



HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NATIONAL MONUMENT



HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

BY KATE CLIFFORD LARSON, PH.D.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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*Cover Illustration: Powelson, Benjamin F, photographer.
Portrait of Harriet Tubman. Circa 1868. Library of Congress.*

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Portrait of Harriet Tubman. Library of Congress.

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

Located on 11,750 acres of wetlands, agricultural and open fields, woodlands, rivers, and streams in Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake in Maryland, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument joined the National Park System in 2013. Established to honor the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman, who was born and raised in the county as an enslaved person during the early to mid-1800s, the park's expansive landscapes encompass the larger story of slavery and freedom in the Upper South and the strategies enslaved people employed to survive and resist their involuntary condition.

Initiated by the National Park Service [NPS] in 2000, the Monument began as part of an extensive Special Resource Study [SRS] rooted in longtime efforts to recognize Tubman's history and legacy. Born in Maryland in 1822, Tubman spent the first twenty-seven years of her life enslaved in Dorchester and Caroline counties on the Eastern Shore. After escaping slavery in 1849, she spent eleven years rescuing family and friends from enslavement in Maryland. Allied with northern abolitionists and Underground Railroad networks, Tubman navigated hundreds of miles of terrain in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, and Canada. In 1859 she purchased a seven-acre farm in Auburn, New York, from William Henry and Frances Miller Seward for herself and her family, who were then living in St. Catharines, Canada. Recruited to work as a spy, scout, nurse, and cook for the U.S. Army during the Civil War, Tubman gained national recognition for her bravery and skill. After the war, Tubman returned to Auburn, where she resided for nearly fifty years, campaigning for woman suffrage, health care for African Americans, and civil rights until her death in 1913. While the National Monument and Park in Maryland encompass the landscapes of Tubman's life in Maryland, the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn protects her home site, Home for the Aged, her church, and gravesite. Her legacy as a champion of freedom, equality, justice and self-determination set the stage for memorials to her life for more than one-hundred years.

Early Preservation and Commemoration

Attempts to commemorate and memorialize Tubman began as early as her death in March 1913. For generations local, regional, and national groups have campaigned for a greater recognition of Tubman's contributions to our nation's history. The work of these

individuals helped support and preserve Tubman's memory, and secured her place among the pantheon of national heroes and great leaders.¹

Early efforts to achieve national recognition started with saving and restoring Tubman's Home for the Aged in Auburn—a property she purchased in 1896 and gifted to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion [A.M.E. Zion] Church in 1903. The home and property served the needs of ill, homeless, and aged African Americans for nearly three decades and eventually fell into disrepair. Restoration began in earnest in the 1950s through the joint efforts of the church, family members, and a newly organized preservation group called the Harriet Tubman Boosters to save the property and buildings, securing Tubman's historical and cultural legacy. With the 1990 purchase of Tubman's former seven-acre farm and brick primary residence—built in 1883 to replace Tubman's wood-frame house destroyed by fire in early 1880—the original two Tubman properties were brought back together for the first time since separated shortly after Tubman's death in 1913. Designated by the National Park Service as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1975, the thirty-two-acre Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged and her residence remain owned and operated as a public museum by the A.M.E. Zion Church. Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Tubman's place of worship, and her gravesite at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn all received NHL status as well. During the 1990s, with the involvement of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation [OPRHP], the Auburn City Planning Office, and the Preservation League of New York State, grants awarded by the New York legislature, the governor's office, and Save America's Treasures helped stabilize the structures and support preservation efforts. The then newly established New York State Freedom Trail highlighted Tubman's role as a famous conductor on the Underground Railroad.

For decades, an annual spring A.M.E. Zion pilgrimage to the Tubman property in New York hosted by the Harriet Tubman Boosters and Friends of the Harriet Tubman Library draws hundreds of families and individuals from all around the country to celebrate Tubman's enduring legacy.

In Maryland, early commemorative efforts included a Civil War centennial marker placed at Tubman's childhood home, the former Brodess Farm outside of Bucktown, in 1965.² Early community celebrations honoring Tubman's life and legacy held on or near Juneteenth at Bazel Church in Bucktown have recently ceased. Founded in the 1980s as a community-centered museum and educational resource center inspired by Tubman, the Harriet Tubman Organization [HTO] (also known as the Harriet Tubman Museum and Education Center) in Cambridge remains central to commemorative efforts focused on

¹ Many thanks to Mike Long, Auburn, NY, and Glenn Carowan, MD DNR, for their assistance in writing this timeline.

² No structures from Tubman's occupation period survive at the farm site today. The current building sited on the farm is an early twentieth-century structure.

Tubman and her life on the Eastern Shore. Educational programs, tours, community outreach, and a yearly conference engage visitors from near and far. The HTO is a strategic partner with NPS, the state of Maryland, and county and local officials and organizations.

A Proposal for a National Park

In 1995, The National Park Service successfully completed the *Underground Railroad Special Resource Study*, establishing the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Program, which now boasts over six hundred documented sites associated with the Underground Railroad nationwide. Two sites associated with Harriet Tubman in Auburn were among the many sites across the country identified in the SRS as worthy of additional study.³

In the late 1990s, through the encouragement of Vincent DeForest, Special Assistant to the Director of the National Park Service, along with Addie Richberg (of the International Network to Freedom Association), Mike Long from the Auburn City Planning Office, and A.M.E. Zion Church bishop George Herbert Walker, discussed the idea of a Harriet Tubman National Park. Bishop Walker, Rev. Paul G. Carter (the resident director of the Tubman home property and then minister at Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Auburn), Vince DeForest, Addie Richberg and Mike Long met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the idea with National Park Service Director Robert Stanton.

The group discussed and tentatively approved the idea of turning Tubman's thirty-two-acre property in Auburn into a national park through a public-private partnership with the A.M.E. Zion Church and its nonprofit management entity, The Harriet Tubman Home, Inc., similar to the partnership that operates the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. With the help of Mike Long and Rev. Paul Carter, Vince DeForest drafted the initial legislation for a *Harriet Tubman Special Resources Study*. This legislation primarily focused on the Tubman property, Fort Hill Cemetery gravesite, Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, and the William Henry Seward House in Auburn, and St. Catharines, Canada, where Tubman spent time during the 1850s. Sponsored by Congressman Amo Houghton in 1997, the legislation did not include any sites related to Tubman's formative years in Maryland. Lacking broad congressional support, the bill failed to pass.

During July 1998, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton sponsored a Save America's Treasures tour, making a special visit to the William Seward Home and the Harriet Tubman Home in Auburn. Featured in newspapers around the world, the Tubman site event was attended by more than four thousand people. Later that summer, President Bill Clinton

³ https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/underground/srs.pdf

signed an Executive Order declaring Tubman’s home property in Auburn a National Historic Site.

In Maryland, work had begun on establishing a Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway. In 1998, the Maryland State Highway Administration, the Harriet Tubman Organization, and other Tubman stakeholders and residents developed a sixty-four-mile Harriet Tubman Byway, which included several sites related to Tubman’s life as an enslaved person and other significant African American historical and cultural sites in Dorchester and Caroline Counties. Finalized in 1999, then revised and expanded in 2005 to cover 126 miles, the route now includes some of the most significant sites related to Tubman’s birth, childhood, young adulthood, and Underground Railroad rescue mission previously not included in the original byway. Additional historical and cultural sites enrich an already powerful historic road. In 2009 the Federal Highways Administration awarded the Tubman byway All-American Road status, the highest and most prestigious rank awarded to a scenic byway.⁴

In April 2000, New York senator Charles Schumer reintroduced legislation for the Harriet Tubman SRS. The original group of supporters and leaders from Auburn, the NPS, and the A.M.E. Zion Church coordinated their efforts with Mrs. Evelyn Townsend and other members of the HTO in Cambridge, Maryland. The new legislation amended and expanded the former Houghton effort to include three sites in Dorchester County—Bazel Church, the former Brodess Farm, and the Bucktown Village Store. The legislation passed both the House and the Senate, and in November 2000, President Clinton signed the Harriet Tubman Special Resources Act. The act authorized the National Park Service to begin its study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing a national park in honor of Tubman.

In July 2002, the HTO in Cambridge developed a proposal to “create the nation’s newest national park” to honor Tubman in Dorchester County. On July 9, 2002, 3,328 delegates attending the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] annual convention unanimously endorsed the creation of the Harriet Tubman National Park.

The Tubman SRS took eight years to complete—one of the longest special resource studies ever conducted by the National Park Service. The study revealed that initial sites designated by the legislation were inadequate to represent Tubman’s life history and contributions. With the help of historians, researchers, and local supporters in New York, Maryland, and from across the nation and Canada, new details of Tubman’s life and activities expanded the scope of the resource study far beyond its original intent. The study identified significant sites in Maryland, South Carolina, Florida, New York, and New England.

⁴ <http://harriettubmanbyway.org>

Maryland's Office of Business and Economic Development and the tourism and economic development offices in the city of Cambridge and in Dorchester and Caroline Counties urged the National Park Service to expand its scope to include nearly two dozen historically and culturally significant sites on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in its proposed park boundaries. These sites, they argued, represented unique examples of a surviving nineteenth-century agrarian working landscape where people pursued traditional uses of farming, timbering, hunting, fishing, and trapping during Tubman's time. These landscapes included sites where she lived and worked as an enslaved person and where she conducted clandestine Underground Railroad activities.

In response, the National Park Service narrowed its focus to sites in New York and Maryland. Participation of local groups, including the Harriet Tubman Organization, Dorchester and Caroline County Historical Societies, state and local tourism, other local museums, site owners and partners, Blackwater NWR, Maryland State Parks, the NAACP, and numerous other local, regional, and national organizations and stakeholders joined in support of the National Park Service and its expanded study.

The Harriet Tubman SRS explored the question of whether the National Park Service should recognize and honor Tubman and preserve sites associated with her. The study, completed in November 2008, determined that resources (buildings and landscapes) in Auburn, New York, and in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot Counties in Maryland, met criteria for units of the park system. The Secretary of the Interior transmitted the study and its recommendations to Congress on January 12, 2009, with support for establishing two units of the National Park System to honor Tubman.

Meanwhile, in 2004, efforts to establish a Harriet Tubman State Park in Dorchester County began in earnest. At the urging of the Dorchester County Office of Tourism, Heart of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Committee, and the Harriet Tubman Organization, the Maryland Department of Budget and Economic Development's (MDBED) Office of Tourism responded. Recognizing the rising interest and advocacy to commemorate Tubman and the Underground Railroad, and the need to protect the significant Maryland sites identified by the SRS, county and state officials launched a working group of community members, historians, county and state officials, and National Park Service representatives to coordinate and advise on a potential state park project.

In 2007, the transfer of a seventeen-acre site (known as the Linthicum Tract) on Key Wallace Drive owned by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge [BNWR] to the State of Maryland and facilitated by a land exchange coordinated by the Conservation Fund, officially established the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park. Years of planning, public meetings, acquiring funding, and coordinating federal, regional, and local support led to the building of a visitor center on the site. Considered the trailhead for the Tubman Byway, the visitor center opened on March 10, 2017, and has hosted over 225,000

visitors from all fifty states and sixty countries.⁵ The years-long process involved a broad cross section of community members, local, county, and state elected officials, tourism, business, and state and local heritage organizations, Maryland State Parks and Department of Natural Resources, the Conservation Fund, historians, family members, the National Park Service, interpretive specialists, and other Tubman stakeholders.

During the 110th, 111th, and 112th Congresses, legislation co-sponsored by delegates from both Maryland and New York for the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, New York, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act in Dorchester County, Maryland, failed to reach a vote during all sessions. On September 14, 2011, more than one hundred Tubman parks supporters from Maryland to New York gathered in Washington D.C. for Harriet on the Hill Day to pressure Congress to pass Senate Bill S. 247, The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act.

In September 2012, Maryland requested that President Barack Obama designate the Harriet Tubman National Monument in Dorchester County. The Conservation Fund acquired a 480-acre parcel near Madison, which once contained the farm of Jacob Jackson, a free black farmer and veterinarian who helped Tubman plan the rescue of her brothers during Christmas 1854. The transfer of the land to the Department of the Interior for the National Park Service enabled the president, under provisions in the Antiquities Act, to designate the site a National Monument in honor of Tubman and the site's historic and cultural significance. President Obama designated the Harriet Tubman National Monument through an Executive Order on March 25, 2013, during a signing ceremony in the Oval Office, the first step in establishing a National Park Service unit in the region.⁶

The creation of the National Monument did not satisfy the recommendations set forth in the SRS—two National Parks in Tubman's honor. Maryland senator Benjamin L. Cardin and three co-sponsors—New York senator Charles E. Schumer Maryland senator Barbara A. Mikulski, and New York senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand—reintroduced the Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act, S. 247, in February 2013. In July 2014, the U.S. Senate passed the bill.

Five months later, on December 3, 2014, the House and Senate leaders unveiled a final agreement on the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA], which included language establishing national parks in Auburn and in Maryland. After the 2015 NDAA passed both the House and Senate, President Barack Obama signed it on December 19, 2014.

⁵ As of October 1, 2019.

⁶ <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/25/presidential-proclamation-harriet-tubman-underground-railroad-national-m>

Though the previous Presidential Proclamation in 2013 had created the 480-acre Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument in Dorchester County, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park included more than eleven thousand acres in Dorchester County and additional authorized acquisition areas in Caroline and Talbot Counties. The National Park Service administers the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park [HATU] as one unit. NPS manages the park unit from offices at the separately operated seventeen-acre Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center in Church Creek, Maryland.

The 2015 NDAA also authorized the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park [HART] in Auburn. On January 10, 2017, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell formally established the park at a signing ceremony at the Department of the Interior's headquarters in Washington, D.C. The Tubman National Historical Park includes Tubman's brick residence, the Home for the Aged on South Street, and Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Rectory on Parker Street in Auburn. The National Park Service owns and operates the church and rectory and will co-manage the thirty-two-acre Tubman property, which includes the Home for the Aged and the Tubman residence, with the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc., a 501c3 organization established by the A.M.E. Zion Church.

The Historic Resource Study

According to the NPS Cultural Resource Management Guidelines (NPS-28),

“A historic resource study (HRS) provides a historical overview of a park or region and identifies and evaluates a park’s cultural resources within historic contexts. It synthesizes all available cultural resource information from all disciplines in a narrative designed to serve managers, planners, interpreters, cultural resource specialists, and interested public as a reference for the history of the region and the resources within a park. Entailing both documentary research and field investigations to determine and describe the integrity, authenticity, associative values, and significance of resources, the HRS supplies data for resource management and interpretation.”

One purpose of the HRS, as outlined in the guidelines, is to identify areas of special need within the Monument boundaries, including more detailed and specialized cultural, historical, and environmental studies of Monument resources. One of the recommendations is to identify sites eligible for National Register of Historic Places nominations. To that end, the Maryland Historical Trust [MHT] conducted an architectural historic sites

and markers inventory beginning in the late 1960s through the early 2000s.⁷ Many of those reports indicate National Register potential. MHT did not review or document every historic structure in Dorchester County, but the approximately seven hundred surveys represent a significant number of historic buildings, including several within the Monument boundaries. The architectural survey reports and Historic Register nomination files are useful for contextualizing historic resources, even for the structures within the Monument demolished since those reports were created. The most significant sites within the Monument boundaries with completed survey reports are in Appendix A.

Other reports include several historical and cultural landscape resource studies conducted by the National Park Service, the state of Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust, and Dorchester and Caroline Counties officials during the early 2000s for the 126-mile Harriet Tubman Byway and All-American Road, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park, the *Harriet Tubman Special Resources Study*, among other cultural, archaeological, and historical resource projects.⁸ NPS completed a Natural Resource Condition Assessment for HATU in March 2019, and is currently conducting a Cultural Landscape Study for the Jacob Jackson site.⁹ I am grateful for the research sharing and conversations with Eliot Foulds, Senior Landscape Architect and Project Manager, Preservation Planning, and Jennifer Hanna, Historical Landscape Architect, at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston. They have engaged in extraordinary research about the human and physical landscapes and cultural material of Jacob Jackson's life, his ancestors, and neighbors.

⁷ https://mht.maryland.gov/research_databaseportal2.shtml. Only one site within the Monument boundaries is currently listed on the National Register: <https://mht.maryland.gov/nr/NRDetail.aspx?NRID=1692&COUNTRY=Dorchester&FROM=NRCountyList.aspx>

⁸ See John Milner Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment for the Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study. Dorchester and Caroline Counties, Maryland* (Boston Support Office, Northeast Region, Boston, MA.: National Park Service, 2003). National Park Service, *Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study* (Boston, MA: National Park Service, Boston Regional Office, 2008). Mary Means & Associates, Kittleson Associates, Tony Cohen, Kate Clifford Larson, and Andy Kalback, *The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway: Where Ordinary People Did the Extraordinary. Corridor Management Plan* (Silver Spring, MD 2007). Kate Clifford Larson, *Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway Tour Guide Training Manual* (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester and Caroline Counties Offices of Tourism, 2011). Jr. Ralph E. Esheman and Carl W. Scheffel, *Maryland Lower Choptank River Cultural Resource Inventory* (Crownsville, MD: Choptank River Heritage, 2002). *Maryland's Upper Choptank River and Tuckahoe River Cultural Resource Inventory* (Crownsville, MD: Choptank River Heritage, 1999). Glenn A. Carowan and John Statsko, eds. *Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval for Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Including Blackwater Nwr)* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2006); Thomas E. Davidson, *A Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Lower Delmarva Region of Maryland* (Carleston, SC: NOAA, 1997); Jesse O. Walker, *Final Report: Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland* (Hadley, MA: Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., 2007).

⁹ Engelhardt, K., T. Lookingbill, N. Bukach, M. Latimer, K. Ratliff, R. Gifford, J. Baek, O. Hurlbert, A. Rizzo, and B. Walsh, *Natural resource condition assessment: Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park. Natural Resource Report NPS/HATU/NRR—2019/1897* (Fort Collins, Colorado: National Park Service, 2019), https://ian.umces.edu/press/reports/publication/609/harriet_tubman_underground_railroad_national_historical_park_natural_resource_condition_assessment_2019-03-01

Heritage and cultural tourism initiatives sponsored by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland State Parks, Maryland Department of Economic Development, and the Dorchester and Caroline County tourism offices include establishment and management of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway and All-American Road. These efforts have spurred additional research for exhibits, waysides, and other interpretive tools. The partnership between tourism and cultural and historical/heritage resources management has grown dramatically in the region in the past fifteen years. The involvement and support of NPS has helped spur nationwide interest in Tubman and her homeland on the Eastern Shore. Additionally, since 2010, a yearly Harriet Tubman Conference, hosted by Ellen Mousin, the Harriet Tubman Organization, and a committee of local people in Cambridge, Maryland, has featured workshops and lectures on topics related to the life and legacy of Tubman, slavery, and emancipation, through research, art, and performances.

This study also directs attention to noteworthy sites outside the National Monument boundaries on the Eastern Shore. Though the Monument is a defined landscape with boundaries in west and south Dorchester County, there are significant and important historical sites and cultural resources just beyond those boundaries and in Caroline County, including those in the authorized acquisition area. Recommendations for future historical and cultural resource research in areas where investigations and preservation of resources enhance and strengthen our understanding Tubman's life and accomplishments and motivate more communities to engage with Tubman's history and legacy are located at the end of this report.

Research

A devastating fire at the Dorchester County Court House, set by an unknown arsonist in May 1852 destroyed a great portion of Dorchester County's historical records. The documentary gaps in the historical past created by that fire have hampered efforts to chronicle Tubman's family story—and the cultural and historical accounts of African American families before that date—more fully. Much of the research necessary to uncover the histories of Africans and African Americans during the colonial and antebellum periods requires deep investigation into primary resources generated for white people. Tracing the histories of the white families who enslaved, gifted through inheritance, sold, and manumitted Africans and African Americans offers opportunities in some cases to locate the identities of generations of enslaved people and their communities. While following white family lines and inheritance patterns during the colonial and early republic periods is complicated by the custom among some white families to favor (and sometimes require) marriages between first cousins, and the repetitive use of given names within the same family over several generations, such practices served to keep generations of enslaved

people closely held through several generations of one white family. The records lost in the fire include probate, tax, chattel, manumission, and other court proceedings from 1778 to 1852, confounding an already difficult task tracking the conveyance of enslaved individuals to slaveholders' descendants or to purchasers. A few documents survived the fire—residents entered the burning building and carried out what they could, and later, families contributed their personal copies of probate and estate records, deeds, mortgages, tax assessments, bills of sale, manumissions, and certificates of freedom, helping replace badly damaged and lost papers. Fortunately, the bulk of colonial era records prior to 1778 survive in Annapolis, the state capitol, at the Maryland State Archives.¹⁰ The surviving documentation is rich in detail and remains a vital source to re-creating the history and culture of the county and its residents. These records, in combination with historical scholarship on African American family life under slavery and in freedom, histories of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and extensive genealogical research, provide a strong foundation for creating a vivid picture of Tubman's life in Dorchester County. But the loss of primary sources has challenged efforts to trace the physical cultural resources of the people who lived on those landscapes before and during Tubman's time. Few structures and material culture remain; environmental forces and human occupation over the past three centuries has obscured or destroyed those resources.

For this study, black families under investigation include Ross, Green, Manokey, Jackson, Marine, Ferrare, Driver, Camper, Bowley, Slacum, Kiah, Banks, Jolly, Tubman, Bailey, Woolford, Kane, Clash, Cornish, Johnson, and Young, among others. Because of the legal nature of enslaved Africans treated as property owned by whites, those records contain the most significant and detailed information about the ancestry of enslaved people and their descendants. Therefore, discovering the histories of Tubman, her family, and the community of people of African descent related to her on the Eastern Shore of Maryland requires analyzing records related to specific white families in the study area. These white families include Pattison, King, Thompson, Atthow, Keene, Jones, Dean, Tubman, Crow, Geoghegan, Spicer, Cook, Bell, Stewart, Tall, Jackson, Harrington, Staplefort, Ennalls, Brodess, Mills, Scott, Eccleston, Lookerman (Lockerman), Meredith, and Green.

Interestingly, though stories about Tubman abound, there are no memories or oral traditions on the Eastern Shore relating to the scores of escapes from the region, or memories of some of the most prominent African American residents from the antebellum and immediate post-Civil War eras. Most of the Choptank River region's Underground Railroad and escape stories, for instance, have been uncovered and reclaimed by late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century historians and researchers, not through local oral

¹⁰ Many are available online in digitized and abstracted form. See <http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/viewer.aspx?page=probate>. For more sources beyond the colonial period important to African American research at the archives, see <http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/viewer.aspx?page=afridesc>

traditions. Those memories of escape and freedom, if they exist, reside in the families and communities where the freedom seekers settled. Many of those self-liberators established themselves in places like St. Catharines in Ontario, Canada, New Bedford, Massachusetts, and Central New York cities and towns. They worked at jobs or farmed their properties, built homes, raised families, established churches, schools, and other organizations. They remained near each other, maintaining the close ties of family and friendship they shared under slavery in Maryland. Those are the places where memories may reside. Community and family memories, disconnected from the historic fabric of ancestral landscapes, risk distortion and potential loss of important historical and cultural resources.

Since the release of three modern academic biographies of Harriet Tubman in the early 2000s by Jean Humez (2003), Catherine Clinton (2004), and the author of this study (2004), there has been a dramatic increase in critical, scholarly attention to Tubman and her place in our national story.¹¹ The publication of additional Tubman studies during the last decade or more, including work by Milton Sernett (2007), Kristen Oertel (2015), Lois Horton (2013), James McGowan (2011), and investigations by other researchers have expanded the documentary landscape with which we can build a fuller historical narrative.¹² In addition to historical and biographical treatments, innovative, fresh analysis and interrogations of Tubman's narrative from women's studies and radical black feminist perspectives challenged generations of both traditional historical and feminist interpretations. For instance, a special issue of *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, guest edited by Janell Hobson during the fall of 2014, generated new perspectives on Tubman's life story and its interpretation.¹³

¹¹ Jean M. Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and Life Stories* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2004).

¹² Milton C. Sernett, *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory and History* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Lois Horton, *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013); Kristen T. Oertel, *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in the 19th Century* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Lois E. Horton, *Harriet Tubman and the Fight for Freedom a Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013); William C. James and Kashatus McGowan, *Harriet Tubman: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishers, 2011).

¹³ Paula J. Giddings and Janell Hobson, eds., *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism. Special Issue on Harriet Tubman* 12 (2014). The articles in the issue are: Karsonya Wise Whitehead, "Harriet Tubman: From Maternal Mother to Jezebel"; Brittney Cooper, "Does Anyone Care about Black Women?"; Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "Prophecy in the Present Tense: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee Pilgrimage, and Dreams Coming True"; Paula Giddings, "What would Harriet do? A legacy of resistance and activism: a conversation with Barbara Smith and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, moderated by Paula Giddings"; Andrea N. Williams, "Frances Watkins (Harper), Harriet Tubman and the Rhetoric of Single Blessedness"; Janell Hobson, "Harriet Tubman: A Legacy of Resistance"; Kate Clifford Larson, "Harriet Ross Tubman timeline"; dann j. Broyld, "Harriet Tubman: Transnationalism and the Land of a Queen in the Late Antebellum"; Janell Hobson, "Between History and Fantasy: Harriet Tubman in the Artistic and Popular Imaginary"; Vivian M. May, "Under-Theorized and Under-Taught: Re-examining Harriet Tubman's Place in Women's Studies"; Karsonya Wise Whitehead, "Beyond Myths and Legends: Teaching Harriet Tubman and Her Legacy of Activism"; Treva B. Lindsey and Jessica Marie Johnson, "Searching for Climax: Black Erotic Lives in Slavery and Freedom"; Janell Hobson, "The Rape of Harriet Tubman"; and Kate Clifford Larson, "Afterword."

