !

I do have a couple questions.

Did you consider including the meeting with Pres. Lincoln by the Longwood group which included Thomas Garrett ?

Did you consider the many trips Thomas made to Philadelphia to attend the Pa. Anti-Slavery Meetings over the years ? Look at May's collection

Did you consider his brothers and cousins in Pennsylvania..... [I saw you mentioned the Mendinhall connection] but the Price family near West Chester his cousins and his brothers in Upper Darby, Pa.[R.C. Smedley Book] . Also Samuel Rhoads, his cousin who lived only about a mile from Upper Darby in Philadelphia. [Letters in Stills book]..... I want to also let you know when Eli married Frances Sellers it was in the Upper Darby area,Milbourne, the home of Frances Sellers parents, John and Elizabeth Poole Sellers, John and Elizabeth were anti slavery and good friends of Thomas Garrett.

Also Robin shared with me an article in the newspaper about the Wollaston home on Washington, Ellwood Garrett married Catharine Wollaston. You will also find Rachel Mendinhall's brother on Washington near Ellwood Garrett home.

I just thought I would share these thoughts, **please know I think you all did a great job !!!!!!!!!**

Bob

PS - Please pass this E-mail to David Ames, as I do not have his E-mail and never had the pleasure to talk with him.

Get the MapQuest Toolbar. Directions, Traffic, Gas Prices & More!

*Robert Seeley
T. Garrett family member
genealogist*

9/4/2008

Debbie Martin

From: seeley1022@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, September 04, 2008 12:12 AM
To: Robin.Krawitz@state.de.us; Debbie Martin; kwbailey@harringtonera.com
Subject: HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

Thomas Garrett was born on August 21, 1789 in what is now Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, to Quaker Thomas Garrett and his second wife Sarah Price. He was one of thirteen children. In 1813, Garrett had an experience that would shape his life when a free African American woman working for his family was kidnapped by a man who intended to sell her into slavery. Garrett tracked the kidnapper and was able to restore the woman to freedom. This one event opened his eyes to the horrors of slavery and instilled in him a desire to set captives free. That need would guide him throughout his life. 101

On page 101

" was able to restore the women to freedom "

According to William Still he states " we believe " secured her release..... So I believe we must add " we believe "

Bob Seeley

Please share this information with David Ames.

Get the MapQuest Toolbar. Directions, Traffic, Gas Prices & More!

9/4/2008

Debbie Martin

From: Szrmilner@cs.com
Sent: Saturday, September 06, 2008 6:14 PM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: Re: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Debbie,

I read the draft and it is so impressive. I am thrilled by the plans and look forward to them becoming a reality. I noted that information about Harriet Tubman's traumatic brain injury and seizure disorder is included at the end of this draft and I hope that this fact about her life will be included at the sites along the byway and any printed pamphlets. I spoke of this at the town meeting in Wilmington a few years ago and shared my experience as a speech-language pathologist working with brain injured adults. I feel that Harriet Tubman's accomplishments would be very inspiring and give hope to the many people in our country living with this kind of debilitating injury. Please forward my comments. Thank you.

Sharon Milner

Debbie Martin

To: Helene Altevogt
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

-----Original Message-----

From: Helene Altevogt [mailto:sanctuary7@verizon.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2008 1:46 PM
To: Debbie Martin
Subject: Re: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Debbie, I did a brief look and read through and it's wonderful!!! I got goose bumps seeing this finally completed!!!! Helene

Debbie Martin

To: Helene Altevogt
Subject: RE: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

-----Original Message-----

From: Helene Altevogt [mailto:sanctuary7@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 04, 2008 10:08 AM
To: Debbie Martin
Cc: maria.andaya@state.de.us
Subject: Re: Harriet Tubman UGR Byway Nomination is on the Web .

Debbie,

In perusing the document, a couple of points rise up.

1. For what it is worth, I don't think you get near enough credit for your perserverance, and efforts to keep things moving.
2. More will be heard from our area, but the document notes the importance of Camden and Dover in the story, which they are, yet the routing calls these areas Optional. That make little sense, and when the park service starts to 'market' the route, tourists will clearly see these towns as of little importance. It's tantamount to creating a bypass. Further, when the corridor management phase starts, attention and funding will likely suffer.

I met with the Camden Town Manager, and he plans to work with the town's elected officials to provide a supporting letter, similar to the one Mayor Baker sent DelDOT.

Again, many thanks for your sustained efforts!

Charles

Charles Altevogt
Friends of Historic Camden

Debbie Martin

From: Altevogt Charles (DelDOT) [Charles.Altevogt@state.de.us]
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2008 4:31 PM
To: 'David Ames'
Cc: altamp@aol.com; 'cporterfield@toast.com'; Debbie Martin; bobbitoner3@verizon.net; Andaya Maria (DelDOT); 'Rmaly@delaware.net'; Helene Altevogt
Subject: UGRR Route Revision; Camden

Dr. Ames,

First, let me very much thank you and the document team for the Harriet Tubman Byway for their positive response to concerns raised at the public workshop about the routes through Camden and Dover, which were designated as options in the current document.

I would like to confirm with one minor, but important revision (Points A & B below), the changes that Dr. Ames has agreed to propose to *the Underground Railroad Coalition* for concurrence. The discussion at the November 18th meeting of the *Friends of Historic Camden* led to an unanimous vote with respect to the route changes in Camden:

The Camden Route will be included as part of the main byway, as opposed to an optional loop. This would necessarily eliminate the western by-pass of both Camden and Dover along Route 15. I might add for your consideration, that Route 15 is under development pressure, and the bucolic setting now seen will change drastically over time.

Entering Camden from the west along Route 10....

- A. At the intersection of Route 10/Camden-Wyoming Ave., proceed straight onto Caesar Rodney Ave.
- B. Turn right onto Center St. to the Zion AME Church
(The attached document is from the front page of the Dover Post weekly paper of Nov 19, 2008. Please note that the new historic marker has been supported by Sen. Bonini and Rep. Blakely. Their continued support for the byway in this area, and especially during the corridor management phase is important).
- C. Reverse route to the Caesar Rodney Ave./Camden-Wyoming Ave. intersection
- D. Turn left and proceed east on Camden-Wyoming Ave.
- E. Turn left at the intersection with Main St. (also US 13 Alternate) and proceed north
- F. Turn left into Brecknock Park, then reverse route
- G. Proceed south on Main St. to the intersection with Camden-Wyoming Ave.
- H. Turn left and proceed to the intersection with US 13
- I. Proceed with the Star Hill and Dover Routes as Dr. Ames has recommended.

Again, on behalf of the *Friends of Historic Camden*, your willingness to work with us is much appreciated! We sincerely hope *the Underground Railroad Coalition* will concur with changes outlined above. If additional discussion or clarification is needed, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Charles Altevogt

11/24/2008

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