Supporting and supplementing these studies is an explosion in archival research in the past fifteen years into North American slavery, reshaping and illuminating the contexts of Tubman's life and the communities within the Monument boundaries. New scholarship on the transatlantic slave trade; regional studies focusing on the Chesapeake region; the Underground Railroad; the abolition movement; antislavery activism; free black communities (north and south); industrial, commercial, and maritime slavery; gendered and feminist perspectives; black culture; race and racism studies; resistance movements; historical memory; and more have advanced interpretive opportunities. Additional work conducted by local researchers and professional historians on the Eastern Shore has added considerably to the historical documentary record of the area and its people.¹⁴

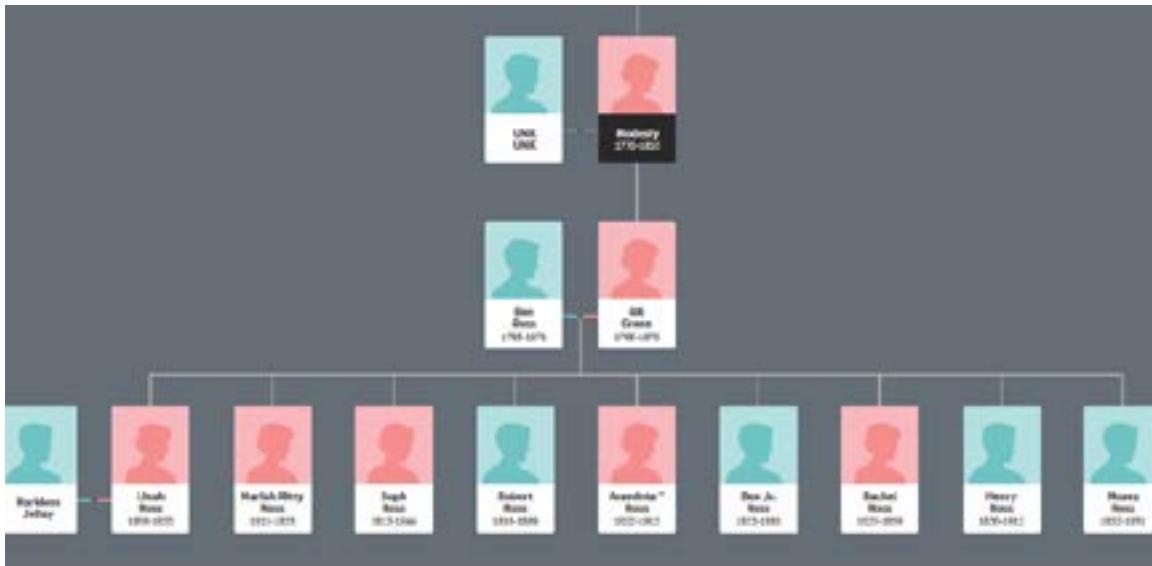
During the past decade or more, a significant effort has been made by public and private libraries, archives, museums, institutes, universities, and consortia of nonprofit and for-profit entities to collect, catalogue, and digitize their documentary collections. This has created a wealth of newly accessible primary sources that allow historians to more deeply mine, contextualize, and interpret the past. Fortunately for this study, there are voluminous resources now available that provide documentary evidence and contemporary historical context for Tubman, slavery, and the pursuit of freedom along the Eastern Shore of Maryland. While many of these records are in digital format, some remain accessible only in physical or microfilmed format in host institutions. The most significant repositories and online sites with resources for this specific study are in Appendix B. An extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources is at the end of this report in Appendix C. The Park's Cultural Landscape Report, available through the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston should also be read in tandem with this Historic Resource Study for a fuller appreciation of the historical and cultural resources available for interpretation and preservation efforts.

Historical Family and Community Figures

Family, friends, community members, and white enslavers profoundly influenced Tubman's life. Within the Monument and Park boundaries and proposed acquisition areas are specific individuals and families who are significant to the context of Tubman's history on the Eastern Shore. They include:

¹⁴ John Creighton, Herschel Johnson, William Jarmon, Patricia Guida, Dr. Kay McKelvey, Dr. Phillip Hesser, Robin Caudell, Rebecca Hackett, Tony Cohen, Pat Lewis, Royce Sampson, Jay Meredith, Matt Meredith, JOK Walsh, Laura Weldon, Dr. Clara Small, Dickson Preston, Calvin Mowbray, Thomas Flowers, Debra Moxey, to name just a few.

Overview and Purpose of the Historic Resource Study



Tubman's parents:

Benjamin "Ben" Ross—born circa 1785(?); left Caroline County, MD, 1857, and changed his name to Benjamin Stewart; died Auburn, NY, 1871.

Rittia "Rit" Green Ross—born circa 1785(?); left Caroline County, MD, 1857, and changed her name to Rittia Stewart; died Auburn, NY, 1881.

Tubman's siblings:

Linah Ross Jolly—born circa 1808, sold between 1834 and 1840. Fate unknown.

Mariah Ritty—born circa 1811, sold 1825. Fate unknown.

Soph—born ca. 1813, sold circa 1845. Fate unknown.

Robert Ross—born circa 1816, escaped slavery December 25, 1854 and changed his name to John Stewart; died Auburn, NY, November 14, 1889.

Ben, Jr. Ross—born 1823, escaped slavery December 25, 1854 and changed his name to James Stewart; died Buffalo, NY or St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, circa 1860–63.

Rachel Ross—born 1825, died Bucktown, MD, circa 1859, leaving behind two children, Ben and Angerine. Fates unknown.

Henry Ross—born 1830, escaped slavery December 25, 1854 and changed his name to William Henry Stewart; died Auburn, NY, 1912.

Moses Ross—born 1832, escaped slavery ca 1851; died before 1865. Fate unknown.

Other Tubman Relatives:

Modesty—Tubman’s maternal grandmother, born in Africa; died between 1810 and 1820.

Kessiah Jolly Bowley—daughter of Lina Ross and Harkless Jolly, born 1824; married John Bowley before 1844; escaped Cambridge, MD, December 1850 with two children, James Alfred and infant Araminta; died Cambridge, MD, 1897.

John Bowley—formerly enslaved by the white Stewart family, John married Kessiah Jolly, Tubman’s niece, around 1844.

Harriet Jolly—daughter of Linah Ross and Harkless Jolly, born circa 1832; sold 1850 to Thomas Willis; sold to James A. Stewart in 1855 and sent to Texas. Fate unknown.

Anne Ross Elliott—presumed daughter of Soph Ross and an unidentified man, born ca 1844. Fled Caroline County, MD unknown date btw 1850 and 1861; married Thomas Elliott 1863 in Auburn. NY; died Auburn, NY circa 1880.

Community Members and Associates:

Jacob Jackson—born enslaved near Madison in the late 1790s, Jackson became free when his enslavers, the Jones family, manumitted him in the early 1830s. Married Dinah Bell, a free woman. Jackson purchased land and operated a small farm, raised sheep for wool and meat, and served as a respected veterinarian to black and white residents in the Madison area. Literate, Jackson knew Tubman and her family and assisted her efforts to free her brothers during Christmas 1854.

John Tubman—born free around 1820 to free parents in the White Marsh Road area, John married Araminta “Minty” Ross in 1844. Minty Ross changed her name to Harriet upon her marriage to John Tubman. After Tubman fled in 1849, she returned in 1851 to bring John to Philadelphia. He had married a free woman, Caroline, and refused to follow Tubman north. A white neighbor, Robert Vincent, murdered John in 1867.

Samuel Green—born enslaved circa 1802, Green purchased his freedom in 1832, and then his wife’s freedom in 1840. His two children, Sam Jr. and Sarah, remained enslaved. Green became a Methodist minister and an Underground Railroad agent who helped Tubman in the East New Market area. Arrested in 1857 and his conviction for owning a copy of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, then considered illegal abolition literature, brought a ten-year prison sentence.

White Enslavers:

Anthony Thompson—Ben Ross’s enslaver and owner of a more than 1,000 acres plantation in Peter’s Neck.

Overview and Purpose of the Historic Resource Study

Dr. Anthony C. Thompson—Anthony Thompson’s son and one of his heirs.

Dr. Absalom Thompson—Anthony Thompson’s son and one of his heirs

Edward Brodess—Enslaver of Rit Green Ross, Harriet Tubman, and all of her siblings.

Eliza Ann Keene Brodess—Edward Brodess’s wife

Atthow Pattison—Enslaver of Modesty, Tubman’s grandmother, and Rit Green.

John Stewart and his brother James A. Stewart—Politically active elite merchants, land speculators, and slaveholders deeply involved in the lives of the Ross family through their enslaved people and labor relationships.

James Cook and wife—farmer who hired Tubman when she was six years old. He and his wife were cruel and abusive.

Historical Context of the National Monument/Park

The following list of sites subdivides the 11,750-acre landscape within the National Monument boundaries into districts or areas specifically associated with the physical movement of Tubman and her family for work, social and familial interactions, worship, survival, and in the pursuit of strategies for freedom. Based on the HATU Map number T20/80,001A, which defines the Monument and Park boundaries and proposed acquisition areas, the following districts are significant to Tubman and her life story:

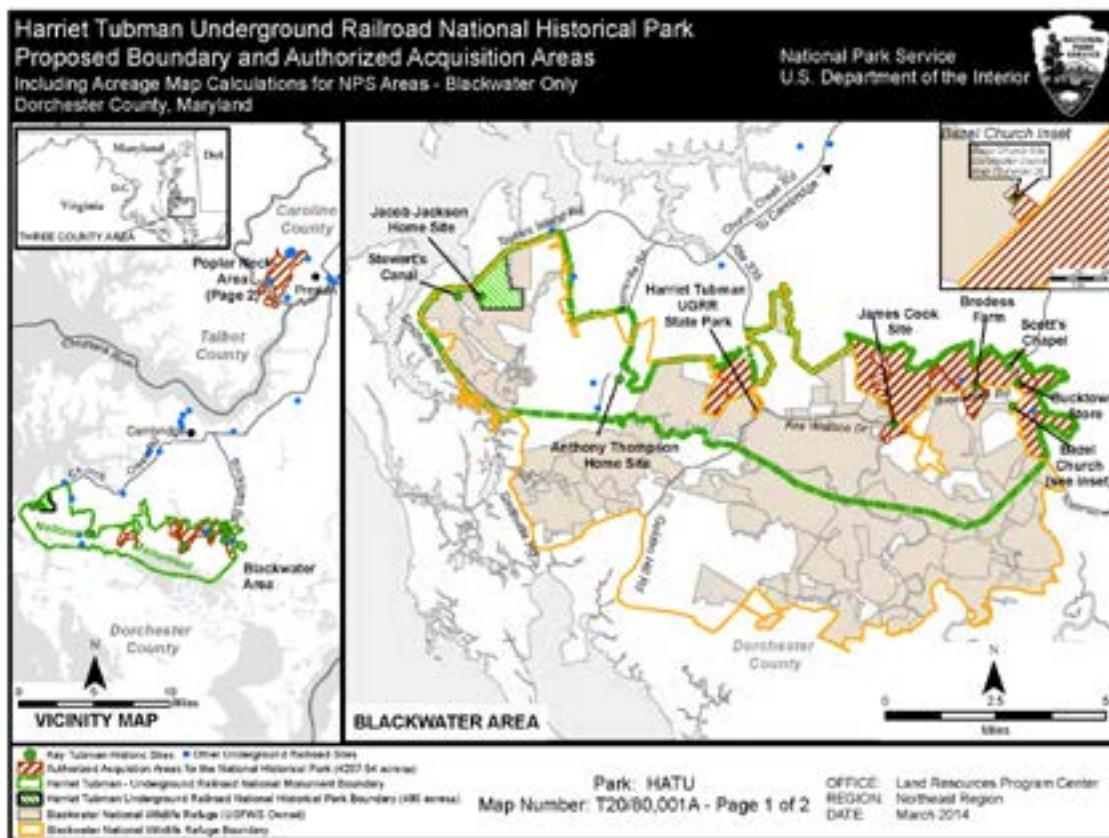


Figure 0.1. Map of National Park and Monument. National Park Service.

1. Jacob Jackson Home Site/National Park

Jacob Jackson assisted Harriet Tubman in rescuing her brothers during the Christmas holiday 1854. The Jacob Jackson site is located on the south side of Route 16 west of Madison and east of Parson's Creek and is the foundation for the Harriet Tubman National Park. The site consists of low-lying lands, which, due to rising water tables, are often wet and boggy. Stands of loblolly pine, oak, and sweet gum pepper the landscape. No extant buildings remain, though ruins of foundations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century structures are visible, and vestiges of farming remain on the landscape in the form of scars from plowed rows once planted year after year. It is unknown if these residues date to Jackson's time. The 480-acre site is owned in fee simple by NPS and is located along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway and All-American Road.

2. Parson's Creek/Stewart's Canal

Parson's Creek is a small tributary on the south side of the Little Choptank River, just east of Slaughter Creek and Taylor's Island along Route 16 and west of the Jacob

Jackson home site. Situated along the Tubman byway, the creek serves as the entry/exit point for Stewart's Canal. Originally named St. Stephen's Creek for Stephen Gary, the first European landowner, in 1662, and renamed Parson's Creek after Rev. Thomas Thompson acquired the land and lived there during the early to mid-1700s, the creek served as an entry and exit point for a seven-mile canal completed by black labor in 1832. The inland waterway stretched to the town of Madison, easing transportation of timber and agricultural products from the densely wooded and marshy interior reaches of Peter's Neck and the Blackwater River.

3. Madison (nee Tobacco Stick)

The town of Madison lies about twelve miles west of Cambridge, on Madison Bay, an inlet of the Little Choptank River. Established in 1760 as "Tobacco Stick" and situated along the Tubman byway on Route 16, Madison's early economic activities centered on the timber trades, shipbuilding, fishing, and merchant shipping. Tubman lived here, working for the Stewart family during the late 1830s and early 1840s; Madison was the site of numerous escapes to freedom. The town sits just outside the boundary of the monument, but its significance cannot be separated from sites within the National Monument or from Tubman's history.

4. Smithville

Smithville is a loosely defined community that surrounds New Revived United Methodist Church on Smithville Road. Smithville Road connects Route 16, before it crosses the bridge to Taylor's Island, to the community of Golden Hill (which is outside of the study area.) Founded in 1876 as Jefferson Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, New Revived Church is located at the north end of Smithville Road. Harriet Parker, Tubman's sister-in-law and the wife of Tubman's brother Henry, lived with her free family in this area. A historic property report for the church, located along the Tubman byway, is available.¹⁵

5. White Marsh around Malone's Church

Malone's Church on White Marsh Road south of the town of Madison stands as a testament to the spiritual, economic, political, and social life of a blended pre-Civil War free and enslaved black community, with roots stretching to the late 1700s during the early, formative years of our nation. Malone's would be the first of five black churches built in and near the National Monument boundaries soon after the Civil War. Named for Jeremiah Malone and his wife, Rose, freedpeople who deeded the land to the community in 1864,

¹⁵ "Jefferson Memorial Church, D-597," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1969).

the church started with a small building (1866) used for both a school and a place of worship. Established as African Methodist Episcopal, the congregation changed to Methodist Episcopal in 1887. In 1890, a new church building replaced the old, which needs immediate stabilization and preservation resources. Though closed for services, the church cemetery is still in active use by descendants of the community.¹⁶ Tubman purportedly lived on or near Jeremiah Malone's property with her husband John during the mid-1840s. The site is located along the Tubman byway, and a historic property report for the church is available.¹⁷

6. Peter's Neck

Peter's Neck is a loosely defined region south of Madison and the town of Woolford, east of Parson's Creek and west of Harrisville Road, between the Little Choptank and the Blackwater Rivers. Peter's Neck includes many specific sites associated with Tubman, her family, and the Underground Railroad, including the southern portions of Parson's Creek and White Marsh Road below Malone's Church, Harrisville Road, and Anthony Thompson's plantation where Tubman was born and where her father later occupied ten acres as a free man after 1840. Peter's Neck also includes portions of the historic White Marsh free black community landscapes dating from the turn of the nineteenth century. The Maryland Historical Trust completed several historic property reports within the study area in the Peter's Neck district between 1969 and 2012.¹⁸

7. Anthony Thompson Plantation and Harrisville Road

Anthony Thompson's home plantation, called the Mansion Farm, is the birth site of Tubman and the home of her father, Ben Ross, to about 1846. Consisting of approximately 1000 acres, the Thompson plantation sat upon the north side of the Blackwater River south of the towns of Madison and Woolford between Harrisville and White Marsh roads in Peter's Neck. Tubman was born "Araminta" on this plantation around 1822. Enslaved by Thompson, Ross worked as a logger and timber supervisor. He married Rit Green, an enslaved woman belonging to Thompson's second wife, Mary Pattison Brodess, sometime around 1808. At least five of Tubman's eight siblings were born here: Linah, Mariah Ritty, Soph, Robert, and Ben, Jr. The farm site has been known locally for over one hundred years as the Brooks farm, named for the family that owned the property during the late

¹⁶ "Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)*

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Harrisville Colored School, D-816," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)*; "St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)*. "Brooks Farm, D-36," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1975). The land mass called "Peter's Neck" is not technically a neck of land connecting two larger land masses, but was first documented in a 1761 land patent for a 342.5 acres plot called "Chalmers Chance." It was identified as an area situated between the Little Choptank and Blackwater Rivers. See Dorchester County Court, "Land Records," in *Dorchester County Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1669–1984). Patented Certificates 677.

nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.¹⁹ Anthony Thompson lived in a log home on the plantation during the later quarter of the 18th century, replacing it with a large federal-style wood-frame home between 1800 and 1810, and most certainly built with the labor of Ross, a skilled carpenter. Ross's later ten-acre homesite circa mid-1830s through 1847 is within the plantation boundaries, though the exact site needs further research. Tubman lived with her father at this site circa 1840, too. While no extant structures remain standing, an archaeological survey with landowner permission might reveal significant culture resources from the late 18th century through the Tubman occupation period. Currently owned and operated as a private hunting club, the property is not accessible to the public at this time. The Maryland Historical Trust commissioned an architecture survey on the federal-style house before its final destruction during the late 1970s.²⁰ Harrisville Road extends from the historic circa 1790 Baptist Meeting House on Route 16 in Woolford south to the Blackwater River, and also includes St. Paul's United Methodist Church (nee Union Mission), built in 1889.²¹

8. *Button's Creek/Neck*

Buttons Creek flows through Button's Neck south to the Blackwater River and is situated between Buttons Neck Road and Golden Hill Road, just west of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State and National Park Visitor Center and east of the Anthony Thompson plantation site. The area hosts the site of Jane Kane's escape from the former Horatio Jones plantation on Christmas Eve, 1854. Kane, the fiancé of Harriet Tubman's brother, Ben Ross Jr., used a disguise—men's clothing—to flee Jones, and her escape is one of the few first-person narratives dictated to and published by abolitionist Benjamin Drew in Canada in 1855.²² Portions of the original Jones plantation are part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, and the Tubman byway and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program features Kane's story.²³

9. *Blackwater River/Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (along Key Wallace Drive)*

Established in 1933 in South Dorchester County as a haven for migratory birds, the refuge manages 28,000 acres of tidal marsh, forest, fields, and freshwater wetlands and

¹⁹ "Brooks Farm, D-36."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606." See also "Woolford Baptist Meeting House, D-231," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2012). Both churches sit just beyond the National Monument boundary.

²² Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*, ed. Tilden G. Edelstein (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1855). "Mrs. James Seward," 28–29.

²³ See "Buttons Creek: Jane Kane Escape Site," NPS Network to Freedom, [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/ntf_member_ntf_member_details.htm?SPFID=4747595&SPFTerritory=Maryland%20\(outside%20DC%20metro%20area\)&SPF-Type=NULL&SPFKeywords=NULL](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/ntf_member_ntf_member_details.htm?SPFID=4747595&SPFTerritory=Maryland%20(outside%20DC%20metro%20area)&SPF-Type=NULL&SPFKeywords=NULL)

shares some boundaries and significant landscapes within the National Monument. Please refer to HATU Map number T20/80,001A for boundary details. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center and National Park headquarters is on Key Wallace Drive within a mile of BWNWR Visitor Center.²⁴

10. Little Blackwater Bridge and Atthow Pattison farm area

The Little Blackwater Bridge spans the Little Blackwater River, the northwest branch and tributary of the Blackwater River, along Key Wallace Drive near the headquarters of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the beginning of Wildlife Drive. During the colonial period and through the 19th century, the Little and Big Blackwater Rivers provided water access to the area's farms, facilitating the movement of goods to and from markets around the Chesapeake and beyond. Atthow Pattison's farm sat on the east side of the Little Blackwater River and it was on his farm that Tubman's mother Rit was born enslaved around 1785. Pattison enslaved Rit's mother and Tubman's grandmother Modesty, who arrived from Africa sometime before 1785—possibly before the American Revolution or just after. On the west side and opposite the Pattison lands and situated on Wildlife Drive sat the former Dorothy Staplefort plantation. The Stapleforts enslaved many people, some of whom were associated with Tubman's family.²⁵ Situated along the Tubman Byway, an Historic Property Report is available for the Staplefort home site.²⁶ The Pattison residence is no longer extant.

11. James Cook site

The James Cook site is significant because of the Cook family's relationship with Tubman. When Tubman was a small child, Cook, a yeoman farmer, hired her from Edward Brodess to learn weaving and collect muskrats from his traps in the nearby

²⁴ See these reports: Glenn A. Carowan and John Statsko, "Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval for Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Including Blackwater Nwr)"; Walker, "Final Report: Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland."

²⁵ See Anthony C. Thompson, "List of Anthony Thompson's Negroes, 1839," in *Levin Richardson Collection, 1758–1865* (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society).

²⁶ "Staplefort House, D-131," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1991). The house is no longer extant, but the cemetery still sits along the Little Blackwater River.

marsh.²⁷ She may have stayed with the Cooks for as long as two years. Research into the exact location of James Cook and his family during the Tubman period is incomplete. The Nause Waiwash own the site currently identified as the James Cook site. They purchased the historic 1892 former Methodist church lot and building in 1998 and have repurposed the building at the intersection of Greenbriar Road and Maple Damn Road as a “Longhouse”—an historically traditional style building commonly used by North American Indians for communal living—for community meetings and celebrations. This site is equidistant—a little more than a mile in either direction—from Tubman’s childhood home at the Brodess farm site, and the Atthow Pattison plantation on the Little Blackwater River where her mother and grandmother once lived. Situated along the Tubman byway, a historic property report is available for the site.²⁸

Bucktown Area:

12. Brodess Farm site

Edward Brodess—who inherited Tubman, her mother Rit, and all of her siblings after his mother’s death—owned this property during the early to mid-nineteenth century and moved here after Tubman’s birth. Situated on the south side of Greenbriar Road in the Bucktown District, about a mile west of the Bucktown Village crossroads and the Bucktown Village Store, the Brodess Farm is one of the most significant sites on the Tubman landscapes on the Eastern Shore. Tubman spent little time here with her family because Brodess leased Tubman, her mother, and siblings to area farmers throughout her childhood. The original circa 1823 house is no longer extant.²⁹ An early twentieth-century structure located at the south end of a dirt lane from Greenbriar Road is a private hunting lodge. Dr. John Seidel of Washington College completed an archaeological survey on the former Brodess farm property in 2003, and the Maryland Historical Trust completed an updated property

²⁷ Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (Auburn, New York: W. J. Moses, 1869), 73. Listed as the head of household of four whites in the 1830 census, Cook also held nine enslaved people. These included two enslaved males under the age of ten, one between ten and twenty-four, and one between fifty-five and one hundred years old, and four enslaved females, including one under ten, one between ten and twenty-four, one between twenty-four and thirty-six, and one from thirty-six to fifty-five. Cook’s own family included one white woman between twenty and thirty, and two boys under the age of five. It appears that Cook rented this property. Though the census recorded these enslaved people in Cook’s household, it does not mean he legally owned them, but rather, he most likely hired them, and the census taker counted them as part of his household.

²⁸ “Hughes Chapel, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Nause-Waiwash Longhouse, D-282,” in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2005).

²⁹ Edward Brodess V. Anthony Thompson (1827).

survey in 2005.³⁰ Though privately owned, a roadside pull-off and Tubman byway signage offer visitors interpretation at the private, gated entrance to the farm.

13. Polish Mills Site

Located on the north side of Greenbriar Road and opposite the Brodess farm site, the former Polish Mills farm is still in agricultural use, though no historic structures from Tubman's time remain on the landscape. As Brodess's neighbor, Mills knew Tubman and her family, and in at least one instance, hired Tubman's mother Rit and sister Linah Ross, separating them from eleven-year-old Tubman and her other siblings. At great risk, Tubman stole away to visit her mother and family at Mills's farm on November 12, 1833, when the spectacular Leonid meteor shower, part of the cosmic debris from the Temple-Tuttle comet, occurred.³¹ Polish Mills testified in 1853 at the Dorchester County Courthouse about the 1850 escape of Tubman's niece, Kessiah Jolly Bowley.³²

14. Bucktown Village Store

In the early to mid-nineteenth century, Bucktown was a larger community, and the store sat at the center of commercial and social activity at the intersection of Greenbrier and Bestpitch Ferry roads. The Bucktown Village Store is one of the most significant and still-extant buildings associated with Tubman in the region. The site features one of Tubman's first acts of defiance, when, circa 1835, she endured a severe blow to her head that fractured her skull and nearly killed her. This injury caused life-long health problems, leaving her suffering from epileptic seizures and headaches for the rest of her life. A store at this location dates to at least 1826, and possibly earlier. The Bucktown store sold china, kitchenware, textiles, various flours, sugar, seeds, corn meal, tobacco, medicines like Worm Pills, and other goods. The Bucktown Village Store remained the only merchant business at the crossroads until the late 1840s or 1850s.³³ The property also includes the historic shopkeeper's house to the south, and the large 1780s period federal-style home to the southeast. Tubman byway interpretive signage welcomes visitors, and the store is open to

³⁰ John L Seidel, "The 2001–2003 Archaeological Investigations at the Brodess Farm Site (18do419), the Possible Harriet Tubman Birth Site, Dorchester County, Maryland" (Chestertown, MD, 2004). "Brodess Farm, D-746," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2005).

³¹ "Aunt Harriet Was Very Old," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, March 12, 1913.

³² Polish Mills, "Mills Deposition," in *Equity Papers 249* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1853).

³³ "Trader's Licenses, 1829," in *Dorchester County Circuit Court Papers 1813–1937* (Maryland State Archives).

visitors most days and by appointment. Historic property reports are available for the store and other buildings at the crossroads.³⁴

15. Bazel Church

Bazel Church on Bestpitch Ferry Road is located on a one-acre clearing edged by the road and cultivated fields and the forested boundary of Blackwater Wildlife Refuge. Organized in 1876 as a Methodist Church by formerly enslaved African Americans in the Bucktown area, the building did not exist during Tubman's time, though oral tradition suggests open-air worship services for free and enslaved blacks occurred here during the antebellum period. Thomas Meredith, a landowner with sizeable holdings in the area and the owner-operator of the Bucktown store, gifted the land to the black community for a church. The church halted services a few decades ago, but until recently, it remained open for special services and Juneteenth celebrations. The current building, constructed in 1911, replaced an earlier 1876 structure and is in utter disrepair and at risk of total collapse. An historic property report is available.³⁵

16. Scott's Chapel and cemetery

Scott's Chapel, now known as Bucktown United Methodist Church, is located about half a mile northeast of the Bucktown Village store on Bucktown Road. Founded at this site in 1812 on land donated by John Scott, the Methodist congregation offered services for both whites and African Americans, in segregated sections. The church restricted free and enslaved people to a loft space or outside near the windows. The congregation constructed the current building in 1891. Segregated cemeteries remain in active use today. A portion of the graveyard contains headstones dating to 1792. A historic property report is available.³⁶

³⁴ "Bucktown Village Store, D-80," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2005); "Meredith/Bradshaw House/Bucktown Storekeepers House, D-774," *ibid.*; "Clement Waters House (Aka Thomas M. Meredith House, Lewis House), D-81," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2012). The Maryland Historical Trust [MHT] completed two Historical Architectural surveys of the store—1975 and 2012, and completed an additional National Register nomination in. These reports contain several errors. The original survey noted that the rear/shed portion of the store dates to the 1860s. The survey erroneously dates the store to an early to mid-1850s construction by John Bradshaw, after Bradshaw purchased the lot from John Mills, but the surveyor's research failed to document the store's presence in 1826, when Horatio North advertised his collections of housewares and more, and subsequent shop owners' presence there through the 1830 and 1840s.

³⁵ "Bazel's Chapel (Bazel's Methodist Episcopal Church), D-274," in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2005).

³⁶ "Scotts Chapel (Aka Bucktown Methodist Episcopal Church, Bucktown United Methodist Church), D-270," *ibid.*

Executive Summary/Introduction

This Historic Resource Study (HRS) examines the historic context of Tubman's life and the nature of slavery and freedom in the Chesapeake region. One of the goals of an HRS is to enhance NPS partnerships, programming, interpretation, and collaborations with stakeholders and others. It provides resources and contexts for varied perspectives and views, which is particularly important to this park because of its association with the controversial and emotionally charged subjects of slavery, human rights, and the struggle for freedom. This study will engage multiple points of reference. During an early Park/Monument roundtable discussion about interpretation of Tubman's life and legacy for the newly established Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument, participants framed the discussion within four themes: *Building Communities, Anchoring the Spirit, Paths Toward Freedom and Resistance, and Sharing Knowledge*. These broad themes shape this HRS. From that roundtable, subthemes and a framework for discussion and interpretation emerged, including the complex interplay of history and memory, the "landscapes" of Tubman's life, challenges to the traditional concepts of "literacy" and "illiteracy," the contours of Tubman's faith, African cultural heritage and retentions, modes of communication, and the particular nature of slavery on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

A complex web of cultural, historical, and social dynamics and viewpoints have contributed to competing notions and interpretations of our nation's history, which have shaped the telling of Tubman's life. On the Eastern Shore of Maryland, history and the stories told by communities are rooted in real and imagined memories about a time, a place, and people. On that landscape, race and ethnicity; community location; faith traditions; social, economic, and political dynamics; and the movement of people sculpted the geography of memory (or the "genealogy of memory," mentioned during the roundtable discussions). The HRS considers these issues.

PART ONE

Pre-colonial Nanticoke and Choptank indigenous history
in the Chesapeake, European Contact and Settlement,
and the rise of New World slavery to Tubman's Birth in 1822.

CHAPTER 1

PALeO-INDIAN SETTLEMENT TO 1720

This chapter follows the decline of Native American power and the ascendency of European governance. Long before Europeans and Africans arrived in the Chesapeake, the Eastern Shore of Maryland was home to Algonquin speaking peoples, including the Choptank, Nanticoke, Manokin, and Pokomoke people. During the mid-seventeenth century, these Indians fought European intrusion and struggled to maintain community and cultural independence. The Choptanks and Nanticokes negotiated for independent reservations that contained thousands of acres along the Choptank and Nanticoke Rivers during the early to mid-seventeenth century. Europeans rapidly claimed Indian living, hunting, planting, fishing, and ceremonial places through plunder, inequitable treaties, deeds, and attrition through disease, famine and out-migration. Those who stayed faced constant efforts to Christianize them, and eventually their presence on the landscape declined. The arrival of captive, enslaved Africans during the latter part of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries dramatically changed the nature of human, social, political, and economic relationships throughout the Chesapeake and the Atlantic World.

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When English explorer Capt. John Smith investigated and surveyed the Chesapeake Bay and its shores during several voyages between 1607 and 1609, he witnessed ancient forests of oak, pine, maple, hickory, chestnut, walnut, elm, cedar, gum, holly, hemlock, and mountain laurel. Ash, birch, alder, and fruit trees provided a canopy for an abundant variety of shrubs, ferns, vines, greenbriers, wild grapes, poison ivy, sassafras, and fruit-bearing bushes. Salt marshes, meadows, swamps, and freshwater rivers and streams teamed with aquatic life, a vast array of birds and waterfowl, and small mammals. Deer, beavers, squirrels, rabbits, wolves, bobcats, minks, elk, and bears were plentiful, leaving Smith and other English observers in awe of the riches of this new world.¹

Smith and earlier explorers also encountered numerous Indigenous societies. Long before he and other Europeans and Africans arrived in the Chesapeake, the region was home to thousands of Algonquin speaking peoples. A limited number of prehistoric and

¹ Helen C. and Clarke Rountree, Wayne E., and Mountford, Kent, *John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607–1609* (Charlottesville, Va: University of Virginia Press, 2007). 15–24. See also John and William Hole Smith, "Virginia," (London, 1624). And more recently the 2007 Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, United States National Park Service and Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, "Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail: Join the Adventure" (Annapolis, MD: National Park Service, 2007).

historic archaeological site surveys completed during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries reveal a few prehistoric and historic sites within and near the Monument. More broadly, archaeological surveys conducted in Talbot, Dorchester, and Somerset counties feature artifact deposits predominantly along the Choptank, Nanticoke, and Manokin Rivers and tributaries dating from the earliest human occupation period 15,000 years ago through the nineteenth century.

For interpretive purposes, and based on archaeologists' general agreement on the organization of historical and cultural resources for prehistoric and precolonial human activity in North America, three generalized time periods help contextualize Indigenous occupation in the region from B.C. 13,000 to A.D. 1600: Paleo-Indian (B.C. 13,000 to 8,000), Archaic (B.C. 8,000 – 1,000), and Woodland (B.C. 1,000 to A.D. 1,600).

While the great majority of artifacts unearthed in the region come from the Woodland Period, historic cultural materials from all periods are extant.² A few artifacts dating from the Paleo-Indian Period within and near the monument include items recovered along the shores of the Little Choptank River, Church Creek, Slaughter Creek, Fishing Bay, and the current site of the Tubman Visitor Center. Paleo Indian artifacts found at Sandy Hill near Cambridge, shoreline locations on Taylors Island, Hooper's Island, and other sites in Talbot, Caroline, Somerset, and Wicomico Counties attest to very early human occupation of the Eastern Shore of Maryland.³

² See Dennis C. Curry, "Birdstones: Some Clarifications from Maryland," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, 80 (no. 2, 2010); Darrin Lowery, Stephen J. Godfrey, and Ralph Eshelman, "Integrated Geology, Paleontology, and Archaeology: Native American Use of Fossil Shark Teeth in the Chesapeake Bay Region," *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, 39 (2011); Darrin Lowery et al., "Meadowood South of the Mason-Dixon Line: An Early Woodland Meadowood Presence on the Delmarva Peninsula," *ibid.*, 43 (2015); Darrin L Lowery, *Archaeological Survey of the Little Choptank River Watershed, Dorchester Co., Md* (Maryland: Maryland Historical Trust Library, 2005); Darrin L. Lowery, "Jack's Reef in the Chesapeake and Delmarva Region: Research into the Coastal Archaeology of the Era between Circa Cal A.D. 480 and Cal A.D. 900," *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, 41 (2013); Torben C. Rick and Darrin L. Lowery, "Accelerator Mass Spectrometry ¹⁴C Dating and the Antiquity of Shell-Tempered Ceramics from the Chesapeake Bay and Middle Atlantic," *American Antiquity*, 78 (no. 3, 2013); Torben C. Rick et al., "A Late Holocene Radiocarbon Chronology for the Shell Middens of Fishing Bay, Maryland," *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, 39 (2011); Walker, "Final Report: Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland"; Davidson, "A Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Lower Delmarva Region of Maryland"; Rick et al., "A Late Holocene Radiocarbon Chronology for the Shell Middens of Fishing Bay, Maryland"; John Seidel and John S. Wah Darrin L. Lowery, "Archaeological Survey of the Fishing Bay and the Fairmont Wildlife Management Area within Dorchester and Somerset County, Maryland," ed. Washington College Public Archaeology Laboratory (Chestertown, MD: Washington College, 2005); Torbin Rick Darrin L. Lowery, Michael Barbr, John S. Wah, and Michael Madden, "Meadowood South of the Mason-Dixon Line: An Early Woodland Meadowood Presence on the Delmarva Peninsula," *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, 43 (2015).

³ Curry, "Birdstones: Some Clarifications from Maryland"; Walker, "Final Report: Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland"; Lowery, *Archaeological Survey of the Little Choptank River Watershed, Dorchester Co., MD*. Darrin L. Lowery, "Archaeological Survey of the Fishing Bay and the Fairmont Wildlife Management Area within Dorchester and Somerset County, Maryland." Jesse O. Walker, "Archaeological Investigations of the Holland Point Site (18do220), Dorchester County, Maryland" (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2003); Darrin L. Lowery Jonathan C. Lothrop, Arthur E. Spiess & Christopher J. Ellis, "Early Human Settlement of Northeastern North America," *PaleoAmerica: A Journal of Early Human Migration and Dispersal* 2 (no. 3, 2016).

As glaciers over North America receded during the last ice age circa 17,000 to 13,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers migrated across the Bering Land Bridge between Siberia and Alaska, spreading east and south across present day Canada and the United States. Some of these migrants, known as Clovis peoples, slowly made their way to the Delmarva region and to a landscape vastly different than today's. During the Paleo Indian period, sea levels on the Eastern Shore were between 358 and 211 feet below the current mean sea level. The Chesapeake Bay did not yet exist—an ancient version of the Susquehanna River flowed through the Bay region. Much of the Monument would have been upland landscapes, supporting an extensive freshwater ecosystem with rivers, streams, and swamps. The salt marshes, so ubiquitous today, were nonexistent. The weather would have been cool—even cold—and damp.⁴

A variety of stone tool technologies, including spear points, scrapers to clean meat from hides and bone, knives, cobble, and other lithic or human shaped stone tools characterize the cultural resources left by Clovis-age and other Paleo Indian era peoples. Believed to be highly mobile, following game and living in temporary settlements, some Paleo Indian peoples may have settled longer on the Eastern Shore than originally determined by earlier archaeologists.⁵

During the Archaic period—a 7,000-year span—sea levels rose from approximately 211 to 13 feet lower than today's sea levels in the Delmarva region.⁶ Excavated sites in Dorchester and neighboring counties reveal seasonal Indigenous people migration patterns following game and edible plants. Larger settlements—supported by increasingly sophisticated stone tools, many made from locally sourced deposits of stone materials, ensured survival of larger populations.⁷ Archaeological sites associated with the late Archaic period (B.C. 4,800 to 1,000) reveal larger numbers of non-native tool materials, like copper, soapstone, slate, and other foreign stone, indicating well-established trading with Indigenous cultures from Canada, the Great Lakes, and New York. Weather patterns fluctuated from warm drought conditions to wet and cooler environments. Archaeologists believe that the relative lack of late Archaic period settlement sites on the Eastern Shore indicates Indigenous people were probably living closer to water and marine resources, and therefore, because of sea level rise in the modern period their sites remain buried in the bay.⁸

⁴ Walker, "Final Report: Phase I Archaological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland."; Darrin L. Lowery, "Archaeological Survey of the Fishing Bay and the Fairmont Wildlife Management Area within Dorchester and Somerset County, Maryland."

⁵ "Archaeological Survey of the Fishing Bay and the Fairmont Wildlife Management Area within Dorchester and Somerset County, Maryland"; Jonathan C. Lothrop, "Early Human Settlement of Northeastern North America."

⁶ Darrin L. Lowery, "Archaeological Survey of the Fishing Bay and the Fairmont Wildlife Management Area within Dorchester and Somerset County, Maryland."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

The great majority of sites investigated in Dorchester County and the Choptank River region date to the Woodland Period (B.C. 1,000 to A.D. 1600.)⁹ This period of indigenous occupation, characterized by expanding populations and broadening trade networks within the Chesapeake and beyond (including as far north as Canada, east to the Atlantic, south to the Carolinas, and west to Indiana and Ohio), reveals an emerging pattern of semi-permanent settlement along coastal areas. These more semi-permanent settlements suggest greater dependence on estuaries and marine sources of food as an adaptation to the changing physical environment. Early-to-late-period Woodland peoples began diversifying from daily subsistence hunter-gathering to preserving, cooking, and storing food resources in ceramic vessels. Migrations of people from the Northeast and Great Lakes regions to the Chesapeake—and trade with them—underscores the cultural influences and social/political networks that define heterogeneous Algonquin native people and their dispersal across a wide swath of eastern North America. Pottery making—for food preparation and storage and ceremonial use—begins coincidentally throughout the Chesapeake around 1200 BC. Burials—complex earthwork mounds—from Adena cultures (indigenous cultures circa 1,200 – 200 BC) stretching from Ohio to Maryland emerge at the same time and reveal rapid adoption of common ceremonial practices, too. Early migrations of Algonquin peoples to the south do not negate the diversity of cultures in the Chesapeake, which also shared significant cultural coherence and histories.¹⁰

⁹ Glenn A. Carowan and John Statsko, “Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval for Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Including Blackwater Nwr).”

¹⁰ Martin Gallivan, “The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations,” *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19 (no. 3, 2011); Davidson, “A Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Lower Delmarva Region of Maryland”; Jay F. Custer, “New Perspectives on the Delmarva Adena Complex,” *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 12 (no. 1, 1987); “Coastal Adaptations in the Middle Atlantic Region,” *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 16 (1988); Dennis C. Curry, “Aboriginal Ossuaries in Maryland: An Update,” *Maryland Archaeology* 44 (no. 1, 2008).



Figure 1.1. Map of Virginia. John Smith and William Hole, London, 1624. Library of Congress. The Native American peoples of the Chesapeake had been living there for several thousand years when Smith and his crew arrived.

Indigenous people in Delmarva built shelters of wood, reeds, mud, and grasses, and established corn agriculture during the Woodland period. Semi-permanent and permanent settlements profoundly affected social and political relationships within and between villages and societies. The growth of “persistent places,” revealed through a growing body of archaeological studies, indicate changes in reproduction, trade, social identity, labor distribution, social and political hierarchy, and economic strategies. Archaeological surveys reveal regional, large-scale gatherings of disparate community groups for yearly feasts and other celebrations, demonstrating opportunities for “establishing alliances for war and marriage, mobilizing labor, creating power and economic advantages, and redistributing wealth.”¹¹

¹¹ Gallivan, “The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations.” The archaeological record shows a proliferation of shell middens, tools, pottery, decorative materials, pipes, larger burial mounds, and more throughout the Chesapeake and Delmarva.

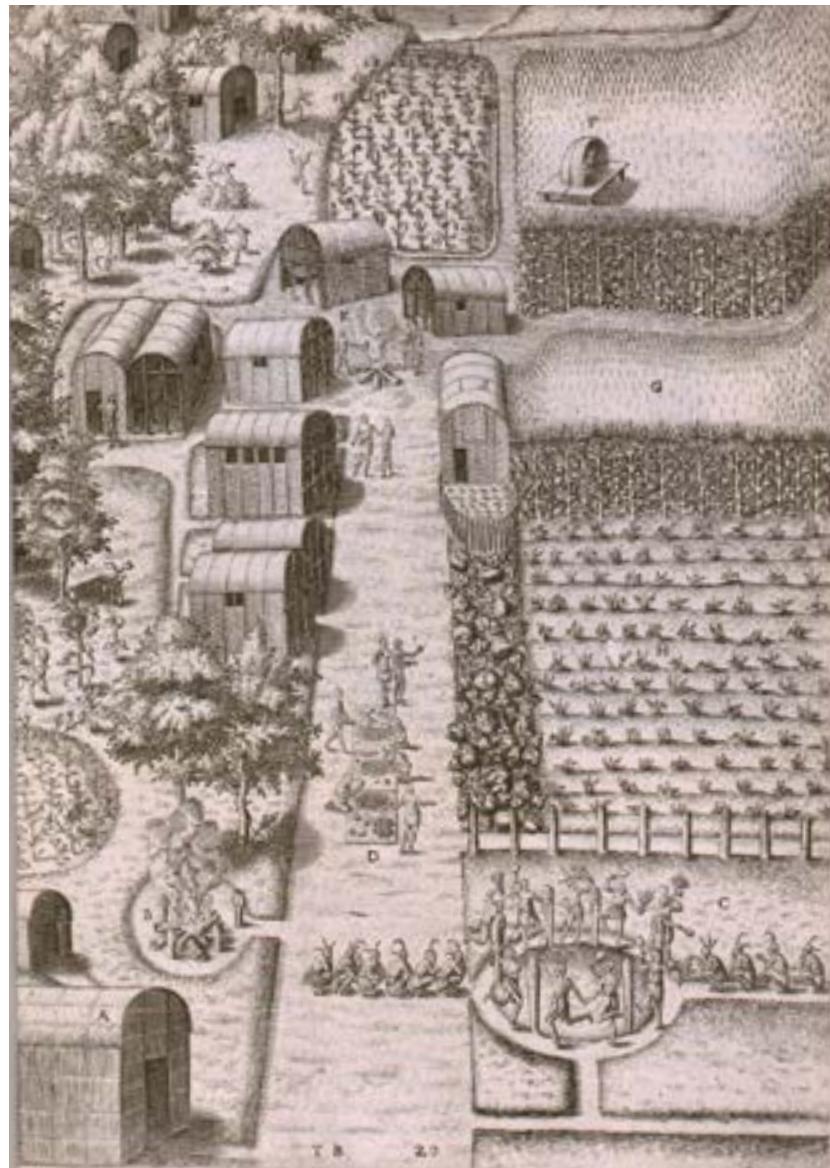


Figure 1.2. Secotan, a Native village in Virginia and representative of Indigenous communities in the Chesapeake. Library of Congress.

The records of places of social and political interactions provide us with a more sophisticated understanding of the Native peoples John Smith and other European explorers met when they arrived in the Chesapeake. The people they met were independent actors involved in a complex world of rival and cooperative societies, long engaged in cultural, social, economic, and political negotiations and exchange.



Figure 1.3. Their manner of fishing in Virginia. (Native men and women in a canoe fishing while others in the background stand in the river and spear fish). Library of Congress.



Figure 1.4. Theodor de Bry's engraving of John White drawing of Indians of North Carolina cooking fish. These engravings reveal the sophisticated societies White witnessed during his late sixteenth-century exploration of the Chesapeake region. Library of Congress.

By the time Smith arrived, the Choptank, Nanticoke, Manokin, and Pokomoke people lived in sedentary villages, grew corn and other foodstuffs, harvested roots, berries, nuts and wild plants, fished, hunted, and manufactured products for trade. Smith did not sail up the Choptank River during his voyages even though it is one of the largest tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay on the Eastern Shore. Barrier islands, some now submerged, may have blocked his view. But his failure to explore its forty-mile course northeast to its headwaters in Caroline County has left a gap in his mission mapping and investigating the human and ecological environment of the bay. He recorded, however, the nearby landscapes of the Nanticoke, Pokomoke, and Manokin Rivers and the Eastern Shore Indians living there.¹²

Smith carried with him a rude vocabulary documented during the 1580s by British and Spanish explorers. Those early explorers did not understand nor accurately chronicle the linguistic diversity of Chesapeake native peoples, though it was readily apparent to later visitors and colonizers from Europe. Archaeologists and ethnographers have identified three separate Algonquin languages spoken by Chesapeake Indigenous peoples: North Carolinian Roanokes and others, Virginian Powhatans, and Maryland's Eastern Shore native peoples, the Nanticoke, Choptank, Manokin, and Pokomoke.¹³ The Pokomoke—who lived in the counties to the south of the Nanticoke River spoke an Algonquin dialect that the Virginian Powhatans' spoke, but not spoken by their closest neighbors, the Choptank and the Nanticoke.¹⁴

¹² Rountree, *John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607–1609*; Helen C. and Davidson Rountree, Thomas E., *Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997). The Nanticoke peoples are better documented than the Choptank. See also, Erve Chambers Kristin M. Sullivan, and Ennis Barber, "Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Study for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail: Nanticoke River Watershed," (Annapolis, MD: The National Park Service Chesapeake Bay, 2013).

¹³ Rountree, *John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607–1609*.

¹⁴ Ibid., 210.

Paleo-Indian Settlement to 1720



Figure 1.5. A Native American man as depicted on John Smith's Virginia Map 1624. Library of Congress.



Figure 1.6. Captain John Smith, early British explorer of North America. "New England." Map. 1635. Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

The peoples who lived nearest to the boundaries of the Monument were the Choptanks and Nanticokes. The Choptanks included sub-groups called (by the English) the Ababco, Hatsawap, and Transquaking (who settled long the Transquaking River and considered Ababcoes).¹⁵ The largest Choptank village when Europeans arrived in the early 1600s was located just north of present day Cambridge, with large and significant burial and ceremonial sites just northwest of Cambridge at Sandy Hill and at the current site of Dorchester County's Courthouse on High Street in Cambridge.¹⁶ Colonists recognized "Choptank lands" encompassed landscapes along the Choptank River, from Jenkins Creek (Sandy Hill) northeast to at least Secretary Creek, if not farther north. These lands extended from the Choptank River south to the Little Blackwater River and east to the Transquaking River and include another ossuary (burial mound) site known as Indian Bone about three miles northeast of Bucktown. Smaller villages were located farther north near present day Choptank Village, Potters Landing, and Denton in Caroline County. The Nanticoke people claimed the lands along the northwest side of the Nanticoke River between Marshyhope Creek and Chicone Creek.¹⁷ Though living near each other, the Nanticoke and Choptank Indians recognized that they were distinctly different people and worked to maintain a fragile peaceful coexistence.

¹⁵ Rountree, John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages, 1607–1609, 212.

¹⁶ Rountree, Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland; William B. Marye, "Former Indian Sites in Maryland, as Located by Early Colonial Records," *American Antiquity* 2 (no. 1, 1936). See also, Jr. James A. McAllister, *Indian Lands in Dorchester County, MD.* (Cambridge, MD: Privately Published, 1962), 2–3. C. A. Weslager, "Wynicaco-a Choptank Indian Chief," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 87 (no. 5, 1944); Custer, "New Perspectives on the Delmarva Adena Complex"; Curry, "Aboriginal Ossuaries in Maryland: An Update."

¹⁷ James A. McAllister, *Indian Lands in Dorchester County, MD.*



Figure 1.7. Enlargement of a section of Captain John Smith's 1624 map, modified in 1638, showing Nanticoke territory. Kus Flu is the Nanticoke River and the Kuskarawaoks are the Nanticoke Indians.

Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

The consequences of engagement with early European explorers and settlers had an immediate and destabilizing effect on indigenous peoples on the Eastern Shore, eventually displacing all of them from their native lands. Disease played a significant role in the rapid decimation of Native peoples due to their lack of resistance to European epidemics of smallpox and other viral and bacterial infections. Wars with Indian nations to the north and south over trade and power, and later with English settlers, reduced their numbers further.

Fur trading with Virginia and Western Shore, Maryland, European settlers marked the first few decades of relationships with the Choptanks and Nanticokes. Settlement on the Eastern Shore was slow, lagging ambitious English settlements across the bay in southern and western Maryland, and Virginia. The exchange of European goods offered the Choptanks and Nanticokes opportunities to adapt new technologies and materials into their traditional cultural ways without abandoning their way of life. Native peoples incorporated fabrics, guns, metal tools, European ceramics, decorative metal items, buttons, iron nails, and glass into their daily and ritual lives.¹⁸ Early English purchases of Indian lands often involved the exchange of not only guns, but also “match coats”—woolen cape-like coats that could substitute for blankets—tobacco and silver.¹⁹ This evidence

¹⁸ Henry M. Miller, “The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters Along Chesapeake Bay: An Overview,” *Revista de Arqueología Americana*, no. 23 (2004).

¹⁹ James A. McAllister, Indian Lands in Dorchester County, MD, 11–28.

indicates that the Algonquians did not abandon their way of life or traditions, but selectively adopted or substituted European commodities into their culture. Within a hundred years, however, the great majority of Choptank and Nanticoke Indians sold their reservation lands and migrated away, integrated into English society through marriage, or intermarried with first- and second-generation Africans. Some continued to resist English encroachment. In 1742, a plot concerning a conspiracy among several Eastern Shore indigenous groups to join forces with Seneca, Totra, Chicawan, and Shawanee Indians (from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland) to attack the English in Pennsylvania and Maryland threatened a fragile co-existence. The warring Native American nations expected support from the French, who promised guns and ammunition, and the Indians stockpiled “poisoned arrows.” The plan collapsed when several Choptank and Nanticoke Indians betrayed them to the British authorities.²⁰ Later, the remaining Nanticoke and other surviving Eastern Shore Indians fled north to the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania and Iroquois in New York and west to Ohio.²¹

Established by a royal charter granted by King Charles I to Cecilius Calvert, the Second Lord Baltimore in 1632 named the Province of Maryland after the King’s wife, Queen Henrietta Maria. The charter granted Calvert the power to distribute land via grants to encourage settlement and development of the land and promote economic activity. Calvert collected taxes, duties, and rents, and established courts and local governing bodies, and churches. The first colonists from England to settle Maryland arrived on two ships, the *Ark* and the *Dove* in the Potomac River in March 1634. Settling on the Western Shore and establishing the city of St. Mary’s, these early settlers prospered.²²

²⁰ Archives of Maryland Online, “Calendar of Maryland State Papers - the Black Books,” in *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1732–1753* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1742), 262–64.

²¹ Miller, “The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters Along Chesapeake Bay: An Overview.”

²² For the most comprehensive and detailed history of Maryland, see Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland, a Middle Temperment, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 3–22. Jean Burrell Russo and J. Elliott Russo, *Planting an Empire: The Early Chesapeake in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2012), 44–51.

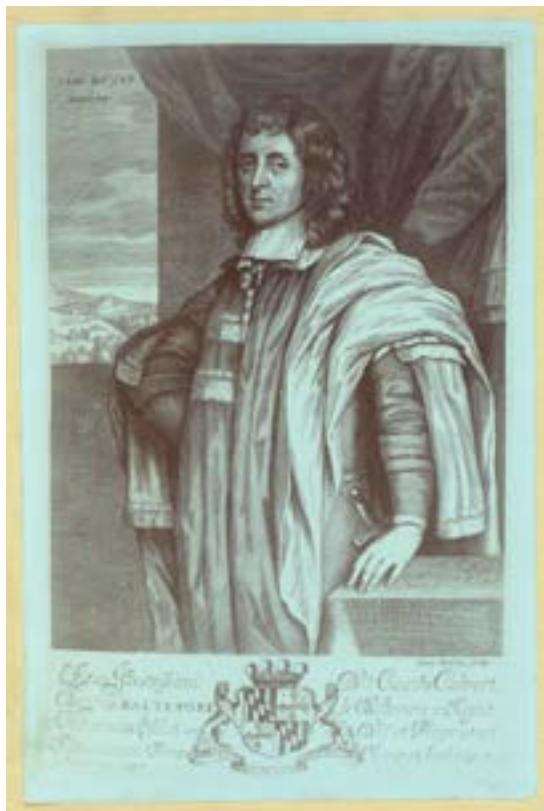


Figure 1.8. Cecil Calvert (1605–1675), 2nd Lord Baltimore. Digital Public Library of America.

The first English land claim on the Eastern Shore appeared on Poplar Island in Talbot County, followed by rapid farm and plantation expansion between 1640 and 1680, including the first land grants in Dorchester in the 1650s.²³ In 1641, a system of land distribution set the grant of fifty acres for every adult, servant, and child over the age of sixteen, in addition to fifty acres for every child under the age of sixteen and held in trust. If a settler paid for the transportation of more than five adults (black or white, free, enslaved, indentured, or convict), Lord Baltimore allotted additional acreage. Baltimore collected annual “quit-rents” from colonists who cleared the land for agriculture. They sold timber, furs, fish, corn, and tobacco, creating a successful Chesapeake economy.²⁴

Records of land grants in Dorchester begin in June 1659. Many early settlers were successful landowners in Calvert County on the Western Shore. Some leased their lands to new arrivals and other planters arriving in the Chesapeake, while others moved across the Bay to expand their wealth and opportunities. Typically, the land closest to the shores of the Chesapeake and Choptank River and its tributaries attracted settlers first. The provincial

²³ Darrin Lowery, “Terrestrial Archaeological Survey of Kingston Landing, Talbot County Maryland with Photographic Documentation and Mapping Additions” (Easton, MD: Talbot County Department of Public Works, 2009). James A. McAllister, Indian Lands in Dorchester County, Md; Calvin W. and Mary I. Mowbray, The Early Settlers of Dorchester County and Their Lands, 2 vols. (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2000; repr., 1992); Calvin W. Mowbray, First Dorchester Families (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2007).

²⁴ Mowbray, Early Settlers, 14.

government formally established Dorchester as a county in 1669. Originally part of Talbot County (established in 1662), Dorchester's boundary along the southern side of the Choptank River included portions of present-day Caroline County.²⁵ After holding the first election in Dorchester and appointing the largest landowners as commissioners to hold court, enact and enforce laws, the nearly 100 settler families in the county finally had representation in the colony's governing body. Robert Stapleford, John Pollard, and William Stevens (whose lands are within the Monument boundaries) served as justices of the peace who adjudicated "all manners of felonies, witchcraft, enchantments, sorceries, magic arts, forestalling, engrossing and extortions whatsoever."²⁶ Early court sessions convened in a house owned by John Hodson near Madison, then called Tobacco Stick (Tobaccostick). The Court moved to the county seat in Cambridge by the end of the seventeenth century.²⁷

The Choptank Indians, seeking an alliance for peace and protection with the English (including protection from settler encroachment), rather than the conflict their Nanticoke neighbors and other Eastern Shore Indians had engaged in, negotiated a large reservation encompassing their traditional homelands along the Choptank River in 1669.²⁸ During the next sixty years, members of the community—kings and queens, their children and other community leaders—sold to settlers thousands of acres of that land, including present day Cambridge and landscapes near the Little Blackwater and Transquaking rivers. Deeds from the mid-1700s document less than two dozen Choptank Indians still living on the last of the communities' lands at Indian Creek near Secretary and East New Market. At the end of the eighteenth century, only nine—all with English surnames—survived on the reservation. Intermarriage with colonists and free and enslaved people had effectively obscured the identities of the last descendants of the Choptank.²⁹

On the Eastern Shore, the English sometimes enslaved the local Indians. During several conflicts with the Nanticokes and other indigenous groups, settlers captured some native peoples as war prizes and forced them to work. Maryland law eventually declared it a felony to kidnap friendly Indigenous peoples.³⁰ The indenture of Indians was common, however, throughout the eighteenth century even when the indigenous population

²⁵ Michael O. and Christopher Weeks Bourne, *Between the Nanticoke and the Choptank: An Architectural History of Dorchester County, Maryland* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 3–18.

²⁶ Ibid., 14.

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸ The Choptank were still petitioning the British government to afford them protection from English settlers and pay them for lands stolen from them. Online, "Calendar of Maryland State Papers - the Black Books," 389.

²⁹ English given and surnames begin to appear in Indian land transfers beginning in the 1710s. The names Mulberry, Bishop, Meyer, Sixpence, and Joshua are the most common. James A. McAllister, *Indian Lands in Dorchester County, Md.* Weslager, "Wynicaco-a Choptank Indian Chief."

³⁰ Jeffrey R. Brackett, *The Negro in Maryland. A Study of the Institution of Slavery* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1889; repr., 1969), 12.

dwindled dramatically.³¹ White indentured servants, serving four to seven years as payment for their passage to Maryland, and convicts working out their sentences, supplied much of the labor needs of the early planter class. They cleared vast amounts of heavily forested land, planted and tended tobacco, corn, and other crops, cut timber, fished, and built structures. Bad treatment and poor nutrition often resulted in early death before the completion of indenture contracts. Those who survived, however, found land and opportunity a path to the planter class.

The enslavement of Africans in the Chesapeake came slowly. Indentured servants proved to be a good investment during the seventeenth century, when land was plentiful and labor needs high.³² Eventually, freed white servants created greater competition for land and cheap labor, driving costs for workers and commodities higher to compensate for those rising prices. During the last four decades of the seventeenth century, tobacco prices fell sharply due to oversupply and trade networks disrupted by European wars, further straining Eastern Shore economies. Planters reacted by planting more tobacco, which put more pressure on prices and severely depleted the soil of nutrients. The importation of indentured servants slowed dramatically by 1690, when improving economic and political trends in England made the decision to sell one's labor to an unsure future in the New World less attractive. The demand for labor only increased on the Eastern Shore, and the African slave traders would supply those needs.³³ The cost of an indentured servant during the last half of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries held constant at around £10 to £12 for an average of five years of service. An enslaved African cost nearly double that, from £23 to £36 by 1720, for labor that lasted a lifetime. Once planters amassed enough assets, they began to see the benefits of race-based, life-long slavery.

Early African captives arrived in the colony with its earliest settlers, though remained minuscule in numbers in comparison to white servants and convicts. Matthias De Sousa, a mixed-race man of African descent who accompanied settlers arriving on the *Ark* and the *Dove* in 1634 and identified as a servant, not a slave, was one of several people of African descent similarly identified during those early years of settlement.³⁴ Free blacks and indentured blacks who obtained their freedom were often of mixed race and called "creoles." Some acquired land and prospered. Enslaved Africans who arrived during the

³¹ See Paul Heinegg, "Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810," <http://freeafricanamericans.com>. *Free African Americans of Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810* (Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Company, Inc., 2000).

³² For recent popular and accessible contributions to the history and interpretation of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of African people in North America, please see major newspaper projects, including The Washington Post's *The Dawn of American Slavery* at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/american-slavery/?noredirect=on>; The New York Times's *The 1619 project* at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>; and USA Today's 1619: Searching for Answers Project at <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2019/08/21/american-slavery-began-1619-project-documents-brutal-journey/1968793001>

³³ John R. Wennersten, *Maryland's Eastern Shore: A Journey in Place and Time* (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1992); Brugger, Maryland, 35–52.

³⁴ Brugger, *Maryland*, 27.

mid-1600s slowly gained a foothold, too, though mortality for this “charter generation” of people of African descent was high.³⁵

By 1664, with hundreds of enslaved Africans having arrived in Maryland, formal legal status sanctioning race-based bondage as perpetual and life-long laid the legal foundation for two hundred years of African American slavery.³⁶ The act or statue controlling and standardizing slavery that passed that year followed Roman law: that the status of the child followed that of the mother. The child of an enslaved woman would be a slave for life.³⁷

Adoption of enslaved labor would not dominate in Maryland and on the Eastern Shore until after 1700. Early African slave traders sold larger numbers of people for higher prices to Caribbean sugar plantation markets, leaving Chesapeake tobacco growers with fewer options. European wars interrupted the trade several times during the late seventeenth century, and the Royal African Company’s monopoly restricted sales even further.³⁸ Finally, after peace arrived in Europe, tobacco prices recovered during the 1690s, and the Royal African’s domination was abolished and competition forced prices down, wealthier Chesapeake planters—most living in Virginia and Maryland’s Western Shore, with a few emerging on the Eastern Shore—turned to slavery as a more attractive labor investment. During the first two decades of the eighteenth century, English men and women were becoming enamored with enslaved labor—as an economic choice and a marker of high status—and they heartily welcomed the transformation of their New World English society from “a society with slaves to a slave society.”³⁹

Where European colonists acquired their enslaved Africans is the subject of numerous studies and a decades-long academic research project known as the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, which has dramatically expanded our understanding of the breadth and scope of more than 400 years of commerce in human beings from the African Continent.⁴⁰ Historical records reveal an increasingly active slave trade from Africa to the Chesapeake during the early to mid-eighteenth century, disembarking over 18,000 slaves onto Maryland soil.⁴¹ How, where and when Eastern Shore planters acquired their enslaved people in the first place is not specifically known. Between 1695 and 1708, four thousand enslaved people arrived in Maryland. By that time, newly arrived Africans vastly outnumbered the charter generation of Africans, creoles, and African Americans, constituting

³⁵ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2004). 36–39.

³⁶ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 64. Brugger, *Maryland*, 42–45.

³⁷ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 32–37. Brugger, *Maryland*, 44–45.

³⁸ Brugger, *Maryland*, 45.

³⁹ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 55.

⁴⁰ David Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein, eds., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999–2010).

⁴¹ Lorena Walsh, “The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications,” *William and Mary Quarterly* LVIII, no. 1 (2001). David Eltis, “The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment,” *ibid.*, 148.

nearly 90 percent of all enslaved people.⁴² On the Eastern Shore, enslaved people numbered about 300 in 1680; by 1710, the numbers rose 500 percent to 1,640, or 15 percent of the Shore's population.⁴³



Figure 1.9. Slave Coffle, Sierra Leone, 1793. Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, London.

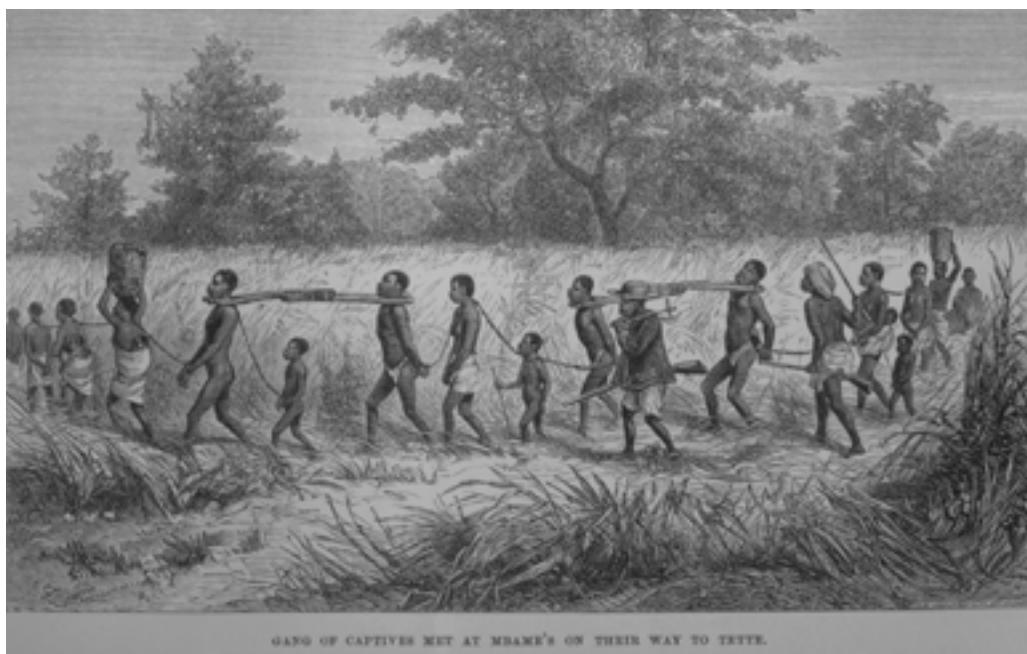


Figure 1.10. Captive Africans destined for the Trade. Slaveryimages.org.

⁴² Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 56.

⁴³ Brugger, Maryland, 46. The Eastern Shore counties include Dorchester, Talbot, Kent, and Somerset.

Studies completed by historians Lorena Walsh, Philip Morgan, David Eltis, John Thornton, and others in cooperation with the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Voyage Database* project reveal, “more than nine out of ten slaves brought to the Chesapeake” during the eighteenth century “arrived directly from Africa or were transshipped from the West Indies.”⁴⁴ The great majority came from the West African coast from Senegambia and Sierra Leone to the Gold Coast around present-day Ghana.⁴⁵

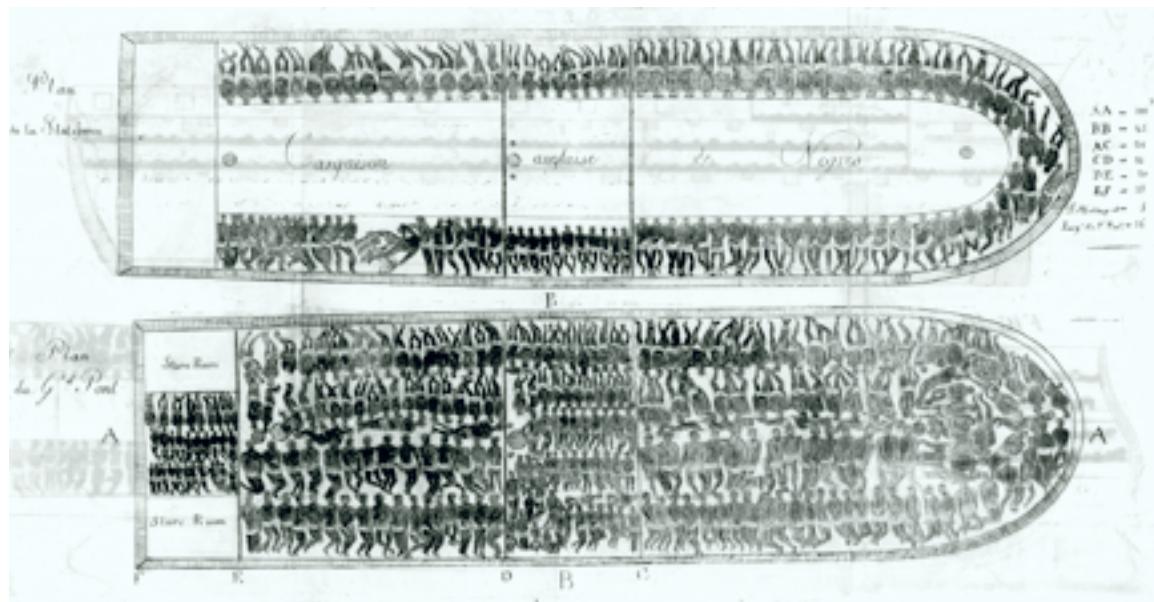


Figure 1.11. Shows the inhumane conditions of packing enslaved Africans in two decks aboard a slave trade ship. Top, Plan of the Platform, shows the deck which held females, arranged around its outer circumference; in the center, the label Cargaison Anglaises de Negres (English Cargo of Negroes). The bottom shows the plan of the main deck (Plan du Grand Pont), where slavers kept males. Note the woman giving birth in the top illustration.

Slaveryimages.org, copy in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

⁴⁴ Lorena S. Walsh, “The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001), 144.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 145.

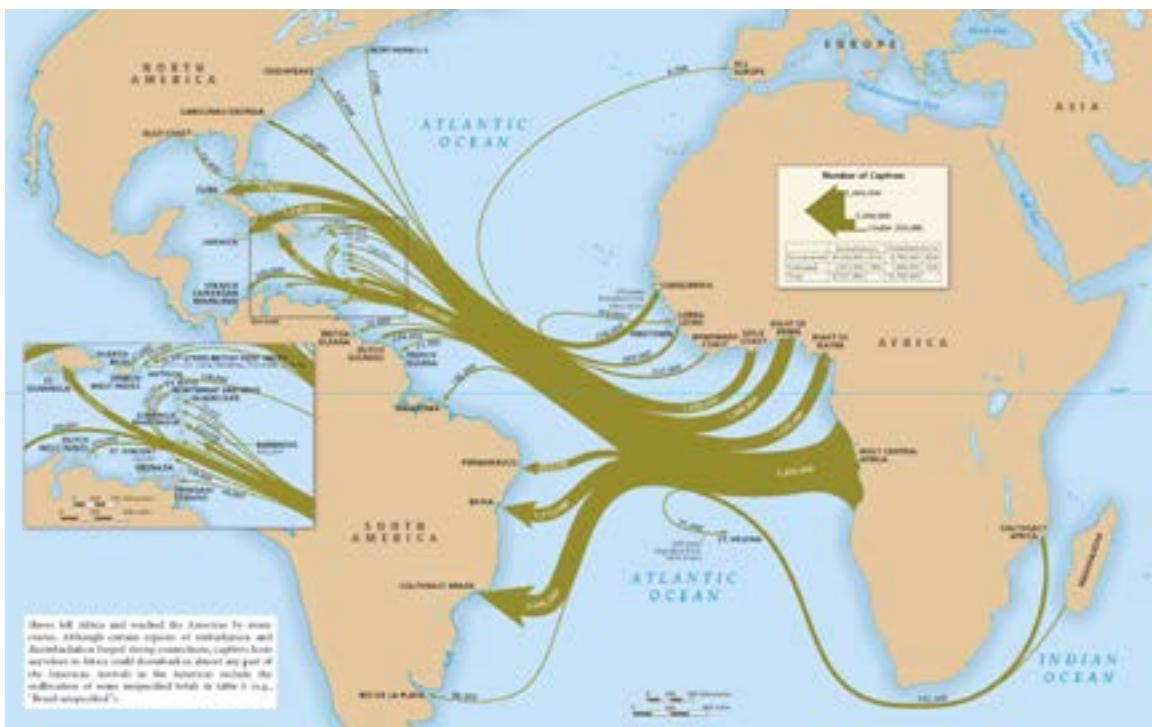


Figure 1.12. Volume and direction of the transatlantic slave trade from all African to all American regions.

Courtesy Yale University Press.

County-level records of sales of newly arrived Africans do not exist. According to Walsh, colonial governments were not concerned with “business transactions between the merchants who financed shipments of slaves, the local agents who sold the slaves, and the planters who purchased them. Colonial governments were interested only in the number of new Africans the ships brought in, so that the appropriate duties could be collected.” Furthermore, Walsh argues, “the merchants who financed the slaving voyages required a report of the number of slaves sold and the prices at which they were sold in order to determine the proceeds of the voyage,” but they did not always require a complete list of buyers.⁴⁶

The few surviving lists of buyers or individual sales records of newly imported African slaves in the Chesapeake region are incomplete, and with only a handful of sale records have been located. Account books for a few slave trading ships, like the *Eadith*, whose account of its 1761 voyage lists the names of buyers of its cargo of Africans, are few

⁴⁶ Correspondence with the author, Jan. 24, 2019

and mostly cover New York, New England, or Virginian traders.⁴⁷ Altogether no more than a dozen such records have been located and none for Dorchester County or the Eastern Shore. One exception includes a record of sales of Africans from the London based ship *Margaret*, which sailed from Bunce Island at the mouth of the Sierra Leone River on the west coast of Africa to Annapolis in the summer of 1718. William Ennalls, a Dorchester County planter, purchased an adult man for £29 on August 25th.⁴⁸

Figure 1.13. Annapolis Port of Entry record showing July 4, 1756 cargo of the Snow Fox with “90 Negroes” from Africa. Maryland State Archives.

⁴⁷ Walsh has catalogued the following known sources, writing, “in addition to the record for the Eadith, [there are references in] James Carroll Account book, there is a record for sales in 1710 in Virginia of the Leopard Galley in the Stephen Loyde Account Book, 1708–1710, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, and an account of, as I recollect, at least three shipments in the 1710s and early 1720s in Virginia in the John Tayloe I and John Tayloe II Accounts and Letters, 1714–1778, Tayloe Family Papers, MSS1T2118, b1, Virginia Historical Society. There are references to other 1720s shipments to Virginia in the John Baylor Ledgers, 1719–1766, Special Collections, University of Virginia (but which, as I recollect, do not list individual purchasers). And David Eltis found records for two sales records for the Othello, a Rhode Island slaver, in the Upper James River Naval District in Virginia in 1769–1771 in the Vernon Papers in the New York Public Library.” Walsh correspondence with the author, January 24, 2019. In August 1756, for instance, the snow Fox (a square-rigged vessel with two masts) arrived in the Port of Annapolis with 90 captured Africans from Sierra Leone. Provincial records show no sales to individual buyers, though the captain, John Easton, paid £135 in customs duties. See Port of Entry Records Books, 1756–1775. Maryland Historical Society. MS. 21. See also Vaughan W. Brown, “Shipping in the Port of Annapolis, 1748–1775,” ed. United States Naval Institute (Annapolis, MD, 1965); and The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>.

⁴⁸ James Carroll, "James Carroll's Day Book," in *The Margaret, 1718*, ed. Georgetown University (Georgetown Slavery Archive: Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, 40062, 1718).

Laws Dwell Maryland 1718			
¶ Contra . . . C			
		\$	£
Aug: 23	By 1 negro woman - sold. Paul Smith.	28 0	00
Sept: 1st	By 2 negro men - sold. Isaac Butterworth. 5d.	00 0	00
	By 1 negro man - sold. John Conaway.	30 0	00
	By 1 negro girl - sold. John Galloway.	26 0	00
	By 1 child abt 3 yr - sold. Datto.	02 0	00
	By 1 negro man - sold. Datto.	30 0	00
Aug: 25	By 2 negro boy - sold. Philip Thomas. 29 10.	09 0	00
	By 1 negro woman girl - sold. James Collier.	25 0	00
26	By 1 Datto boy - sold. Datto.	25 0	00
	By 1 Datto man - sold. Rachell Remond.	80 0	00
	By 1 Datto man - sold. Cha Carroll. Opt.	40 0	00
	By 1 Datto woman - sold. Datto.	28 0	00
	By 1 Datto woman - sold. Anthony Bishop.	28 0	00
Sep: 9	By 1 negro D. boy - sold. Datto.	28 0	00
Aug: 26	By 1 negro man - sold. Eliz. Jones.	30 0	00
	By 1 D. woman girl - sold. Datto.	28 0	00
	By 2 negro men - sold. Joshua Mitchell.	40	00
	By 1 negro man boy - sold. Daniel Robinson.	30 0	00
	By 2 small negro boys & small girl - sold. Tom. & Maria Shorthold.	30 0	00
	By 1 negro man - sold. Thos. Johnson.	30 0	00
	By 1 D. woman girl - sold. William Anderson.	38 0	00
	By 1 negro child boy - sold. Ab. Patten.	08 10	00
	By 1 languishing negro woman - sold. Anna. Avery.	20 0	00
	By 1 negro woman - sold. Datto.	28 0	00
	By 1 negro man - sold. Datto.	28 0	00
	Total amount paid	100	00
		£1 15 00	

Figure 1.14. James Carroll Account Book, 1718, showing sales of enslaved Africans to white buyers. Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, Georgetown University Manuscripts, Maryland Province Archives.

The early demand for enslaved labor was small on the Eastern Shore as compared to western and southern Maryland, and Virginia. Therefore, Walsh explains, slave traders sent their ships to the places where there was higher demand for labor and where the greatest number of wealthy planters prospered, most of whom lived in profitable tobacco growing areas. Fewer wealthy planters lived in Dorchester County, for instance, than they did in Talbot or Western Shore counties.⁴⁹

As the planter class expanded on the Eastern Shore throughout the eighteenth century, slave ships plied their trade everywhere in the Chesapeake, in small and large

⁴⁹ Correspondence with the author, January 24, 2019

ports, rivers, and bays. Customs Houses in Vienna and Oxford attracted a few slavers, but other ports such as Cambridge, Tobaccostick, Church Creek, and other coastal points were attractive options for slave traders looking to sell a few people at a time. Some may have sold enslaved Africans directly to plantation owners on private wharves along the rivers and bays.

Customs office records held at the Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Historical Society confirm that few ships arrived directly from Africa—most arrived via the West Indies. The provincial government recorded the customs duties and taxes paid by ship captains on their cargoes, but not individual sales. Agents for Eastern Shore planters acting as intermediaries most likely purchased several people at once and transported them back to the shore. Bills of sale for enslaved people, typically found in county land records during the colonial period, represent only sales transactions between local buyers, not African slave traders or intermediaries and their clients.⁵⁰ As a result, a crucial step in tracing the identities and cultural origins of enslaved people from Africa to the localities in the Chesapeake lacks the necessary documentation to complete the connections. One limited resource includes “judgment” records found in colonial courts. After 1700, court records reveal a dramatic increase in white slaveholders asking their county courts to adjudge the age of newly purchased Africans. While a rise in the “judgment” records coincides with and underscores the growth in newly arrived enslaved labor in the region and county, it provides a limited view of the genealogical histories for the newly arrived and their African American descendants.⁵¹

The African origins of Harriet Ross Tubman’s family remain unknown. According to her first biographer, Franklin Sanborn, Harriet was “the grand-daughter of a slave imported from Africa, and has not a drop of white blood in her veins.”⁵² In a later interview, another newspaper reporter wrote, “the old mammies to whom she told [her] dreams were wont to nod knowingly and say, ‘I reckon youse one o’ dem ‘Shantees’, chile.’ For they knew the tradition of the unconquerable Ashantee blood, which in a slave made him a thorn in the side of the planter or cane grower whose property he became, so that few of that race were in bondage.”⁵³ It has been generally assumed at least one if not more of Tubman’s grandparents came directly from Africa. Another interviewer later reported that Tubman believed that Rit’s mother, Modesty, had been “brought in a slave ship from

⁵⁰ See *Prerogative Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1634–1777). During the colonial period, Bills of Sale were originally recorded in *Land Records*, and later, after the American Revolution and around 1800, those transactions were often recorded separately in *Chattel Records*.

⁵¹ F. Edward Wright, *Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties, Maryland* (Lewes, Del.: Delmarva Roots, 2001), 16–1.

⁵² Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman, [July 17].” Sanborn would later write that she was “one degree removed from the wolds [sic] of Africa, her grandfather being an imported African of a chieftain family...” Franklin B. Sanborn, “The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as ‘Moses’ or ‘Harriet Tubman’,” in Franklin B. Sanborn Papers (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1913).

⁵³ Frank C. Drake, “The Moses of Her People. Amazing Life Work of Harriet Tubman,” *New York Herald*, Sept. 22, 1907.

Africa,” and that Rit “was the daughter of a white man, an American.” She also claimed that Ben was “a full blooded Negro.”⁵⁴ Modesty is the only person noted in the historical record as being one of Tubman’s grandparents.⁵⁵ Ben Ross’s parentage remains unknown, though there is evidence of possible siblings and other relatives living in the county, both free and enslaved.⁵⁶

While documented slave trade patterns to the Chesapeake during the eighteenth century offer some clues as to Tubman’s African heritage, we can only speculate on the probabilities. Captured as children sometime during the mid-1700s while living on the West African Gold Coast, in the region now known as the Republic of Ghana populated by Asante peoples, Modesty and any one of Tubman’s other African grandparents signify the tragic and violent arrival of first-generation Africans to the Americas. As a loosely defined coalition of small chiefdoms, the Asante defended themselves against British colonial rule far longer than most African states, finally succumbing to defeat in 1896. They failed in protecting themselves from capture and enslavement, however. Years of conflict between the Asante and their neighbors offered a steady supply of Akan, Fante, Asante, and other Gold Coast captives to New World markets.⁵⁷ Most of these captives belonged to a variety of common “Akan linguistic subgroups.”⁵⁸ Though “prone to revolt,” the Asante were highly valued by slaveholders in Maryland and Virginia because of their strong physical ability and flexibility in performing a variety of tasks.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ann Fitzhugh Miller, “Harriet Tubman,” *American Review*, August 1912, p. 420. Miller is the granddaughter of Gerrit Smith, anti-slavery activist, Underground Railroad stationmaster, John Brown supporter, and a friend of Tubman’s from Peterboro, New York. There is no other documentation suggesting that Rit’s father was a white man. The identity of the white man remains unknown; Atthow Pattison seems a logical choice, or it could have been a man named Green; however, this is indirect contrast to Sanborn’s much earlier assertion that Tubman “has not a drop of white blood in her veins.” See Franklin Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17],” *The Commonwealth*, July 17, 1863.

⁵⁵ Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, “Thompson Deposition,” in *Equity Papers 249*. (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1853). Interestingly, the name Modesty is very uncommon on the Eastern Shore, either as a name for white or black women. The name Modesty here is dissimilar from the much more common “Modeste” found throughout Louisiana as a name for slaves and French white women alike. Puritan records in New England show the name Modesty more frequently during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Dorchester County census records, manumission records, or chattel records from 1790 to 1860 reveal only one other “Modesty,” an enslaved woman. See “Pattison, Gourney Crow, to William Henson,” in *Dorchester County Chattel Records* (Cambridge, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1829).

⁵⁶ March Ross, an enslaved man, and possibly Simon Ross, a free man.

⁵⁷ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks. The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 109–11.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 105.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 107.



Figure 1.15. Map of Western Africa highlighting the coastal region encompassing “Ashantee” strongholds.
T. Edward Bowditch. 1819. University of Pittsburgh Library.

A highly spiritual culture that believed in the sacredness of land and water, Asante society was rooted in the power of great female ancestors and noted for the role women engaged as advisors and leaders in the community. Asante ancestresses “came from either the sky or the earth to the forests,” enabling the transition of the Asante people from hunter-gatherers living in the forests to farmers, living in established villages and towns throughout the region. The Asante became adept at clearing densely forested land for small farms, establishing specific timetables for alternating fallow and production, and they were keenly aware of the need to protect the newly cleared land from the disastrous effects of soil erosion, particularly near rivers and streams. European observers noted the well-ordered and fenced farms of the Asante producing abundant crops of yams, corn, nuts,

cassava, and plantains. These skills made the Asante attractive labor on the Eastern Shore.⁶⁰ The Asante developed social and cultural imperatives that placed a high value on “fruitfulness, increase, maximization, [and] abundance.” New World planters may have very well detected this “principle of accumulation” among the Akan.⁶¹



Figure 1.16. A street scene in Asante city/village. T. Edward Bowditch. 1819. University of Pittsburgh Library.

Like other West and West Central African peoples, the Asante believed in a variety of deities linked to both the natural and spiritual worlds. The most powerful were associated with bodies of water, but the land, or mother earth, was the link between the dead and the living, through which all Asante individual and communal values rest. Their buried ancestors continued to live in a parallel world and sought out in times of need.⁶²

These beliefs were common to the West African region, and such cultural traditions may have persisted in the Chesapeake. Enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast “brought an acute understanding of the role and significance of land with them to the New World. They were among those who saw the need for a connection both tangible and spiritual.”⁶³ Historians long believed that cultural retention was nearly impossible due to significant cultural mixing among Africans during the Middle Passage, leaving little opportunity for maintaining an ethnic or cultural identity once established on the plantation. Twenty-first-century studies reveal, however, “less random mixing of African groups to the Chesapeake

⁶⁰ Ivor Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of the Asante*. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993), 41–72. See also, Gomez, *Exchanging*, 105–13. Gomez expands upon this scholarship, using T. C. McCaskie’s work on the Asante. See T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante Society* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁶¹ Gomez, *Exchanging*, 110.

⁶² Gomez, *Exchanging*, 112.

⁶³ Ibid., 113.

than has been commonly supposed,”⁶⁴ offering opportunity for ethnically similar peoples to create communities in the New World.⁶⁵ London traders owned the majority of ships bringing captured and enslaved people from Africa to Maryland, and of those, the most came from the Gold Coast and Upper Guinea.⁶⁶ This may have worked well for slaveholders. Planters may have wanted slaves with similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds to ensure more congenial work groups, and ease the transition for frightened and angry newly enslaved people.⁶⁷ Once a slaver arrived in the Chesapeake and began selling captive Africans to buyers from the Eastern Shore, it is likely purchasers from the same districts or from closely related families acquired bonds people at the same time, thus increasing the possibility that the enslaved had culturally similar peoples nearby, if not on the same plantation.

While a variety of African cultural practices persisted on the Eastern Shore for one or more generations, Africans struggled in the face of European cultural intrusion and conversion mandates from Christian denominations in the New World. Efforts to Christianize people of African descent challenged African cultural norms, driving practitioners to observe and perform rituals and traditions in secret. Archaeological digs have uncovered African bundles—power and spirit objects commonly found throughout the Atlantic world wherever Africans lived—purposely buried in many eighteenth-century sites in Maryland, for instance, and other artifacts discovered in former slave quarters and spaces where enslaved people lived and worked expands on this pattern.⁶⁸ At Wye Plantation in nearby Talbot county archaeologists from the University of Maryland uncovered several spirit charms and objects buried in the foundation of the plantation’s eighteenth-century greenhouse.⁶⁹ Though few traditions survived completely unaltered and intact into the nineteenth century, they provided a connection and source of strength for captive Africans and their descendants well into the antebellum period. Forced assimilation over time effectively destroyed or reshaped most cultural and religious traditions, though archaeological evidence reveals the use of European manufactured and influenced items—pottery, coins, buttons, medals of Christian saints, other metal work, pipes, and parts of dolls, for instance—refashioned into “African-Chesapeake religious expression,”

⁶⁴ Walsh, “The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications,” 145.

⁶⁵ Eltis, *Slave Trade*. “Debate centers on such issues as the composition of the peoples captured in the slave trade, the degree of random or concentrated redistribution in the Americas, the accuracy of the ethnic labels employed by slave traders and New World planters, and whether enslaved Africans” were cognizant of cultural similarities or ethnic bonds. See Walsh, “Chesapeake.” 140–42.

⁶⁶ Walsh, “Chesapeake,” 148.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 152; Archives of Maryland Online, “Papers Relating to Affairs in Maryland, 1701–1714: An Account of Negroes Imported into Maryland,” in *Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1732–1753* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1707), 257.

⁶⁸ For a brief sampling see, “The Magic and Mystery of Maryland Archeology,” in *Maryland Archeology Month Booklet April 2019*, ed. Sara Rivers Cofield (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2019).

⁶⁹ University of Maryland, “Archaeologists Find Hidden African Side to Noted 1780s Md. Building,” EurekaAlert! (2011), https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-02/uom-afh020811.php.

during which “the processes of creolization… led to the development of a religious expression which… endowed non-African forms and artifacts with new spiritual meanings.”⁷⁰

The process of acculturation and maturing of intergenerational African, African American, and European American people reflects not only an increasingly diverse human landscape, but also an evolving environment that blended cultural, physical, political, and social systems that fed a flourishing and unique American experience, a new American society in what Michal Sobel describes as a “… world they made together.”⁷¹

Summary

The rise of chattel slavery in the Chesapeake, with specific focus on the Eastern Shore and Dorchester County during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, reveals a slow process of labor transformation from predominately white indentured servitude to a lifetime and generational system based on the enslavement of Africans and their American-born descendants. White settlers slowly acquired large and small properties along the Eastern Shore and Choptank region during the last half of the seventeenth century through provincial land grants. By the end of the century, Dorchester’s county boundaries had been set and Europeans secured their footing further by acquiring thousands of acres of land from Indigenous people. With white indentured labor, and then, enslaved labor, Europeans began building a new society. Early arrivals of captive Africans—Ira Berlin’s “charter generations”—in conjunction with Europeans, informed and shaped the contours of the physical, cultural, and human landscapes in the New World. The next generation of Africans (American born and African born), the “plantation generation,” would experience a more controlled environment, increasing violence, degradation, and ill treatment.⁷²

⁷⁰ Laurie A. Wilkie, “Secret and Sacred: Contextualizing the Artifacts of African-American Magic and Religion,” *Historical Archaeology* 31, no. 4 (1997). See also, Savin Gavin, “How Ezekiel’s Wheel Helped Turn African Americans into Christians: Unique Evidence Discovered by Umd Archaeologists,” *UMD Right Now* (2016), <https://umdrightrightnow.umd.edu/news/how-ezekiel%E2%80%99s-wheel-helped-turn-african-americans-christians-unique-evidence-discovered-umd>.

⁷¹ Michel Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁷² Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 23–49.

CHAPTER 2

1720–1775

Introduction

In this chapter, we discuss the development of Colonial Maryland, prospering similarly to other colonies during this century, benefitting from economic expansion and rising prices, and weathering economic downturns, too. Abundant land and labor resources fueled the rapid growth of Eastern Shore communities, businesses, small farms and larger plantations during the eighteenth century. Farming, logging, fishing, commercial trade, shipbuilding, and manufacturing nourished the growth of white wealth and community building, while solidifying and expanding race-based chattel slavery—the beginning of what Ira Berlin calls the “Plantation Generations” of enslaved Africans and their descendants in North American colonies. Acquisition of enslaved people from Africa escalated dramatically during this period, quickly eclipsing the simultaneously falling numbers of imported white indentured servants and convicts from Great Britain. The plantation system relied on forced and unfree labor, which involved incredible violence and brutality to sustain it. Laws codifying North American slavery emerge during this period, setting a course for constant struggle, challenge, negotiation, and resistance. The cultural identities and skills of first-generation Africans, newly arrived Europeans, and Indigenous peoples set the stage for a blended environment that was truly a “new” world.

As Native communities and their power dwindled during the first half of the eighteenth century, European settlers negotiated access and then outright purchase of nearly all the Indian lands—some of the most fertile in the region—including those of the Choptanks, Nanticokes, Pocomokes, and Manokins. Europeans and their American-born descendants refined and redefined British-style government, social relations, religious institutions, and economies to suit the unique environment, needs, and aspirations of the settlers here. Americans further strengthened and refined laws codifying North American slavery during this period, setting a course for constant struggle, challenge, negotiation, and resistance between the enslaved and their enslavers for generations to come. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the expanding plantation system relied heavily on enslaved labor, which required incredible violence and

brutality to sustain it. In response to captivity and inhumane treatment, enslaved people engaged in a variety of methods of resistance, including work slow-downs and stoppages, vandalism, and escape. Negotiation and compromise sometimes helped create some private spaces where the enslaved reserved opportunities for cultural and spiritual practices to sustain their physical, familial, and community identities and relationships.¹

By the 1740s, enslaved Africans had become the dominant labor resource for the expanding agricultural and timber economy of the Chesapeake. Slave imports rose steadily in Maryland between 1700 and 1770s, from about 2,500 enslaved people during the first decade of the 18th century to over 5,300 disembarking during the ten years prior to the Revolution.² With trading interruptions during the war, followed by a ban on imports of African-born enslaved people in 1783, Maryland relied more on intra-regional trading, smuggling, and the natural growth of the enslaved community to increase its labor force. African cultural practices likely persisted: African names such as Ibo, Mingo, Winnebar, Sinta, Suke, and Binah are evident in early 19th century census and court records, and physical descriptions in manumission records and runaway advertisements contain accounts of identifying marks, including ritual scarring and body piercings, dental filing, and difficulty speaking the English language. As late as the 1830s and 1840s, names such as Winnebar, Sinta, and Mingo, persist.³ One Eastern Shore man recalled that his grandfather owned an enslaved African woman by the name of Suck, and that his grandfather had

¹ There is a significant body of work on the interior lives of the enslaved, and the patterns of survival and relationship management they engaged in with enslavers and communities around them. By no means complete, here is a sampling: Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1999). Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Sobel, *World They Made Together*; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*; Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris, *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2018); John W. Blassingame, ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House There Are Many Mansions. Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1985); Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006). Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); John Hope Franklin, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, ed. Loren Schweninger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Thavolia Glymph, "Fighting Slavery on Slaveholders' Terrain," *OAH Magazine of History* 23, no. 2 (2009); *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gomez, *Exchanging*; David Barry and Hine Gaspar, Darlene Clark, eds., *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, Blacks in the Diaspora (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986); Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (2012).

² Walsh, "Chesapeake," 168–69

³ See Dorchester County, "Certificates of Freedom," in Dorchester County Circuit Court Records (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1806–1864), and U.S. Federal Census 1800–1840.

purchased her from a “slave ship which had come up the Chesapeake Bay.” When he was a young boy, Suck told him that she had been a member of an African nation that “was defeated in battle with another tribe and numbers of her people were captured” and sold to slave traders plying the African coast.⁴

Tracing the histories of Harriet Tubman’s ancestors from Africa has proved daunting. Her family story, within the broader story of enslavement of Africans on the Eastern Shore and the creation of their families and communities, is dependent upon surviving records for several white families who settled in the region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For Tubman’s family, we can begin in 1707, when Anthony Thompson, the patriarch of the Thompson family in Dorchester County and whose descendants would enslave Harriet Tubman’s father, died.⁵ An immigrant servant who arrived in the region sometime before 1670, Thompson worked off his indenture, and by the early 1680s began acquiring property in the western part of the county. By the late 1680s, he owned more than five hundred acres. His homeplace and residence appears to have been fifty acres he acquired in 1681 called “White Haven” on Church Creek. From there, Thompson could access navigable water for transportation and shipment of crops, timber, and fish. The rest of his properties included contiguous parcels situated along the northside of the northwest branch of the Blackwater River and Thompson’s Creek in an area known as Peter’s Neck.⁶ Here, too, Thompson could access passable waters to ship and receive goods. His land at Peter’s Neck would eventually form the foundation of a much larger, thousand acres plantation on which four generations of Thompsons would prosper, and where Harriet Tubman would be born more than a hundred years later.

⁴ Joseph B. Seth, *Recollections of a Long Life on the Eastern Shore*, ed. Mary W. Seth (Easton, MD: Press of the Star-Democrat, 1926), 31. Seth had erroneously construed that Suck was not a real name. “She could give no name, except a sound, like suck, so she was known as ‘Suck’ all her days.” Seth may not have recognized the woman’s African name due to his unfamiliarity with her specific African language.

⁵ *Prerogative Court Records*. Wills; Anthony Thompson, Dorchester County, Liber 12, folio 178–80; Inventories & Accounts: Anthony Thompson, 1711, Dorchester County, Liber 28, folio 315, Liber 32B, folio 65 and 222, and Liber 33A, folio 84.

⁶ Mowbray, *Early Settlers*, 54, 115, 117, 118. During the eighteenth century, Anthony Thompson’s heirs would sell off portions of “White Haven” for the establishment of the town of Church Creek. Originally called Dorchester Town, then White Haven, the town was renamed, presumably, for Old Trinity Church, first erected sometime around the turn of the eighteenth century in the newly established village. See also, Mowbray, *First Dorchester Families*, 156; and Elias Jones, *The History of Dorchester County, Maryland* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company Press, 1902), 108–14.



Figure 2.1. Dorchester County cropped from larger map. “Clarke Cr.” is Church Creek, where Anthony Thompson purchased his White Haven land in 1681. “Stephen’s Cr.” was later renamed Parson’s Creek. Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

By the time Thompson died, the county had firmly established a few sustainable towns and villages, roads, ferries, taverns, houses of worship, wharves, and viable commercial activities that fed the wealth and prosperity of European immigrants and their American born descendants. An active court system expanded to handle a wide range of growing criminal, social, and civil cases, including felonies like murder, assault, theft, and a remarkable number of “fornication” and “bastardy” cases, where women who bore children out of wedlock suffered financial consequences and physical punishment—usually whipping—far more often than the men who fathered their children.

The courts also heard petitions to settle real estate boundary disputes, relief from taxes, requests for allowances to support the sick, disabled, aged, and indigent, and to extend the terms of service of indentured servants who had run away or refused to work. The courts also managed the building and maintenance of roads and bridges, and licensed

taverns, inns, and ferry operators. They fined individuals for swearing and defaming a neighbor, public intoxication, and for trespassing on the community lands of local indigenous people. The courts also played an important role in providing for orphaned children, judging the quality of manufactured linen, paying bounties for the heads of wolves—a threat to livestock—and collecting taxes.⁷

County clerks were responsible for enumerating the number of inhabitants in the county. From the late 1690s to 1712, Maryland authorities recorded five separate censuses and sent them to England. The censuses enabled the British government to calculate provincial taxes due from each county. Only white men and free and enslaved black men and women were taxable. The first censuses included the names of every man, woman, and child, but the British government complained that the records were too “voluminous,” and—tragically for historians and genealogists—that they had “no need of the names of every child and slave.” After destroying those vital records, and from that point forward, only abstracted census returns with aggregate population figures satisfied England.⁸ Those abstracted censuses documented mostly taxable residents—white men and black men and women over sixteen years of age, but later censuses listed more categories. In 1704, estimates gleaned from Dorchester County’s census reveal 305 heads of households (“masters” of families and landowners), 512 free and indentured women, 814 free children, 418 free and indentured men (presumably landless), 64 indentured children, and 279 enslaved people for a total population of about 2392.⁹ By 1707, Dorchester’s population had grown a dramatic 31 percent to 3148, including an increase in enslaved people to 367. Five years later, the county witnessed a much slower 9 percent growth in total population to 3475, and a 5 percent increase in enslaved people to 387.¹⁰ Growth in Dorchester County lagged its neighbors to the north and across the bay. During the same time-period—1704 to 1712—Maryland’s total population expanded 20 percent, from a little more than 36,000 to nearly 46,000, with a dramatic 50 percent increase in enslaved people, from 5,600 enslaved people to 8,400 respectively.¹¹

⁷ See Wright, *Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties, Maryland*, 1–61.

⁸ Russell R. Menard, “Five Maryland Censuses, 1700 to 1712: A Note on the Quality of the Quantities,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1980), 617.

⁹ Ibid., 620. Regrettably, the destruction of the full census records in England prevents any further understanding of individual, family, indentured and enslaved relationships.

¹⁰ Ibid., 624–25. Enslaved people represented 12% of Dorchester’s total population in 1704 and 1712.

¹¹ Ibid., 620, 625. Enslaved people made up 16% of the total Maryland population in 1704, and 18% in 1712.

Number of Inhabitants in Maryland.

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Mr. T. B. A. N.
Hersewith find you a sufficient Account of the Number of Inhabitants, white and black, born and free, inhabiting those in the Province of Maryland, in the Year 1755. Many Scams, and difficulties, political and commercial, may be drawn from these Tables; but I shall now give you, for one of another Kind, It hath been always allowed that more than two thirds of all the Negroes in this Colony; were slaves, white and black, bond and free, having arrived in this Colony; long

before the year 1700. Many Scams, and difficulties, political and commercial, may be drawn from these Tables; but I shall now give you, for one of another Kind, It hath been always allowed that more than two thirds of all the Negroes in this Colony; were slaves, white and black, bond and free, having arrived in this Colony; long

An Account of the Number of Souls in the Province of MARYLAND, in the Year 1755.

Persons under fifteen Years of Age.

Persons not taxable.

Taxable Persons sixteen Years of Age.

Name of the County.	White.		Mulatto.		Black.		White.		Mol. Black		White.		Servants hired, or concurred.		Malatto.		Black.	
	Free.	Servants.	Free.	Slaves.	Free.	Slaves.	Free.	Slaves.	Mol. Black	Path labour, or apprentices.	Free.	Slaves.	Servants hired, or concurred.	Free.	Slaves.	Free.	Slaves.	
Baltimore	8639	595	472	36	71	25	16	3	1149	313	4	58	267	400	87	142	4	47
Anne Arundel	3534	438	164	16	23	11	8	4	847	126	3	64	539	93	51	45	6	47
Calvert	619	124	34	8	3	5	4	1	556	519	3	39	619	68	15	7	39	80
Prince George	1545	255	73	87	31	37	43	3	1275	151	3	44	1630	55	37	8	88	1840
Fredrick	4775	216	94	13	4	10	24	45	116	223	1	45	314	13	165	4	13	3140
Charles	1929	173	303	60	36	48	33	1	1190	950	4	53	1777	105	78	17	5	1759
S. J. Maryland	846	194	49	16	17	3	9	16	5	848	761	3	63	186	168	13	16	146
Hanover	3763	45	4	31	22	3	7	1	401	359	1	57	1904	1	10	7	1	104
Somerset	3243	31	1	23	16	15	15	4	631	571	8	61	1495	37	1	37	1333	1333
Dorchester	1950	472	7	7	2	9	22	7	649	514	3	44	1097	126	8	8	44	3477
St. Mary's	1223	294	35	24	18	22	63	12	3	697	595	2	34	1840	160	4	36	1341
Queen Anne's	1745	184	187	18	30	33	31	8	61	641	572	3	31	1846	73	3	32	2037
Anne Arundel	3454	365	82	8	83	7	9	10	5	69	523	3	34	1443	74	6	35	1527
Child	3745	190	47	3	12	140	86	2	236	216	3	31	1136	23	8	3	13	1509
Total	46	33386	3570	14571	2071	147433	1392	11969	103448	8913	15637	123531	13241386	995936637	138495931	138495931	138495931	138495931

Figure 2.2. Population free, enslaved and indentured people in Maryland Counties, 1755.

Tobacco remained an important commercial crop on the Eastern Shore until the mid-eighteenth century, when more fertile soils to the west and south producing better quality tobacco captured higher prices and larger shares of the market. Eastern Shore farmers readily transitioned to cultivating corn and grains, and raising cattle, hogs, and sheep to meet rising demand from Europe and the Caribbean for meat, wool, hides, and flours made from these staples.¹² A growing artisan class emerged, too, including blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters, millers, shoe and boot makers, weavers, and more.¹³ While timber harvesting employed a moderate number of enslaved people year-round in Dorchester County and the Choptank region well into the mid-nineteenth century, grain production did not require the perennial labor force of tobacco manufacturing.¹⁴ Seasonal crops supplemented by raising animals, slaughtering, sheering, tanning, and other associated manufacturing offered additional income but also made use of sometimes idle labor, and in some cases increased labor needs. On the Eastern Shore, indentured servant labor dwindled throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, and unlike the Western Shore of Maryland, convict labor was virtually nonexistent.¹⁵ The use of enslaved labor, however, during the first few decades of the eighteenth century, only slowly replaced indentured servants for the Eastern Shore's entrepreneurial and financially secure planters and business people.

Compared to limited slave ownership in the seventeenth century, the general increase in owned labor during the 18th century transformed work in the field and house. As planters became more established and economically secure, their homes increased in size, and separate quarters for the enslaved became more common. European Americans disregarded an African's prior social or political rank, special skill or trade in their African community, forcing the newly enslaved to learn they were of the lowest rank on the plantation and everywhere in white-dominated spaces. Work regimens for enslaved people became more rigid, with longer days and conditions harsher. Slaveholders hired overseers to exact discipline and increase production. Planters prospered while enslaved people suffered.¹⁶

¹² Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 22.

¹³ Ibid., 80–81.

¹⁴ T. Stephen Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2007), 12–13.

¹⁵ In Dorchester County, for instance, in 1755, only 9 indentured convicts labored for planters, while in Baltimore nearly 500 were bound to masters. Sylvanus Urban, "An Account of the Number of Souls in the Province of Maryland, in the Year 1755," *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1, 1764.

¹⁶ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 62–64.



Figure 2.3. Wealthy merchants at leisure while enslaved workers labored around them. Map reproduction courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

Stripped of their African names, slaveholders began the harsh process of assault on the physical and cultural identities of their captive laborers.¹⁷ Physical punishments became the norm rather than the exception. Branding with the enslaver’s initials or some other identifiable mark—like those used for branding cattle—was not out of the ordinary. Whips, chains, canes, and hot irons scarred the bodies of enslaved people who did not work hard enough, long enough, or competently enough to suit the enslaver or overseer. Enslavers punished the enslaved for perceived insolence or resistance. Restrictions on access to food, socializing, and appropriate clothing were common. Cropped ears, dismembered fingers and toes, and tongues seared with hot metal could be the punishment for running away or stealing food, clothing, or money.¹⁸ Enslavers could kill their enslaved people and suffer no consequences; laws passed during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries exempted enslavers or overseers from charges of felonies like murder if the enslaved person was crippled or died during “correction.”¹⁹

White domination over enslaved people required constant attention and the cooperation of non-slaveholding whites, who often constituted the ranks of slave patrols and privately paid slave hunters. Punishments for harboring runaways could be harsh—fines, whippings, and jail time served as ample deterrents.²⁰ To control the movement—and escape—of enslaved and indentured free people of color, passes were required if they traveled beyond their home county.²¹ White people who owned enslaved labor sat atop the

¹⁷ Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 325–26.

¹⁸ Billy G. and Richard Wojtowicz Smith, Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728–1790 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 1–14. See also, Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 10–12.

¹⁹ Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave Breeding Industry* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2016), 135.

²⁰ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 60–65.

²¹ Laws of Maryland at Large, ed. Thomas Bacon (Annapolis, MD: Jonas Green, 1766), 263.

Chesapeake social and economic hierarchy, with nonslaveholding and landless whites vying for entry to society's elite circles, feeding a profoundly unequal and paternalistic culture reminiscent of the English society they left behind in Britain.²²

Imported captive Africans' health deteriorated the most. Weakened from the transatlantic voyage endured in horrific conditions and vulnerable to new world diseases they carried no immunity for, Africans died at much higher rates than native born African Americans. Birth rates among surviving Africans remained low, and infant mortality was high among both African Americans and Africans.²³ During the first third of the eighteenth century, the sex ratio of Africans imported to the Chesapeake hovered around two men for every woman. Children comprised less than twenty percent, with boys outnumbering girls two to one.²⁴ This imbalance made it difficult for newly arrived and established Africans to create and maintain families. Additionally, one in four imported Africans died within a year of arrival in the Chesapeake.²⁵

Overall, however, the import and natural increase of enslaved Africans continued to expand throughout the Chesapeake. By 1755, Maryland's enslaved population grew to 44,540, including 2,132 bi-racial or mixed-race people.²⁶ The state's free mixed-race population also increased, numbering 1,553, nearly five times the number of "free blacks," a specific category presumably indicating African-born or the issue of African parents, who had most likely been manumitted.²⁷

The incidents of biracial children borne by white women and enslaved and free African men outside of marriage rose during the last part of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth. Initially, marriage between white women and enslaved men was legal, but in 1664 Maryland made such unions illegal and forced the women and their children into slavery for life. By the end of the 1600s, those marriages were legal again and the women and children released from slavery but indentured until adulthood.²⁸ Punishment for consensual nonmarital relationships continued; contracts of already-indentured women were extended, while free women endured newly imposed seven-year indenture contracts, whippings, and fines, and courts sold their children into indentured servitude until at least aged sixteen and often up to thirty-one years old, when they would be set free.²⁹ These penalties were generally harsher for indentured or free women of color

²² Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*. 62–63.

²³ Ibid., 57.

²⁴ Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800*. 320–21. See also Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 57.

²⁵ Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800*.

²⁶ Urban, "An Account of the Number of Souls in the Province of Maryland, in the Year 1755."; Robert V. Wells, *Population of the British Colonies in America before 1776: A Survey of Census Data* (Princeton University Press, 1975), 162–63. The term "Mulatto," used extensively in Urban's article to describe biracial and mixed-race people, is a derogatory term and no longer in common use.

²⁷ Urban, "An Account of the Number of Souls in the Province of Maryland, in the Year 1755."

²⁸ Heinegg, *Free African Americans of Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810*, 1.

²⁹ See Wright, *Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties, Maryland*.

than those for white women who bore children from consensual sexual affairs with white men. White men sometimes paid a fine in cash or tobacco, while free black men always paid a fee, though neither were subjected to physical reprimand, nor forced into indentures.³⁰ In 1702, the estate inventory of Ann Hunt, a deceased Dorchester County woman, listed 3 mixed race indentured servant children of unknown parentage, likely a white woman and an African man. Their future term-limited labor had value and became part of the distribution of her assets to her minor son and heir, Thomas.³¹ In December 1744, Grace Mills, a “spinster,” bore a mixed-race child after having an affair with an enslaved man. The judges ordered her indentured for seven years to Dorchester County to serve in whatever capacity the county government determined, while a local man, Andrew Russel, purchased the child’s indenture for 350 pounds of tobacco.³²

Biracial children born to enslaved women fathered by their white enslavers or other white men in the community—a far more common occurrence and more likely the result of rape—also escalated. Their children became slaves for life, following the status of their mothers and not of their fathers, while their enslavers escaped criminal charges or fines and who ultimately benefitted from the children’s future and life-long labor.³³ In Dorchester County by 1755, more than 150 enslaved mixed-race people represented about 5 percent of all enslaved inhabitants, almost three times the free mixed-race population. By mid-century, the county’s total population had grown substantially to 11,753, including 2,635 enslaved people, nearly a quarter of the county’s residents and up from 11 percent fifty years earlier.³⁴ Manumissions of enslaved Africans and the children of free Africans constituted twenty additional free people of color.³⁵

³⁰ In November 1690, Robert Buchoxy, a free black, paid 800 pounds of tobacco and an unknown amount of money for the support of two children he fathered with two different indentured white women, one of whom received 25 lashes, while John Buely, a white man, paid nothing for fathering a child with Honnorah Pendergrass, who received 20 lashes as punishment. See *ibid.*, 3–5; and Heinegg, “Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810.”

³¹ “Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810.” See also Volume 23 in Maryland Prerogative Court Inventories, <http://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/viewer.aspx?page=probate>

³² Wright, *Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne’s and Talbot Counties, Maryland*, 55. See also, Monica C. Witkowsky, *Women at Law in Early Colonial Maryland* (2012).

³³ For a discussion of the treatment and abuse of enslaved women, and attitudes regarding their labor and childbearing potential, see Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*; and, Gaspar, *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*; and Brenda E. Stevenson, “Introduction: Women, Slavery, and the Atlantic World,” *Journal of African American History* 98, no. 1 (2013); “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South,” *Journal of African American History* 98, no. 1 (2013). Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800*, 386.

³⁴ Urban, “An Account of the Number of Souls in the Province of Maryland, in the Year 1755.”; Menard, “Five Maryland Censuses, 1700 to 1712: A Note on the Quality of the Quantities.” The census listed seventy-eight free people of color—less than 1% of the population—including the fifty-eight who identified as mixed-race. And twenty as “black.”

³⁵ See Maryland State Archives Land Records for manumissions in Dorchester County before 1800. Court, “Land Records.”

In 1752, the Maryland Assembly outlawed manumission by will, forcing enslavers to predetermine and formally declare their intention to liberate their enslaved people in deeds recorded in the province's county land records, even when those manumissions would not officially take place for decades in the future. As legal instruments, those manumissions by deed were as legally binding as prior manumissions affirmed in wills. In the same legislation, however, lawmakers also made it illegal to manumit "disabled and superannuated Slaves," requiring "Master, Mistress, or Owner of such Slave or Slaves" to "Support and Maintain such Slave or Slaves, during the natural Life or Lives of such Slave or Slaves, in Food and Cloathing fitting and needful for such Slave or Slaves, whereby he, she, or they may not become a Burthen to others, or Perish through Want, to the great Scandal of Christian Society."³⁶

Methodism in Maryland initially supported manumission, while Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers had long questioned the morality of slavery. Quakers found adherents during the 1650s in the Chesapeake, and though seriously persecuted for decades, the Christian sect finally secured a foothold in Maryland, and Quaker meetings flourished on the Eastern Shore.³⁷ The Third Haven Meeting in Easton, Talbot County, is one of the oldest in America. A few converts settled in Dorchester by the 1670s, though by the mid-eighteenth century, Dorchester Quakers had dwindled so much that they no longer had their own meeting place.³⁸ Early manumissions of enslaved persons by Eastern Shore Quakers begin to appear in the late 1680s. Some early Quakers became anti-slavery activists, but their influence remained muted until the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1760, nearby Talbot County Quakers determined that "Friends should not in any way encourage the importation of negroes, by buying or selling them." John Woolman, a Quaker leader from New Jersey, advocated the end of slavery after a visit to the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia in 1762. Four years later, he returned to Maryland and testified to the evils of slavery, that it was a "cancerous disease, eating at the moral and spiritual life" of Quakers. Manumissions by Third Haven members and other meetings along the Shore began in earnest.³⁹ In 1760, Baltimore Quakers rejected the slave trade, and by 1773, certain Maryland Quaker Meetings encouraged manumission, instituting a record keeping practice for that purpose.⁴⁰

Though some Methodist missionaries believed slavery was immoral, most would wait until after the American Revolution to argue for its abolition. Freeborn Garrettson, a famous itinerant Methodist preacher responsible for converting thousands of individuals on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Delaware, was once a slaveholder. His religious

³⁶ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 55. See also, Laws of Maryland at Large, 527.

³⁷ Kenneth Carroll, *Quakerism on the Eastern Shore* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1970), 29–30.

³⁸ Ibid., 93, 98–105.

³⁹ Ibid., 130–33.

⁴⁰ James Martin Wright, ed. *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, vol. 97, No. 3, Studies in History, Economics and Public Law (New York, NY: Columbia University, 1921), 46–47.

awakening began in 1775 with a realization of the “impropriety of holding slaves.” Fully aware of the growing rhetoric fomenting revolution and demanding freedom from British control, Garrettson further declared, “My heart has bled... for slaveholders, especially those who make a profession of religion, for I believe it to be a crying sin, [for] freedom is the natural right of all mankind.”⁴¹ One of Methodism’s founders, John Wesley, most likely influenced Garretson through his widely read denouement of slavery, published in his 1774 treatise “Thoughts upon Slavery.”⁴²

On the eve of the American Revolution, British American Methodist ministers were hesitant to speak out against slavery. Wesley, long disturbed by the physical mistreatment and spiritual well-being of enslaved people, and the lack of moral authority to keep them subjugated, wrote that slavery was “the vilest.” No “human law can deprive” human beings “of that right which he derives from the law of nature,” Wesley wrote. “Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle towards men. And see that you invariably do unto everyone, as you would he should do unto *you*.”⁴³ Despite Wesley’s beliefs, most Methodist ministers remained silent on the issue.⁴⁴ Though Garretson did speak out, he apparently had little sway over his family. Only after inheriting several enslaved people—James in 1783, and Jack and George in 1798—from family members could Garretson successfully manumit them.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid., 47.

⁴² John Wesley, *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (London: Joseph Crukshank, 1774; repr., 1778).

⁴³ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁴ Sylvia and Betty Wood Frey, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill: Univrsoty of North Carolina Press, 1998), 111–12.

⁴⁵ Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, 47. See also Anne Arundel County Court, “Land Records,” in *Anne Arundel County Court Records* (Annapolis: Maryland State Archives, 1653–1851). Liber JLG E folio 369–70; Liber NH 9 folio 142–43

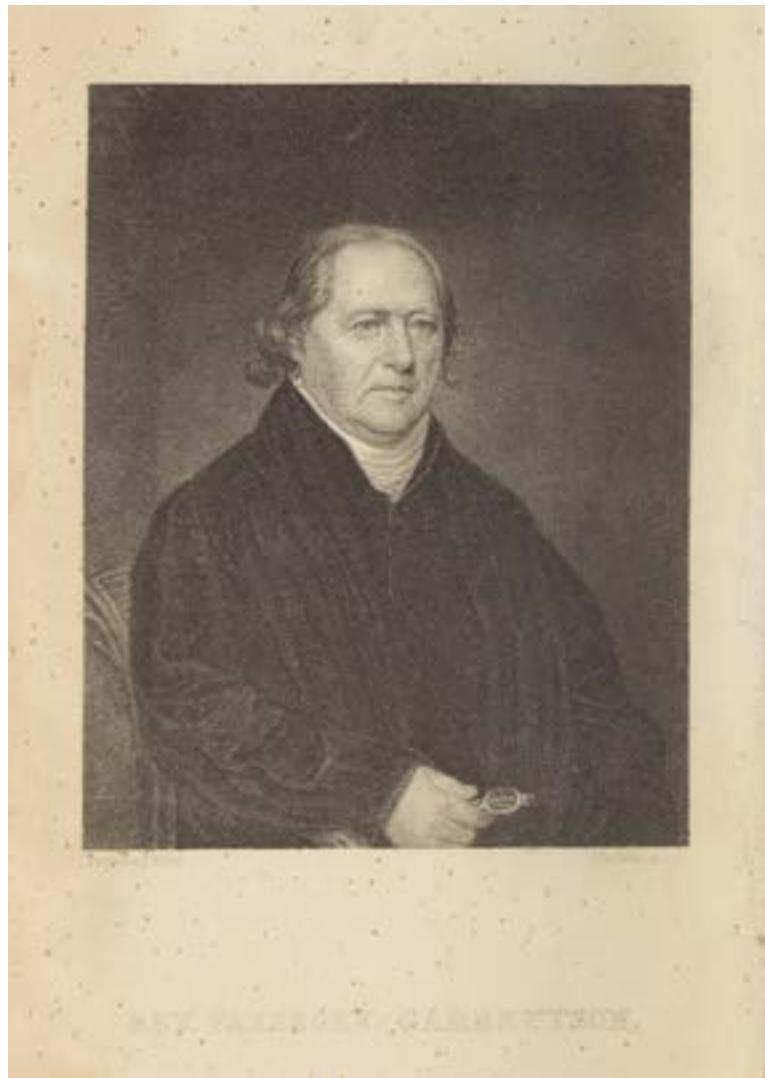


Figure 2.4. Reverend Freeborn Garrettson preached the first Methodist sermon in Dorchester County. Library of Congress.

The Reverend Garrettson preached the first Methodist sermon in Dorchester County in 1781 at the home of Henry Airey (outside the NM boundaries, east of Cambridge and north of Bucktown). Sentiment against the new religion was so powerful that county authorities imprisoned Garrettson in Cambridge for several weeks.⁴⁶ The majority of English settlers in Dorchester were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church. One of the first buildings constructed for purposes of worship in Dorchester was Old Trinity in Church Creek. Purportedly built in the early 1690s Old Trinity may be the

⁴⁶ Nathan Bangs, *The Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson: Compiled from His Printed and Manuscript Journals, and Other Authentic Documents.*, 4th ed. (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1838). 100–6; and Jones, *The History of Dorchester County, Maryland*, 90.

oldest still-standing house of worship in the country.⁴⁷ From that time and during the early decades of the 18th century, the Episcopal diocese established several more churches, including Christ Episcopal in Cambridge in 1693.⁴⁸ But by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Methodism made great strides in membership on the shore. Converts established numerous churches, including one near Henry Airey's home in 1790, after becoming inspired by some of the leaders in the Methodist Movement, like Rev. Francis Asbury, one of the first Methodist Episcopal bishops.⁴⁹

Catholic, Protestant and evangelical Christianity's impact on enslaved people in the colonies was more akin to a “reciprocal process rather than of conversion by confrontation,” with countervailing influences from West and West African spiritual traditions on British and American religious practices as part of new world dynamism.⁵⁰ This phenomenon is rich in cultural and historical documentation.⁵¹ Catholic conversion had been taking place for well over 150 years—first in Africa, then in the colonies—before evangelical Protestantism took hold. Jesuit records from plantations on Maryland's Eastern Shore reveal hundreds of baptisms, marriages, and funerals of enslaved men, women and children, and these ceremonies were often large celebrations attended by free and enslaved people and their enslavers.⁵² Early efforts at conversion to Methodism in Maryland was an interracial affair. Rev. Garretson wrote that when he preached in the Aireys' home in Dorchester County in 1781, both black and white people attended and experienced conversion during the meeting.⁵³ Interracial services and meetings would decline by the end of the century, when segregated worship spaces became the norm.

During the French and Indian War (1754–1763), fears about Native peoples' alliances with the French against the English drove Marylanders to renew restrictions on the freedoms of indigenous people in the colony. American colonists and British authorities

⁴⁷ “Old Trinity Church, Church Creek, Md, D-4,” in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1960).

⁴⁸ “Christ Episcopal Church and Cemetery, D-140,” in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1983). The current church, built in 1883, is the third church built on the site.

⁴⁹ “Christ Methodist Episcopal Church at Aireys, D-82,” in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2011).

⁵⁰ Frey, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*, Xii.

⁵¹ For a variety of viewpoints, please see *ibid*. Albert J. Raboteau, *American Prophets: Seven Religious Radicals and Their Struggle for Social and Political Justice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). Roger D. Abrahams, *Singing the Master: The Emergence of African-American Culture in the Plantation South* (New York: Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1992). Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, the “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). Sobel, *World They Made Together*; Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South*.

⁵² See for instance, “Marriage register for Southern Maryland, the Eastern Shore, and Delaware, 1760–1802,” Maryland Province Archives, “Slavery in the Maryland Province,” in Georgetown Slavery Database, ed. Georgetown University (Georgetown, Washington, DC.: Georgetown Slavery Archives).

⁵³ Frey, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*, 108.

were deeply concerned by France's efforts to control the Ohio Valley, where many Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania settlers were migrating in pursuit of more land and opportunity.⁵⁴ The French had long maintained trade and military alliances with Native people throughout the valley, and the two groups resisted British encroachment by claiming sovereignty over the region to prevent the British from crossing the western boundaries of the Appalachian Mountains. In 1756, Maryland enacted laws restricting the movement of Indians, denied them access to guns for hunting, and required that they procure special passes from local sheriffs and magistrates before traveling beyond their villages.⁵⁵

British Americans had long used such restrictions to limit the movement of people of color. As the population of enslaved and free blacks grew in Maryland, white people became more fearful of real and imagined insurrection, just as they feared attacks from Native people. European Americans suspected that their enslaved people were plotting against them and that free people of color were fomenting dissent in the slave quarters. In 1723, the Maryland General Assembly passed a law restricting gatherings of people of African descent, whether free or enslaved. "An Act to prevent the tumultuous Meetings, and other Irregularities of Negroes and other Slaves," required plantation owners to prohibit group activities separate from work, while empowering constables to monitor the movements of free and enslaved people and disperse meetings, including assemblies for spiritual purposes.⁵⁶ Threats from planned insurrections by groups of enslaved Africans, sometimes in coordination with indentured whites or Indians, first appeared in seventeenth century Virginia, prompting more deliberate surveillance and restrictions on mobility and social gatherings.⁵⁷ A slave rebellion in 1712 in New York City, a thwarted plot in

⁵⁴ From the earliest colonial period, a conflict over the exact boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland festered until 1763, when the heirs of William Penn and Lord Baltimore hired two British surveyors, Charles Mason and James Dixon, to settle boundaries of an estimated 4,000 square miles of disputed territory. One part of the survey was based on a deed executed between the heirs in 1732, stipulating that a boundary line be set, from Cape Henlopen in Delaware to the Chesapeake Bay "across the peninsula of Maryland." The "Transpeninsular Line" was drawn west from Fenwick Island, just south of Cape Henlopen, to the Chesapeake in 1751, running through portions of the National Monument, including Bucktown, Blackwater, the Thompson Plantation, and Peters Neck. The Line set the southern boundary of Delaware and established an important midpoint that Mason and Dixon used to determine the eastern boundary for Maryland and the western boundary for Delaware. The settled boundary (part of the larger Mason Dixon Line) between the two colonies contributed to the 1773 reconfiguration of Maryland's Eastern Shore counties. Caroline County, a sparsely populated region carved from lands belonging to Dorchester, Queen Anne, and Talbot counties in 1773, was secured by the newly delineated border with Delaware, which helped spur more settlement and development in that county. Many thanks to Eliot Foulds and Jennifer Hannah at NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston for the alerting me to the Line and sharing their research and sources. Please see their in-process Cultural Landscape Report on the Jacob Jackson site.

⁵⁵ Maryland General Assembly, "An Act for Preventing Indians Disaffected to the British Interest in America from Coming into This Province as Spies, or on Any Other Evil Design," in *Vol. 56*, ed. Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1756), 536.

⁵⁶ "An Act to Prevent the Tumultuous Meetings, and Other Irregularities of Negroes and Other Slaves," in *Vol. 34*, ed. Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1723), 731. See also Jeffrey R. Brackett, *The Negro in Maryland. A Study of the Institution of Slavery* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969). See also *Laws of Maryland at Large*, Chapter 25.

⁵⁷ Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1981), 30–32.

Charleston, South Carolina, in 1720, a rumored but aborted uprising in Virginia in 1727, and the Stono Rebellion in 1739 in Charleston—the largest slave uprising in the colonies—all involved numerous enslaved Africans who killed or planned to kill white people. Yet another rumored plot in New York City in 1741, stoked white anxieties and further fed rumors of unsubstantiated plots and distortions of reality. These fears helped create a system of ever more restrictive military-type control over people of African descent, enslaved and free.⁵⁸ Some Southern planters blamed Christian teachings as inspiration for rebellious enslaved people.⁵⁹ Though a few recognized mistreatment as a root cause, and still others acknowledged the immorality of keeping human beings in life-long bondage, responses involved increasingly punitive measures.

While few insurrections and rebellions materialized, enslaved people resisted more frequently and persistently by running away from their enslavers. Since they first arrived in the colonies as captive Africans in the 1600s, self-liberators found support in Native American communities and, as noted above, conspired with them to attack Europeans. In response, in 1715, Maryland encouraged Indians to turn in runaway indentured servants and freedom-seeking enslaved people with a payment of a matchcoat or equivalent value per runaway.⁶⁰ It apparently was not inducement enough, for in 1722, Maryland slaveholders filed numerous petitions with the provincial governor and his council asking for protection from the “evil consequences” of “Indians [who] entertain our Runaway Negro Slaves.”⁶¹

The incidence of runaway labor—enslaved or indentured—grew dramatically during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, forcing the colonial government to enact increasingly harsh laws restricting the movement and comingling of enslaved and free people and indentured whites. To ensure white community support and held liable for violations, slave owners paid fines of hundreds of pounds of tobacco if they did not monitor and control their indentured and enslaved people. The government formally legalized whipping, branding, ear cropping, and, in extreme circumstances, death for recalcitrant black people as coercive enforcement to obedience. Whites who helped freedom seekers endured whippings and fines, but the slaveholders reserved the most extreme violence, dehumanization, humiliation, and degradation for Africans.⁶²

In response, thousands of enslaved people ran away during the eighteenth century. Notices placed in colonial newspapers offering rewards for the capture and return of

⁵⁸ Ibid., 30–38. Frey, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*, 69–72.

⁵⁹ *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*, 71.

⁶⁰ *Laws of Maryland at Large*, 263

⁶¹ Maryland General Assembly, “The Evil Consequences of the Shuanuo Indians Entertaining Our Runaway Negro Slaves,” in Vol. 25, ed. Proceedings of the Council of Maryland (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1722), 393–95.

⁶² *Laws of Maryland at Large*, 343—44. Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 60–61.

freedom seekers proliferated, especially by midcentury.⁶³ This fact may be attributed to a variety of factors: a many-fold increase in the numbers of enslaved people; American-born children of enslaved Africans could speak English far better than their parents, which enabled them to communicate and learn about options for freedom; African Americans often knew regional landscapes and had broader connections to the outside world than their African-born relatives; a modest expansion of newspapers and literate public; and growing population centers in coastal cities where freedom seekers could find shelter and work. Some mixed-race enslaved people could blend into free communities, and still more fled in the company of indentured servants or white convict labor. Others hid out in maroon communities, where dozens of freedom seekers could live a tenuous freedom as outlaws if they could avoid recapture.⁶⁴

⁶³ Advertisements for runaway servants, convict labor and apprentices represent most advertisements prior to the American Revolution. The numbers of ads for enslaved people escalated during the 1740s, 1750s, and 1760s. Not every slaveholder posted notices in newspapers because they were expensive, and newspapers were not readily available.

⁶⁴ Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, 37–42.

Numb 163.

THE Pennsylvania GAZETTE.

Containing the freshest Advices Foreign and Domestick.

From Tuesday, January 4. to Tuesday 11. 1731-2.

From the Boston GAZETTE, Dec. 13.
ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION to our Trusty
and well-beloved Jonathan Belcher, Esq; Our Captain Gener-
al and Governor in Chief, in and over Our Province of the
Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, in America. Given
at our Court at Hampshire-Court, the 13th Day of August,
1731. In the Fifth Year of our Reign.

freest Terms, in the only Manner that can be accept-
able to Us
G. R.
Copy, examined, per J. Willard, Secr.

The foregoing Instruction was laid before the Assembly of the
Massachusetts-Bay, on the fourth of December past, by
Governor Belcher, when his Excellency's acts made the follow-
ing SPEECH.

Gentlemen of the Council, and House of Representatives,

THE several Adjustments I have made of this Court, from its first Sitting in May last, were absolutely nec-
essary for His Majesty's Honour and Service: I should indeed have thought my self very happy, could I have per-
suaded you (for your own Rule) to have fallen in with
the King's wife and just Sentiments; but when I found on
likelihood of your doing any thing in this important AF-
fair, about which you far to long, I at length made a Pro-
rogation. This therefore becomes a new Session, and I hope
you all come with the best Disposition of Duty to your
King, and with a hearty Concern for the Welfare of your
Country.

As I abhor every thing that carries the Face of blind O-
bedience, so I do the least Appearance of Want of Duty to
a Prince, who upon the highest Reasons may challenge to
be called *The Father of his Country*. Thus happy is the whole
English World, in his present Majesty; I therefore hope,
we shall all endeavour to make this People happy under
the present Reign and Establishment. And in order to it,
the first thing I would recommend to your serious Consider-
ation, is the Reformation of Manners, by making some other
Laws, if it be thought necessary, for the better Sup-
porting of Professors and Immorality: And when we con-
sider that our worthy Ancestors freely professed their Religion
to be the principal End of their Settlement of this Plant-
ation, I hope it will provoke in us a Spirit of emulation,
and make us endeavours to bar up the Frontiers of Vice
and Wickedness.

On my first Arrival to the Government, I observed to the
General Assembly, the great Ease with which this Province emerged
from the Crown, not only in their Civil, but also in their
Religious Rights; and that as one great Errand of our Fa-
thers either was, to avoid all Impression, on their Con-
science, so it would well become the Legislature here, to
make good Proficients of all Denominations easy in their
Way and Manner of Worshipping God, and who we may
have Reason to believe, conscientiously differ from the estab-
lished Church of this Country. Of this Matter I am ob-
liged now to remind you, from the repeated Applications
made to me by the People among us called Quakers, who
think themselves under great Hardships from some of the
Laws of this Province. They are generally a set of virtuous
indefinite People, and good Members of the Common-
wealth, and their Friends in England are a great Body of
Men, and ther'd as well attach'd to His Majesty and his
Royal Arms, as any the best of his Subjects: I should
therefore upon all these Considerations, think it an Influence
of your Prudence and Wisdom, to pass some further Law
for their Quiet and Ease.

In

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Figure 2.5. The Pennsylvania Gazette, one of the most popular newspapers during the eighteenth century. University of California.

Limiting researchers' ability to document the phenomenon on the Eastern Shore, Colonial newspapers carry few published advertisements for freedom seekers from Dorchester County. This does not mean enslaved people did not try to escape from the area. Not every slaveholder posted ads and instead depended on their own networks and paid slave catchers to track their self-liberated property. Paying for ads in newspapers printed in faraway Baltimore, Annapolis, or Philadelphia held little promise of a return on investment for Eastern Shore slaveowners. Locally published papers in Easton, Cambridge, or other shore communities did not appear until after 1800.⁶⁵

Advertisements for the recapture of freedom-seeking Africans made the success of such escapes more difficult. Thousands of ads published in newspapers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Boston, and New York attest to early and continued quests for freedom. Newspaper advertisements served as the most important resource for many slaveholders in their attempts at retrieving freedom seekers, and privately printed handbills also served this purpose despite limited geographic influence. Rewards increased the danger for freedom seekers—monetary compensation increased the number of eyes looking for them, and advertisements made white people more observant of unfamiliar people of color in their midst. One documentary study of eighteenth-century freedom seekers reveals nearly 1,500 advertisements for Maryland-based runaways in Maryland newspapers alone from 1745 to 1790.⁶⁶ In another study of advertisements in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* from 1728 to 1790, Maryland freedom seekers represented 19 percent of the runaway reward notices. Men represented 91% of freedom seekers, with more than 50 percent between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine-years old. These enslaved men were the most valuable of enslaved laborers, and their high numbers reveal slaveholders' willingness to pay for ads and offer rewards for their capture than for older or younger enslaved people, or for women.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Maryland State Archives Special Collections for details. Some early papers include *Republican Star*, *Easton Gazette*, *Eastern Shore General Advertiser*, *Peoples Monitor* in Easton from 1802 to 1817.

⁶⁶ Lathan Algerna Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, vol. 2 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983). The study excluded Pennsylvania and Virginia newspapers. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* was one of the most widely circulated papers in colonial America.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790*. 13. Women likely ran away in numbers higher than the advertisements indicate, though still less than the rates for men. Women were more often tied to their place of enslavement because of children and therefore less likely to flee. During the early part of the eighteenth century the great majority of runaway and reward advertisements were for the capture of white indentured servants. As the century wore on, more of the ads reflected the increase in enslaved people in the colonies.

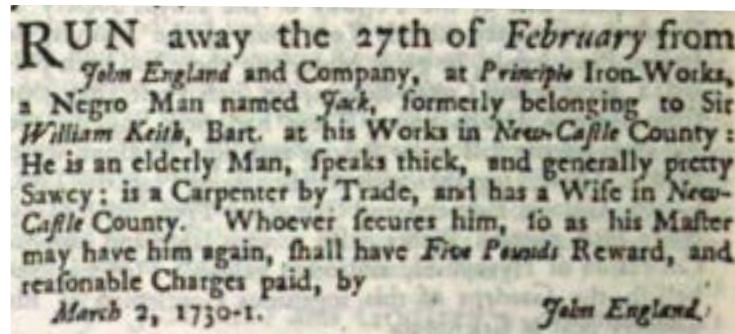


Figure 2.6. Early colonial reward advertisement for the capture of freedom seeker, “Jack.” Pennsylvania Gazette, 1731. University of California.

These advertisements speak to a larger story—the agency of the enslaved to take their liberty when they were able to.⁶⁸ The ads are a window into the lives of enslaved people in a historical moment otherwise lacking in documentary detail of their existence. Descriptions of freedom seekers—gender, height, weight (size), skin color, clothing, scars, physical impairments, trade, special skill, language and speech patterns—were vital to finding self-liberated people. In addition, some enslavers included their opinions and presumptions about a freedom seeker’s character, deportment, intelligence, and countenance. These details merely reflect the perceptions of the enslaver rather than truths about the enslaved. Enslavers often claimed that their bonds people were rogues, thieves, liars, “artful,” “saucy,” “cunning,” “villainous,” and “smooth tongued,” who pretend to be free.⁶⁹

The advertisements also attest to the great diversity among Africans and African Americans. More than a few advertisements reveal that the runaways could speak two or more languages, including French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, and English. The ads also reveal a range of skilled trades, reflecting a diversified economy employing enslaved craftsmen and women, including millers, distillers, blacksmiths, coopers, shoemakers, weavers, barbers, tailors, carpenters, brickmakers, tanners, iron workers, ship builders, in addition to farm labor, husbandry, and domestic duties.⁷⁰

In 1747, thirty-five-year-old Cuffy, an African born enslaved man, escaped bondage from Adam Muir, a slaveholder from nearby Worcester County. Cuffy, Muir wrote, was “much scarified on his Forehead, and has holes in all his Teeth,”⁷¹ a description that helped highlight Cuffy’s distinctive appearance compared to other Africans and African Americans. In 1761, Robert Broady from Queen Anne County posted a reward for the capture of a “lusty Negroe Man, lately imported from Guiney [Guinea], and speaks bad English.” These men faced unfavorable odds getting away from their enslavers and

⁶⁸ David Waldstreicher, “Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1999).

⁶⁹ For a brief introduction to interpreting runaway advertisements, see *ibid.*

⁷⁰ Smith, *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728–1790*.

⁷¹ Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, 2, 4–5

achieving freedom in unfamiliar territory far away. Blending into nearby communities or larger urban landscapes would have been a challenge given their physical characteristics and poor English.⁷²

The likelihood of recapture of these Africans contrasts with the potentially successful escapes of American born enslaved people. In April 1763 Jack Cornish, a mixed-race and light skinned enslaved man fled from John Turner in Dorchester County. Thirty-five-year-old Cornish was the type of bondsperson who may have been hard to recapture. A weaver by trade, he could easily gain employment in Philadelphia, Baltimore or other cities and towns far away. He was, Turner described in his advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “very genteel, talkative and complaisant.”⁷³ That October, a mixed-race man named James Dyson fled from Robert Darnall in Dorchester. Wearing an “Indian Matchcoat” and his hair “combed out straight,” Darnall suspected that Dyson would pass for an Indian. A shoemaker by trade, Dyson had taken his shoemaking tools, but Darnall believed that he might work as a barber somewhere, for he could “shave and dress a Whig as well as most barbers.” Both Cornish and Dyson were well prepared for freedom away from the Eastern Shore.⁷⁴ Whether these two enslaved men successfully escaped to permanent freedom is unknown, but having a trade or skill and command of the English language, as well as lighter skin, made navigating broader colonial landscapes easier than for Africans with ritual spiritual and ethnic scarring, dark skin, and poor English skills. For American born Cornish and Dyson, capitalizing on their trade skills and European cultural knowledge may have enabled them to navigate business and trade networks, as well as diverse communities beyond their immediate neighborhood.

⁷² Robert Broady, “Run Away from the Subscriber Living near Choptank Bridge,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 19, 1761. When Broady died in 1772, he left seven enslaved people to his heirs, including 4 men named Jacob, Bobb, Jambo, and Andrew. *Prerogative Court Records. Wills, Liber 38 Folio 739*.

⁷³ John Turner, “Run Away from the Subscriber Living in Dorchester County,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 28, 1763.

⁷⁴ Richard Keene, “Run Away from the Subscriber in Dorchester County, Ennals Ferry,” *ibid.*, December 18, 1766. Robert Darnall, “Run Away from the Subscriber,” *ibid.*, November 10, 1763. Darnall owned property all over the county, including Church Creek, along the Blackwater and Little Blackwater rivers in the NM boundaries, and near Vienna on the Nanticoke River. V. L. Skinner Jr., *Abstracts of the Debt Books of the Provincial Land Office of Maryland. Dorchester County, Vol. II Liber 21: 1766, 1767, 1770* (Baltimore: Clearfield Company by Genealogical Publishing Company, 2016), 194. Mowbray, *Early Settlers*, 44, 52–53.

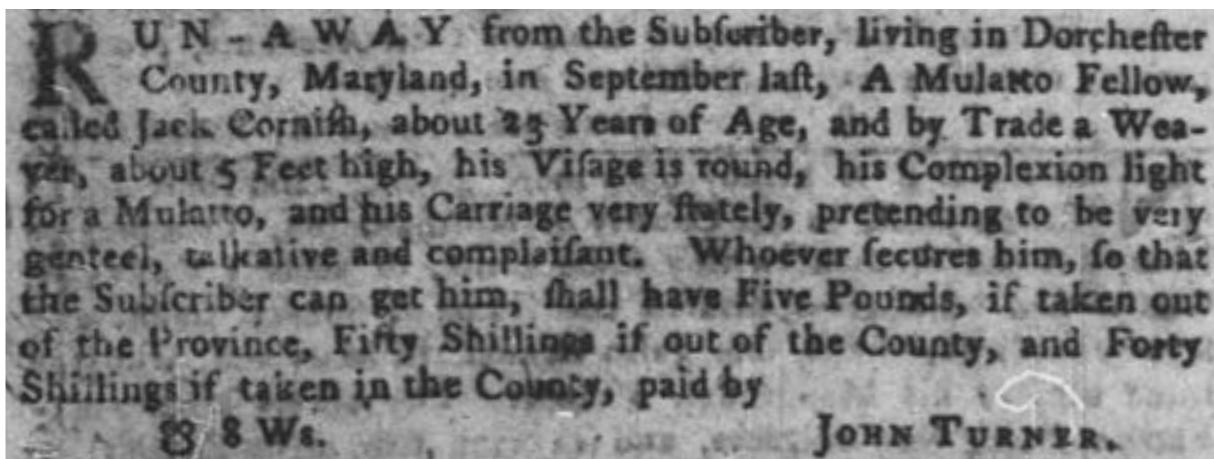


Figure 2.7. Still missing after eight months, enslaved man Jack Cornish remained at large when John Turner of Dorchester County advertised a reward for his capture in April 1763. *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 28 April 1763. Newspapers.com.

For another Dorchester County freedom seeker, skills, language, and knowledge of a world beyond his enslaver's home were not enough.⁷⁵ In November 1766, Richard Keene from Ennalls Ferry, a busy trading post on the Choptank River in Dorchester, advertised for his enslaved man, Charles Cornish, who could read, write, play the flute, and use surveying equipment. Portrayed as "very talkative, vastly affable," Keene suspected that Cornish escaped aboard a vessel, and warned ship captains from taking him onboard. Six weeks later, the jailer of the "Goal of City and County of Burlington," New Jersey, advertised that he had jailed Cornish and that Keene should come get him.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Smith, *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728–1790*, 56.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 86–87.

Maryland, November 29, 1766.

RUN away from the Subscriber (in Dorchester County, Ennalls's Ferry) a Negroe Man, named Charles, about 6 Feet high, between 40 and 50 Years of Age; had on a black Broad-cloth Coat, but it is supposed he will change his Clothes; he can read, write, and cast Accounts, has a small Notion of Surveying and Music, and took with him a Flute; he is very talkative, vastly affable, and very fond of letting those he talks with know what he understands; he has a remarkable Scar on one of his Feet, occasioned by the Cut of an Axe, and it is likely he may have a Pass. Whoever secures the said Negroe in any Goal, so as his Master may have him again, shall have Forty Shillings Reward, and if brought home, the above Reward, and reasonable Charges, paid by

RICHARD KEENE.

N. B. It is likely he may attempt to get on board some Vessel, therefore all Masters of Vessels are forewarned not take him off, at their Peril.

¶ 8 W.

Figure 2.8. Not all self-liberators achieved permanent freedom. Enslaved man Charles fled Dorchester County and made it to New Jersey before his arrest. Reward advertisements provided ample incentive for vigilant slave catchers and local sheriffs. The Pennsylvania Gazette, December 18, 1766. Newspapers.com.

Escape was difficult and filled with perils. Some advertisements emphasized the numbers of times a freedom seeker had escaped before, proving that the yearning for freedom never stopped. Separation from family members, threats of sale away from loved ones, mistreatment, and a basic human need for dignity and freedom propelled some to take the risk in the face of great odds. Enslaved people increasingly challenged and contested their subjugation, exposing the fragile new world's social, economic, and political foundation colonists sought to build on their backs. These enslaved men, and women and children like them, came of age at a moment when white colonists began to test their own emerging views of liberty and justice in the new world. The next generation of enslaved Africans and their descendants—the “Revolutionary Generation”—would, in turn, challenge many notions of freedom and white dominance, offering a few opportunities for negotiation, compromise, and concession from their enslavers and white neighbors.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 97–157.

Summary

The building of communities of black and white, free and enslaved people expanded dramatically during the eighteenth century. Colonists responded to this newly developing slave-based society by establishing laws and codes defining ownership and conduct that increasingly defined ever more restrictive measures controlling the lives of people of color. Social, political, and economic relationships experienced great transformation because people were inhabiting a new world that was witnessing a blending of new and old forms of cultural expression, political engagement, economic opportunity, and religious doctrine. The eighteenth century framed the maturing of colonial Maryland as a society increasingly dependent on enslaved labor. Eastern Shore economies increased demands for more enslaved labor, with Africans and their American-born descendants replacing white indentured and convict labor needs. The growing population of African and mixed-race peoples created unique opportunities and challenges for Eastern Shore communities and individuals in the process of building the familial and social networks in which Harriet Tubman's captive African ancestors would become part sometime before the American Revolution.

CHAPTER 3

1775–1800

Introduction

The American Revolution and the development of new political institutions and laws for the newly independent nation, in tandem with religious revivalism influenced a “remaking” of chattel slavery for the “Revolutionary Generations.”¹ The rhetoric of the American Revolution—“all men are created equal”—and Quaker and evangelical Christian influences urged manumissions of enslaved people, fueling small, viable free black communities ensuring that the debate over slavery would grow louder and more contentious in the coming decades. Newly freed people established fragile and autonomous homes and communities while struggling to redefine and influence the nature of slavery. The dynamics of black family formation and survival within the context of an increasingly harsh labor system in the Chesapeake reveals the evolving nature of black and white intergenerational relationships in what Michal Sobel describes as a “... world they made together.”² The postrevolutionary and Early Republic periods witnessed dramatic transitions in the economy and society, fueled by evolving notions of democracy. Expanding transportation systems—maritime and road networks—fortified and expanded not only the means and methods of trade in a diversified and growing economy but also broadened networks of communication, shaping and facilitating the movement of people and ideas. This flow of information helped invigorate the struggle for freedom and build support for challenges to slavery.³

This chapter introduces Harriet Tubman’s ancestors. Examined here are the earliest recorded histories of Tubman’s extended family and the families of their enslavers in Dorchester County. Though the research remains a work in progress, resources suggest potential African roots and specific creolization in Maryland. Both of Tubman’s parents were born during the revolutionary and early republic periods. Jacob Jackson’s family history and the establishment of extensive familial and social ties that bound Tubman’s family with numerous other enslaved and free families within the Monument boundaries concludes this chapter.

With the French and Indian War over in 1763, Britain turned to the colonies to recoup wartime expenditures and raise funds to support the thousands of British troops still stationed in America. Already overextended on credit for a building and manufacturing boom during the 1750s and early 1760s, and because of their own contributions to supplying the war effort, colonists reacted sharply when the British Parliament passed the Sugar Act in 1764, followed by the Stamp Act in 1765 to fill Britain's coffers. Taxes on sugar and molasses in the first case, and fees in the form of tax stamps on all legal documents, published pamphlets and newspapers, licenses, playing cards, and certain types of stationery in the second, the acts infuriated agitated colonists already burdened with high tariffs on imports and special duties on lands in the Ohio Valley now open for settlement. Colonists argued that without their own elected officials representing their voices in London, Parliament could not tax them without their consent. "No taxation without representation" became a rallying cry for dissenting British Americans. A network of rebellious groups called the Sons of Liberty formed in the colonies to defy the taxes and instigate protests, violence, and boycotts. In Maryland, Sons of Liberty groups formed first in Baltimore, then spread to the Western and Eastern Shores. London responded by repealing the Stamp Act, but then legislated harsher and more expansive taxes on paper, lead, paint, and tea. Marginally successful boycotts of British products helped repeal the new taxes by 1770, but growing resentment and tension frayed political, economic, and social relationships between Britain and the American colonies.⁴

The final blow came when London imposed the Tea Act of May 1773. Boston patriots and members of the Sons of Liberty famously dumped the East India Company's cargo of Chinese tea into Boston Harbor in protest. Maryland's Sons of Liberty quickly followed with two protests: the dumping of the cargo of tea from the ship *Geddes* into the Chester River in May 1774, and the more violent burning of the *Peggy Stewart* in Annapolis harbor in October.⁵ By December, Maryland had organized its own colonial "Association of Freemen of Maryland"—later evolving into its state government—and joined other colonies in forming county militias and purchasing arms.

⁴ Brugger, *Maryland*, 102–8.

⁵ Ibid., 113. The ship's owner, Anthony Stewart set the blaze himself.



Figure 3.1. The ‘Burning of the Peggy Stewart,’ Maryland’s own Tea Party protest against British taxation. Francis Blackwell Mayer, 1896. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections.

Representatives from Dorchester and other Eastern Shore counties in this new governing body reflected some of the wealthiest and most powerful planters and merchants.⁶ Other elites were more cautious and observed from afar. Most were fearful of lower classes—or even worse, in their view, enslaved people—revolting and uprooting

⁶ Brugger, *Maryland*, 112–16. See also, Jones, *The History of Dorchester County, Maryland*, 198–99.

generations of wealth and privilege. They had reason to worry. One Dorchester County wheelwright, John Simmons, vowed he would never fight against the crown. The rich “gentlemen” he said, would “make us fight for their lands and negroes.” He would not join the local militia, he told a neighbor, but hoped that if there was a war, that some of the “damn” elites would be killed, and then “we should have the best of the land to tend and besides could get money enough.”⁷ Simmons was not alone in his frustration with and abhorrence of planters and their power. The Eastern Shore, particularly in Dorchester and counties south of it, had higher numbers of ordinary yeoman and landless men and women who remained loyal to Britain.⁸ Wealthy, propertied Eastern Shore planters were also concerned about the fate of slavery and their investment in enslaved labor.

Loyalists, British American colonists who supported the king, from the Eastern Shore felt threatened by challenges to their way of life. Thomas Paine, one of the most widely read revolutionary political activists in America at the time, and a founding member of the *Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage* in Philadelphia in 1775, asked American patriot revolutionaries why they were prepared to fight for liberty, yet deny Africans the same. “That some desperate wretches should be willing to steal and enslave men by violence and murder for gain, is rather lamentable than strange. But that many civilized, nay, Christianized people should approve, and be concerned in the savage practice, is surprising... With what consistency, or decency they complain so loudly of attempts to enslave them, while they hold so many hundred thousands in slavery; and annually enslave many thousands more, without any pretense of authority, or claim upon them?” While slaveholders throughout the colonies pondered and reacted to Paine’s reasoning, some determined they should abandon slavery, too.⁹

Anti-slavery advocates faced daunting odds in their efforts to dismantle slavery. But their rhetoric enraged and fostered anxiety among slaveholders, who feared the calls of freedom might reach their slave quarters. Fears of slave insurrections were real, and evidence of plots surfaced in several colonies on the eve of the Revolution. Some American colonists imagined collusion between British authorities and enslaved people seeking to destabilize the budding patriot resistance. In South Carolina, rumors of British-sponsored slave revolts ran rampant, forcing a crackdown on the liberties of free blacks and more strict control of enslaved people. Some were jailed out of an over-abundance of fear. In August 1775, an angry mob watched as local authorities hanged and burned Thomas

⁷ Brugger, *Maryland*, 116–17.

⁸ Ibid., 734.

⁹ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 100. For the full text of Paine’s treatise, see <https://www.bartleby.com/184/101.html>. The Society, established 1775, was reconstituted as the Pennsylvania Society For Promoting The Abolition Of Slavery in 1789. Pennsylvania Society for Promoting The Abolition Of Slavery. *An address to the public, from the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, and the relief of free negroes, unlawfully held in bondage ... Signed by order of the Society, B. Franklin, President. Philadelphia, 9th of November. Philadelphia, 1789.* Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005577131>.

Jeremiah, a well-to-do free black boat pilot in Charleston. Falsely accused but convicted of “conspiring to foment a slave insurrection,” Jeremiah’s execution served, some white South Carolinians believed, to “deter others from offending in the like manner.” Though the British royal governor believed Jeremiah innocent of the charges and was horrified by the injustice, the violence incited by perceived threats of British attempts to quash a percolating colonial insurgency negated any attempts to help Jeremiah. Only four months before, British bullets had shot and killed patriot soldiers during a skirmish at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.¹⁰

In the fall of 1775, patriots in Dorchester wrote, with alarming concern, to the new governing body in Annapolis:

“The insolence of Negroes in this county has come to such a height, that we are under the necessity of disarming them which we affected on Saturday last. We took about eighty guns, some bayonets, swords, etc. The malicious and imprudent speeches of some among the lower classes of whites have induced them to believe, that their freedom depended on the success of the Kings troops. We cannot therefore be too diligent nor too vigorous with those who promise and encourage this disposition in our slaves.”¹¹

Enslaved people, fully aware of white colonists’ calls for freedom from tyranny, engaged in acts both small and significant to resist their condition and assault the underpinnings of slavery. Free blacks in urban areas joined together, demanding universal and “unalienable rights” to freedom, just what white slaveholders had feared.¹²

In Maryland, rebel representatives signed the Declaration of Independence and on July 4, 1776, the colonial resistance became a revolution. The ensuing war would elevate new ideas of liberty and equality, bolstered by mounting evangelical thought, remaking North America in ways they could not have imagined. On the Eastern Shore, anxiety over the future shaped new alliances and opportunities. Some of these alliances involved angry lower class and landless whites conspiring with free and enslaved blacks to overthrow the planter elite. Simmons, the Dorchester County wheelwright, argued “if I had a few more white people join me I could get all the negroes in the county to back us, and they could do more good in the night than the white people could do in the day.”¹³ And just as whites in South Carolina had feared, the British offered freedom to enslaved people willing to run away and aid the Loyalists, further destabilizing patriot support.

¹⁰ J. William Harris, *The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah; a Free Black Man’s Encounter with Liberty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 148.

¹² Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 102–3.

¹³ Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland*, 147.



Figure 3.2. William J. Stone 1823 engraving of the Declaration of Independence. National Archives.

During the summer of 1776, the British sent agents to entice free and enslaved blacks, and in August, three enslaved men killed a white Dorchester man in their attempt to escape to British forces in the Chesapeake. Their trial, execution, public hanging, dismemberment, and display stifled some dissent, but white families remained nervous about

supporting the patriot cause and local patriot militias found few recruits in the county.¹⁴ Militia officers felt that residents of Dorchester County in general were “of such an unfriendly disposition” that they required more strict enforcement to prevent them from aiding the British. The militia made matters worse; they confiscated salt, food and other supplies without permission from residents.¹⁵ Later, when prices for foodstuffs rose and export prices fell, Dorchester County farmers and their families—Loyalists and patriots alike—rioted and stole food from their more prosperous neighbors.¹⁶ The Revolution fed festering resentments held by small-scale and yeoman farmers and artisans who felt emboldened to finally resist the authority of the landed gentry.¹⁷

Eventually, most Maryland colonists supported the cause of independence, while some enslaved people successfully fled to the British. Runaway advertisements reveal that freedom seekers joined the British aboard ships patrolling the Chesapeake or ran to anywhere British troops were stationed and fighting.¹⁸ Some signed up to battle their former enslavers and serve in Britain’s new black “Ethiopian Regiment,” whose uniforms sported the motto, “Liberty to Slaves.” Though the numbers of black soldiers remained small—no more than one thousand—some five thousand more took the opportunity to escape to British protection in the Chesapeake.¹⁹ On November 7, 1775, John Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia and a Loyalist, declared martial law in that colony and proclaimed that any enslaved person who joined the British armed forces to fight American patriots would receive their freedom. Known as *Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation*, the declaration struck alarm beyond Virginia and the Chesapeake, stoking fears of slave rebellions all over the Mid-Atlantic. Dunmore’s tactic to weaken revolutionaries’ resources inspired thousands of enslaved people to flee their enslavers. British ships controlled the Chesapeake Bay early in the war, and their raids on farms and plantations wreaked havoc on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Patriot revolutionaries lost livestock, food stores, and their enslaved labor. Enslaved men like James Langford and John Gordon escaped from their masters in Dorchester County by way of easy access to the Bay via the Choptank and Nanticoke Rivers, seeking protection on British ships conducting raids throughout the

¹⁴ Ibid., 185.

¹⁵ Ibid., 186–87.

¹⁶ Barbara Clark Smith, “Food Rioters and the American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1994). 15, 19, 35, 37. Keith Mason, “Localism, Evangelicalism, and Loyalism: The Sources of Discontent in the Revolutionary Chesapeake,” *Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1 (1990), 31–32, 34. See also, Barry Paige Neville, “For God, King, and Country: Loyalism on the Eastern Shore of Maryland During the American Revolution,” *International Social Science Review* 84, no. 3/4 (2009), 139–40.

¹⁷ Smith, “Food Rioters and the American Revolution,” 53.

¹⁸ Smith, *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728–1790*, 129–45. See also Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790*, 2.

¹⁹ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 28–29. See also Maryland State Archives and the University of Maryland College Park, “A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland” (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 2007), 8; and Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves the Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800*, 416–20; and Brugger, *Maryland*, 123.

area. Both survived and settled in Nova Scotia, Canada, after the war.²⁰ The British evacuated thousands of free and formerly enslaved people who fled to their protection at the close of the war. When the war ended, a peace treaty specified that the British could not keep or bring to other British colonies any formerly enslaved people owned by American patriots. Though orders given to shipmasters, waiting to disembark from American ports, to release African Americans back onto American soil were in-process, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America, Sir Guy Carleton, believed that Britain should honor its promise to give freedom to formerly enslaved people who fled to British lines and aided in the war. Carleton overruled the peace treaty agreement and ordered the ships to embark for British soil with the Black Loyalists, as they became known. He also ordered ship captains to record the personal details of each Black Loyalist on their ships. Those compiled records became known as the “Book of Negroes,” and the 1782 register contains each person’s name, former enslaver’s name, home place, age, and more. The British shared a copy of the book with the United States government to aid in compensation claims made by Americans robbed of property during the war by the British. That American register, called the “Inspection Roll of Negroes Book,” is preserved in the United States National Archives.²¹ The book contains the names of almost 3,000 Black Loyalists, and another 2,000 white Loyalists (some of them indentured servants whose value mattered to “masters” who paid for their indenture.) Though states created extensive lists of aggrieved property owners in anticipation of compensation by the British, slaveholders never received reparations for their lost property.

²⁰ Carleton Papers, “Book of Negroes, 1783.” Library and Archives of Canada, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/loyalists/book-of-negroes/Pages/introduction.aspx#c>

²¹ See Record Group 360: Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, 1765–1821. Series: Miscellaneous Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789 File Unit: Inspection Roll of Negroes Book No. 2, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5890797>; <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/17337716>.

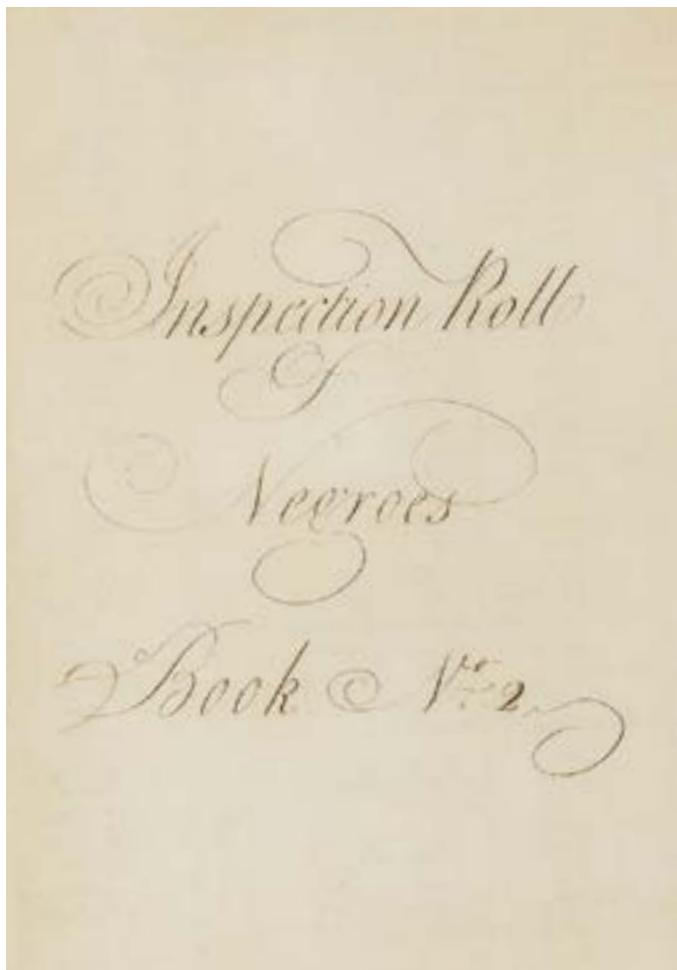


Figure 3.3. Register of Black Loyalists who fled to the protection of the British during the American Revolution. The list, used by Americans to file claims for reparations for self-liberated enslaved people, is an excellent resource for tracking information about these freedom seekers. National Archives.

Unlike Black Loyalists, some enslaved men accompanied their patriot masters—like a “boy,” enslaved by Continental Congress delegate John Henry—into service during the war as servants and day laborers, and free black men joined or were drafted into the Continental Army (after 1780).²² While records are incomplete, several free blacks joined the Continental Army from Dorchester. George Buley, a mixed-race freeman who lived in East New Market, joined the 4th Maryland Regiment in July 1781; Job Buley, race undetermined, signed on to Captain Lilburn Williams’s 3rd Regiment in Cambridge; and Salady Stanley, “a man of colour” who lived near Cambridge, enlisted as a private in the Upper Battalion in July 1781.²³ Both George Buley and Salady Stanley or their widows applied for

²² Park, “A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland,” 8.

²³ Job Buley racial identity may have included Native American and African, in addition to any number of European or Middle Eastern cultures.

and received pensions.²⁴ Another free man, Ephraim Green, left his home in Somerset County—where Loyalist sympathies dominated—to join the army in Dorchester.²⁵

During and immediately after the American Revolution, a spike in manumissions reflected a newfound recognition of inalienable rights invested in all human beings. Manumissions recorded in land records reveal this sentiment. Over time, the reasons evolved and expanded to include the spirit of religious revivalism and the rhetoric of the American Revolution. During the spring of 1768, several slaveholders in the county liberated their enslaved people, each stating that it was a “matter of conscience to keep any slave or slaves from their freedom,” and that they were guided “especially to satisfy my conscience relative to keeping of slaves.”²⁶ By 1781, as the war still raged in the colonies, Dorchester County resident Thomas McKenzie manumitted six enslaved people, claiming that they “have an indisputable Right in Equity to enjoy their freedom.”²⁷ By the end of the war, manumission language changed more dramatically. Henry Bowdle of Dorchester was one of several slaveholders who, in late March and early April 1786, collectively manumitted several dozen enslaved people. “Being conscious to myself,” Bowdle wrote, “that the practice of holding my fellow men in perpetual Bondage and Slavery contrary to the Golden Law of God (on which hang all the Law and Prophets) and the inalienable Right of mankind as well as Principal of the Glorious Revolution that has lately taken place in America... I the said Henry Bowdle do...hereby manumit discharge & forever set free... James [and an unidentified] girl...[and] Sam...[and] Beck...”²⁸ Despite the dramatic language about freedom and inalienable rights, most enslavers delayed manumission dates for children and teenagers until at least their 20s or early 30s. This proved profitable to the enslaver, and helped maintain control over their freed parents who would not leave their children to find better lives elsewhere.

²⁴ Henry C. Peden Jr., *Revolutionary Patriots of Dorchester County, Maryland 1775–1783* (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2000), 24–25, 222; *Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Patriots in the Revolutionary War: A Guide to Service, Sources, and Studies*, ed. Eric G. Grundset (Washington, DC: National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution 2008), 36, 461, 463. See also, Buley’s pension application: <https://www.fold3.com/image/12028637>.

²⁵ Heinegg, “Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1810.”

²⁶ *Prerogative Court Records*. Wills, 1768. Liber Old 22 folio 254, 308, 356. The majority of these manumissions included adults who were set free immediately. A few involved children, whose manumissions were set for future dates when the children reached the age of maturity or majority. Freed parents’ labor often remained tied to the slaveholder who still enslaved their children and who continue to exert control over their lives.

²⁷ Court, “Land Records.” “Thomas McKenzie, his manumission of certain Negroes,” April 17, 1781. Liber Old 28 folio 330–331.

²⁸ Ibid. “Henry Bowdle to Negro James and Others,” March 22, 1786. Liber HN folio 354. Bowdle delayed those manumissions well into the 1790s.

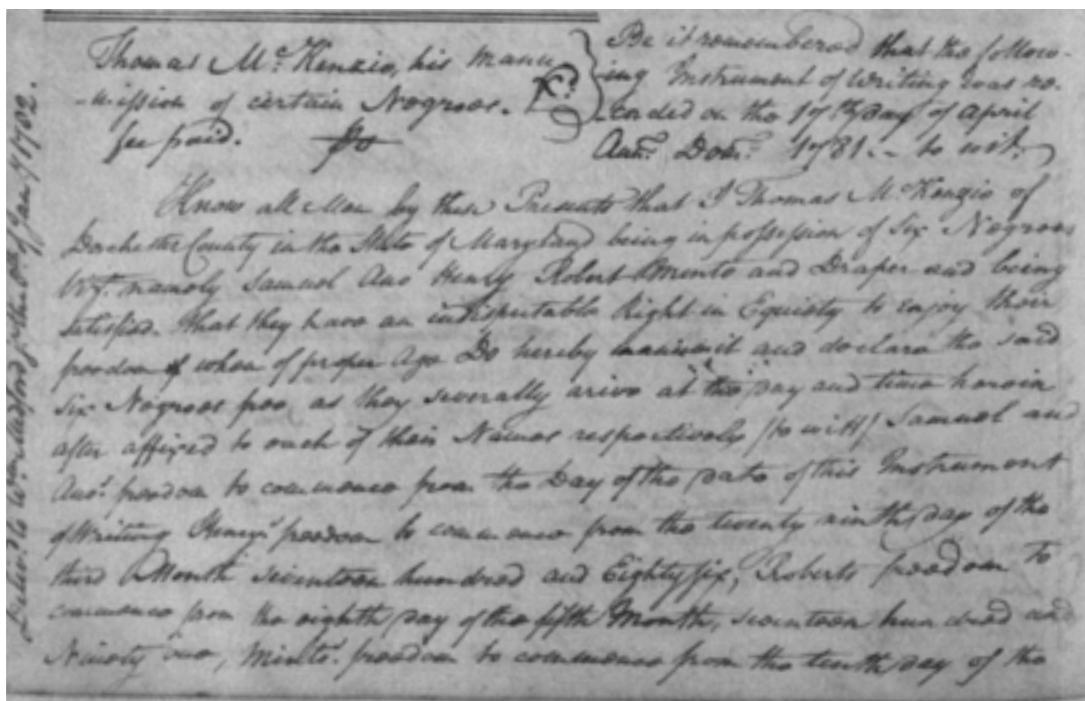


Figure 3.4. “Thomas McKenzie, his manumission of certain Negroes,” April 17, 1781. McKenzie postponed his enslaved persons’ liberty for five to ten years, ensuring their unpaid labor accrued to his benefit into the future.

Maryland State Archives.

Some of the impetus for freeing enslaved people in the Chesapeake also reflected strong anti-slavery sentiment in northern states and the abolition of slavery there. In 1777, many newly established state governments banned imports of enslaved Africans, but Vermont took it one step further by abolishing slavery via its constitution; Massachusetts’s 1780 constitution and a 1783 court decision effectively nullified slavery there; and Pennsylvania, after much anti-slavery debate between 1778 and 1780, instituted the first gradual emancipation laws (though slavery did not officially end there until the 1840s.) New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut all instituted gradual manumission measures, too, during the 1780s and 1790s that ensured some enslaved people and their children remained enslaved for decades more while a majority became free.²⁹ The South, however, found itself divided—Revolutionary rhetoric encouraged individual rights and liberty on the one hand, and on the other slaveholders argued that enslaving Africans was their most precious liberty: the freedom to hold human property. Pressure from anti-slavery activists only hardened their resolve to defend and preserve their status.³⁰ Numerous anti-slavery societies emerged in the Revolutionary and Early Republic eras in Maryland,

²⁹ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 102–11; Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2016), chap. 3.

³⁰ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619–1877* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), 89–92.

Virginia, Delaware, and the Carolinas, mostly organized by Quakers and early Methodists and Baptists.³¹

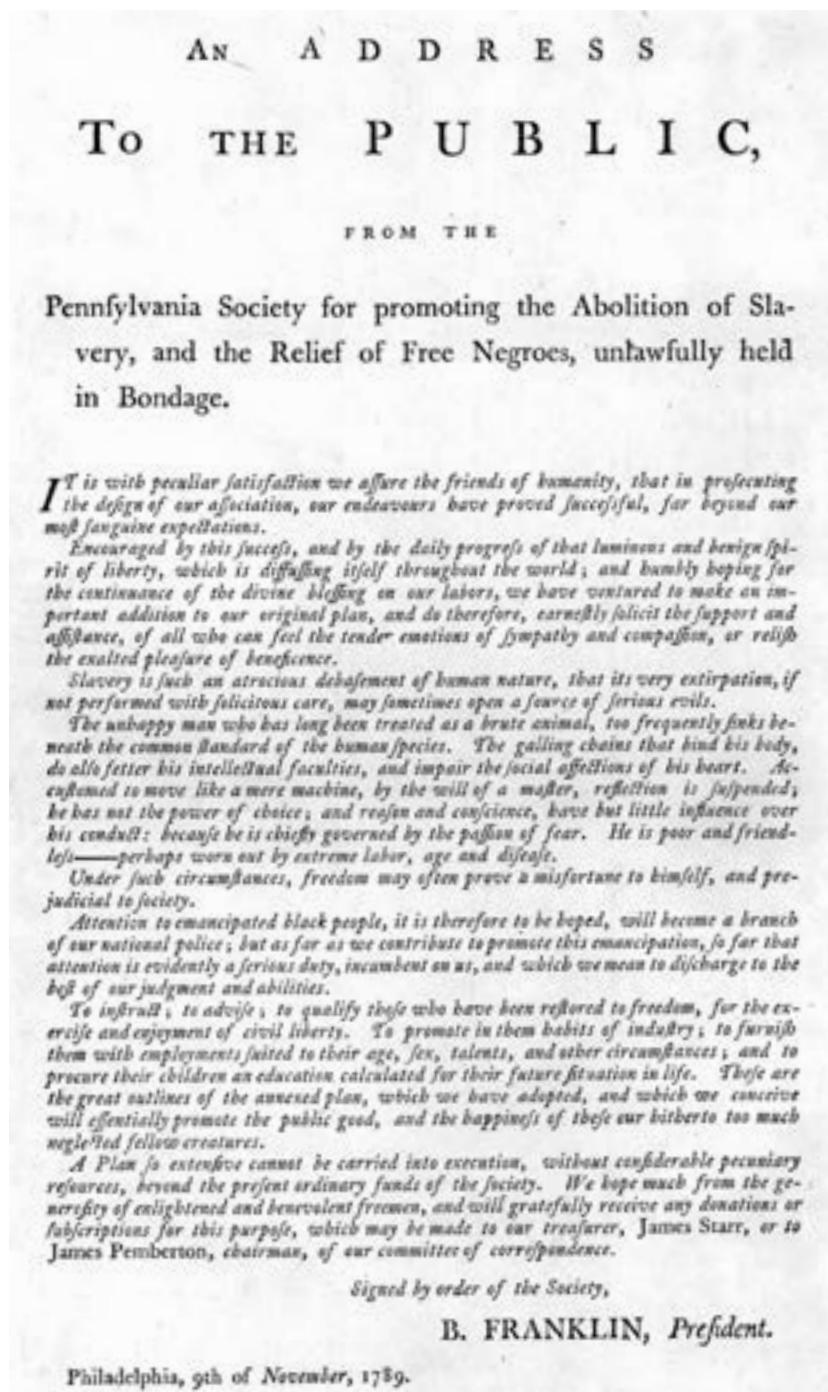


Figure 3.5. Benjamin Franklin's public address denouncing slavery for the Pennsylvania Society For Promoting The Abolition Of Slavery. Library of Congress.

³¹ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 45–72.

With the Revolution won, and the transatlantic slave trade resumed, many states renewed restrictions and outright bans on the trade, including Maryland in 1783. By doing so, Maryland slaveholders ensured the value of their multiplying native-born enslaved population, creating an internal market safe from international competition.³² When the Constitutional Convention delegates debated and drafted the new nation's constitution, Chesapeake planters did not oppose regulating the slave trade. A compromise with South Carolina and Georgia, whose slaveowners experienced great losses during the war and required more enslaved labor to supply their expanding rice and cotton fields, deferred the issue by postponing a ban on the transatlantic slave trade until January 1, 1808.³³

One of the most important additions to the new constitution would be Section 2, Article 1, which apportioned three-fifths of each state's enslaved population when calculating each state's free population for the purpose of determining congressional representation. Under threat of southern opposition to adopting the Constitution and forming a Union of states, delegates finally voted in favor. This addition to the U.S. Constitution would give southern states, with their unfree and unable-to-vote enslaved populations, disproportionate and outsized political power in relationship to northern states with fewer enslaved people.³⁴ Also passed by the Congress was the Northwest Ordinance, the platform for establishing governments in the territory north of the Ohio River and west of the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. Article IV of the ordinance stipulated "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude." Surprisingly Chesapeake slaveholding delegates agreed with Northern representatives in banning slavery in the new territory. Permitting slavery in the new fertile lands of the Ohio River Valley posed certain competition for Chesapeake tobacco and agricultural products. Prohibiting slave labor there slowed the process of large-scale clearing and planting.³⁵ Eventually, the Ohio River would become a dividing line between free and slave states. The ordinance in fact guaranteed the spread of slavery most significantly south of the Ohio River. Additionally, slavery persisted in the northern territories for decades. Those territories north of the Ohio River did not enact emancipation laws for enslaved people already living there, and when new free states established constitutions, few banned existing slavery outright. The impact of accommodation to slaveholders with the three-fifths clause, and the legal but rarely enforced suppression of slavery in the new territories in the Northwest Ordinance would have profound consequences for American slavery and freedom well into the nineteenth

³² Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619–1877*, 90–94.

³³ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 40–43.

³⁴ Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 7–18.

³⁵ Ibid., 35–56.

century, eventually driving an increasingly divided nation—part free, part slave—to a deadly sectional crisis.³⁶

In October 1790, one Dorchester County resident manumitted an enslaved sixteen-year-old girl. “I Isaac Lowe of Dorchester County and the State of Maryland, do think it wrong and oppressive to hold negroes in abject slavery, when it is clearly against the principles of Law and Government, the dictates of reason, the common maxims of equity, the Law of Nature, the admonition of conscience, and in short the whole doctrine of natural religion, do therefore Manumit and set free Negro Juda.”³⁷ An increasingly important religious awakening—founded upon Quakerism and Methodism—and an ideological legacy of liberation from the American Revolution, sparked intense debate about the moral, political, and economic validity of slavery. While a marked rise in manumissions and petitions for freedom immediately following the American Revolution was, in part, a function of the Revolution’s rhetoric of liberty, it was also a function of fluctuating economic conditions, less labor-intensive agricultural work, and a self-sustaining free African American population. Free black labor was short term and cheap. These factors made term limits and manumissions more attractive to slaveholders as an alternative to perpetual bondage.

In Maryland, a group of white male citizens from the Eastern Shore, including those from Talbot, Dorchester, and Caroline counties, petitioned the House of Delegates in 1785 for the abolition of slavery. Members of the Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in Baltimore, some of whom hailed from the Eastern Shore, became aggressive in demanding an end to the institution. Modeled after the more famous and long-lived “Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race,” founded in 1774 by Quaker and non-Quakers like Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, the Maryland Society was short-lived, though it did bring about change.³⁸

Through their actions, these groups inspired and emboldened some enslaved people to successfully sue their masters for freedom. Though few, these suits and calls for abolition outraged slaveholders, who forced Maryland’s assembly to impose sanctions against the Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in Baltimore, effectively dismantling it by the mid-1790s.³⁹ Its sister societies on the Eastern Shore—the Choptank and Chestertown societies, established in the late 1780s—faced the same resistance and challenges, and also collapsed by 1800.⁴⁰ Quakers on the Eastern Shore, in the meantime, devoted themselves to ridding their families and communities of slavery, manu-

³⁶ Ibid. See, in particular, Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 34–79.

³⁷ Court, “Land Records.” “Isaac Lowe to Negro Judah,” October 15, 1790. Liber HD 2 folio 723

³⁸ Kenneth Carroll, “Voices of Protest: Eastern Shore Abolition Societies, 1790–1820,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 84 (1984).

³⁹ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 46–57.

⁴⁰ Carroll, “Voices of Protest: Eastern Shore Abolition Societies, 1790–1820.”

mitting hundreds immediately by deed or delayed manumission by will in the 1780s. Though many elite families initially remained loyal to the Anglican Church—which supported slavery—newly converted Methodists manumitted scores of people as the religion spread rapidly throughout Dorchester and surrounding counties during the 1790s, too.⁴¹

Slaveholder concerns about the growing free black population became a powerful counterpoint to rising anti-slavery sentiment on the Eastern Shore. In 1790, the free black population grew to an under-reported 528 people.⁴² Ten years later, it had grown to 2,365 people. Many whites were increasingly worried about their ability to control the economic, political, and social dynamics of race in their communities. While immediate emancipation remained a choice for some Methodists, it appears that the majority who chose to consider manumission for their enslaved people followed a policy of delayed emancipations by executing deeds of manumission based on some future date. In this way, the slaveholder ensured that they remained the beneficiary of an enslaved person's most productive years. Others sold their bondspeople for a limited term of years, putting cash in their own pockets while assuaging their consciences by providing for eventual manumission, which, in all cases of delayed manumission, “afforded the greatest amount of protection for the master’s purse while still appeasing the troubled conscience,” but a painful wait for the enslaved.⁴³

The Abolition Society argued in the 1780s that restrictions on the ability of a slaveholder to manumit his slaves (as defined in the 1752 law) was in direct conflict with the rights of free individuals to control their property, regardless of whether it was a person or a piece of land. Quakers debated the limits on deeds of manumission at yearly meetings of the Society of Friends, at the general court, and finally before the House of Delegates in Maryland. After several defeats in the Maryland Senate, a revised bill was passed in 1790, allowing for “manumission freely by deed, properly executed, as before [per the 1752 law], or by will at any time, saving only the rights of creditors, and provided that the slave be not over fifty years and be able to work, at the time he was to be free.” In 1796, Maryland amended the law to restrict manumission to those slaves forty-five years of age or younger.⁴⁴

White Americans’ fears of a multiplying free black population grew deeper when a rebellion in Haiti (then Saint Domingue), led by enslaved people and their free allies in the summer of 1791, succeeded in overthrowing their French colonial rulers and liberated the entire island, creating a free black government.⁴⁵ Insurrection rumors in the states fed debates about manumission and the need to restrict the movement and settlement of free

⁴¹ See, for instance, Court, “Land Records.”

⁴² A portion of the 1790 census for Dorchester was damaged and lost, so the total is under reported.

⁴³ Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port. The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 38–42. T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom. Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 66–68; Brugger, *Maryland*, 168–70. Wennersten, *Maryland’s Eastern Shore*, 120–21.

⁴⁴ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland.*, 149–57.

⁴⁵ Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 44–45.

people of color. Maryland passed legislation restricting the immigration of free blacks from other states, though enforcement was inconsistent because many businesspeople, merchants, and small-scale farmers found free labor economically preferable. The specter of slave uprisings, however, would never abate, and white enthusiasm for manumission “turned frigid,” declining as Maryland entered the new century.⁴⁶

Limiting the term of enslavement for their bondspeople still proved appealing for some slaveholders, and many believed that a promise of future freedom ensured loyalty. Term limits allowed slaveholders to ease their conscience within the context of the newly formed ideas of democracy and evangelicalism in the Early Republic.⁴⁷ This attitude was not, however, incompatible with a belief that slavery could remain intact and perpetuated. Nonetheless, term slavery was the road to autonomy for some enslaved people, eventually joining growing free black populations.

While elite families still maintained much control, achieving newfound affluence was possible through increased agricultural production for export markets. Budding entrepreneurial families in Dorchester and surrounding counties required a variety of strategies to sustain and grow their wealth. The rise of intensive grain agriculture and timber harvesting transformed work patterns on the Eastern Shore; waning tobacco production, which required a year-round labor force, declined in favor of grain agriculture. Small scale farmers could employ free black labor until they could afford an enslaved person. These factors altered the nature of black enslavement and free labor on the Eastern Shore after the war; on the one hand, free black labor became, to some extent, a more attractive economic alternative to enslaving people for those who could not manage the financial outlay, while on the other hand some white slaveholders found additional income through leasing their enslaved people quite profitable. Additionally, some white enslavers sold their bonds people, using the proceeds to lease labor when necessary.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 68–69.

⁴⁷ Whitman, *Price of Freedom*, 67.

⁴⁸ For more information regarding the transformation of Maryland’s agricultural practices and its attendant effects of slavery, see Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*; Brugger, *Maryland*; and Whitman, *Price of Freedom*.



Figure 3.6. “An overseer doing his duty,” monitoring the work and productivity of enslaved women clearing a field. Maryland Historical Society.

While manumissions increased at the same time slavery expanded in some parts of Maryland, newly freed people seized opportunities for paid work and mobility. They established a fragile independence and struggled to redefine and influence the nature of slavery.⁴⁹ Many had still-enslaved family members, forcing them to stay in the community near their loved ones. Some saved portions of their earnings to purchase family members' freedom, while others helped them escape to northern states or urban communities where they could blend in and live as fugitives from the law. Achieving autonomy, whether by manumission, purchasing freedom, or running away, remained constant goals until the Civil War.

Chesapeake slaveholders felt threatened by the persistence of freedom seekers and the now clear opportunities for freedom that self-liberators could achieve by fleeing to Pennsylvania, New York, New England, and the new territories in the Ohio River Valley. Many Pennsylvanians, in fact, refused to give aid to enslavers and their slave catchers tracking Maryland and Virginia freedom seekers. Vachel Keene, a Dorchester planter advertised for the capture of Harry and Hannah in August 1788. Living near Parson's Creek on the Little Choptank River (and within the boundaries of the National

⁴⁹ Whitman, *Price of Freedom*, 4.

Monument), Keene enslaved at least eleven men, women, and children. The escape of two adults not only destabilized his control over his enslaved people but surely stirred hope and aspiration in enslaved people in the area who may have known how close, geographically, freedom was.⁵⁰ In response to slaveholder complaints, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 to make enslaved property more secure, writing, “No person held to Service or Labor in one State...escaping into another...shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to who such Service or Labor may be due.” Though the law satisfied slaveholders initially, the act had little enforcement power, and people continued to strike out for freedom, finding aid in black and white communities near and far.⁵¹

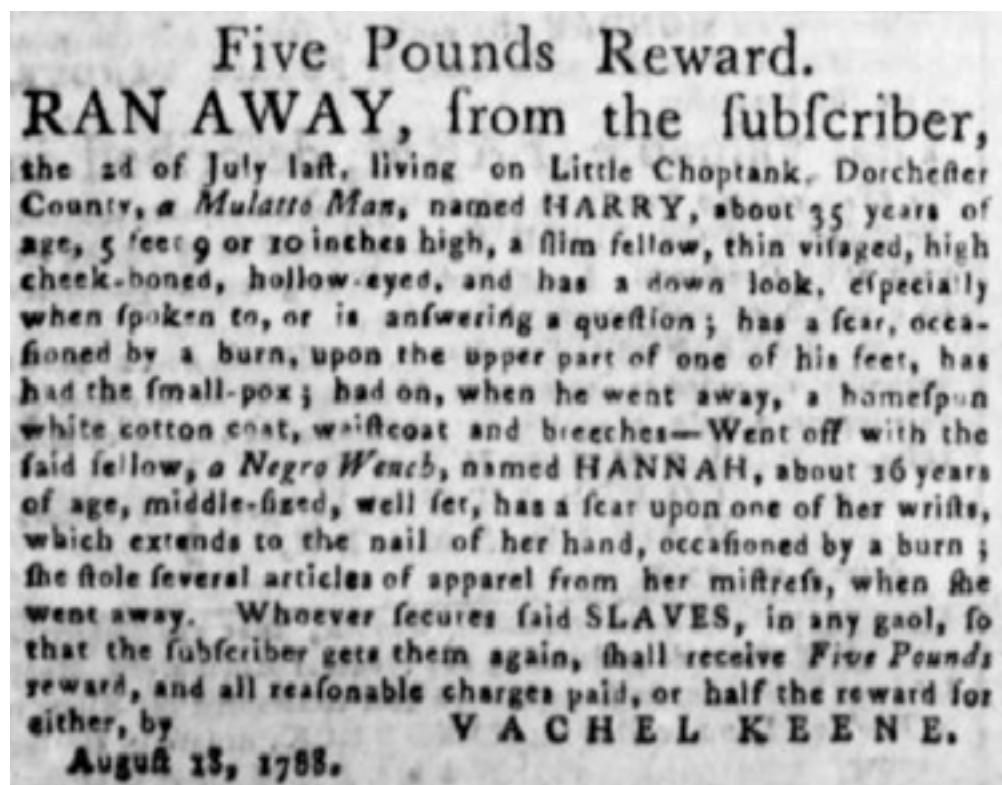


Figure 3.7. Vachel Keene's reward advertisement for the capture and return of Harry and Hannah, 1788. Maryland State Archives.

⁵⁰ Vachel Keene, "Ran Away from the Subscriber," *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, August 18, 1788. https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/17880822mjb1.pdf

⁵¹ Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson*, 80–83; Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 43–44.

The dynamics of black family formation and survival within the context of an increasingly harsh labor system in the Chesapeake during this period frames the foundation of Harriet Ross Tubman's own family history and intergenerational, geographic and social relationships. Both of Tubman's parents were born during or just after the American Revolution, probably around 1785 or earlier. The Ross family history and the family's extensive social ties that rooted them in free and enslaved communities within the Monument boundaries reveals an extraordinary window into the personal challenges facing people of color to build lives within a stridently controlled and unfree, violent human landscape.

Documentation for the origins of Tubman's family in America before the Revolution is slim. Anthony Thompson, a modest planter who came of age during the Revolution, enslaved Tubman's father, Ben Ross. Where and when he acquired Ben is still undetermined. Thompson's great grandfather, also called Anthony Thompson, was the first English-born Thompson settler in Dorchester County. He did not possess any enslaved people when he died in 1707. His first-born son, Henry, acquired at least one, a woman named Juda.⁵² When Henry died in the early 1730s, his estate inventory listed Juda as his most valuable non-real estate asset at £20. In 1749, Reverend Thomas T. Thompson, a collateral relative, sold an enslaved man named Dick to his minor son John Thompson.⁵³ These two records constitute the surviving documentation of enslaved labor for English born Anthony Thompson's descendant family until after the American Revolution.

In 1783, Dorchester County commissioners taxed Anthony Thompson, the great grandson, for four enslaved people—three boys under the age of eight and one boy between eight and fourteen years old. When, where, and how this late eighteenth-century Anthony Thompson acquired them—through purchase, inheritance, co-mingling of family or marriage assets, or if they were the sons of a deceased enslaved woman or one sold away—is not known, and their names remain unknown, too. Ben Ross, though, could be one of the boys under the age of eight.⁵⁴ Tubman claimed that Ben was “a full blooded Negro,” but she did not specify that he had arrived on a ship from Africa.⁵⁵ There are no bills of sale, deeds, or chattel records documenting Thompson's purchase of any of the enslaved people he was taxed for in 1783.

Thompson may have later acquired one or more enslaved people through his wife, Mary “Polly” King, the daughter of planter John King, who lived on 400 acres along the Blackwater River. Married in 1786, Polly and Anthony settled on Thompson's property, situated along Thompson's Creek and the Blackwater River. Polly could have brought

⁵² See *Prerogative Court Records*.

⁵³ Court, “Land Records.” Liber Old 14 folio 389. See also, Thomas T. Thompson Will 1755 Liber 29, Folio 519 and Account 1756/1757 Liber 40 folio 223 and Liber 41 folio 402, *Prerogative Court Records*.

⁵⁴ State Of Maryland, “1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, MD,” ed. Sharf Collection (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1783), Lower District, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Miller, “Harriet Tubman.”

enslaved people into the marriage, though the county taxed her father, John, a widower, for only one enslaved male aged between fourteen and forty-five (and not likely to be Ben Ross) in 1783.⁵⁶ Inadvertent destruction of a portion of the Dorchester County 1790 census left the details of King's and Thompson's households during that year unavailable to researchers. King died without a will in 1798, and any estate papers were likely destroyed in the courthouse fire.⁵⁷ The odds that Thompson purchased one or more of the enslaved boys or more likely their mother directly from an African slave trader in the Chesapeake region before 1783, records of which are unavailable, is significant.

Tubman's maternal family origins are similarly imprecise. According to Tubman, her maternal grandmother, Modesty, was African born. County records reveal that Atthow Pattison, a tobacco farmer who settled on 265 acres on the east side of the Little Blackwater River, enslaved Modesty and her daughter Rittia "Rit" Green, Tubman's mother.⁵⁸ The Pattison family first settled in Dorchester County when Thomas Pattison and his wife Ann migrated from England sometime on or before 1665, bringing several of their children with them. Settling on James Island (now completely submerged in the Chesapeake Bay and outside the monument boundaries), the Pattisons prospered and acquired several hundred acres over the next three decades.⁵⁹ They operated a mill, a tavern, and an inn; grew tobacco, corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, and other grains; raised cows, hogs, and sheep; and cultivated fruit orchards. When Ann and Thomas died at the turn of the eighteenth century, they left ample landholdings and personal assets to their children, including the remaining time of two indentured servants.⁶⁰ It would take another two generations before the Pattison heirs would acquire enslaved people. In 1776 and on the eve of the American Revolution, John Pattison, Thomas and Ann's grandson and Atthow Pattison's father, died, leaving six enslaved adults to his children, including a woman named "Bess" to Atthow. When and how John acquired Bess and the other enslaved people in his household is not known. It is likely they were Africans whose purchase is unrecorded, as was the custom at that time. That same year, the Maryland colonial census recorded five unidentified enslaved people in fifty-six-year-old Atthow's household. One of them is surely Bess, but the identities of the other enslaved people remain unknown.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Maryland, "1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, MD," 34.

⁵⁷ See John King estate division of lands in Court, "Land Records." Dorchester County Liber HD 15 folio 341–47.

⁵⁸ Maryland, "1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, MD," 39. Pattison actually owned 530 non-contiguous acres, including the 265 acres home farm.

⁵⁹ Mowbray, *Early Settlers*, 22. As early settlers with children and servants, Thomas and Ann's original land grant included 400 acres on James Island at Oyster Creek.

⁶⁰ *Prerogative Court Records. Wills*. Pattison, Thomas, Dorchester, Liber 11 folio 136; and Pattison, Ann, Liber 11 folio 341. See also, Wright, *Judgment Records of Dorchester, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties, Maryland*, 8.

⁶¹ *Prerogative Court Records. Wills*. Pattison, John, Dorchester County, Liber 41, folio 254. See, also, Atthow Pattison's great-grandfather's estate in Inventories & Accounts: Atthow, Thomas, 1699, Dorchester, Liber 21, folio 28, and "Maryland Colonial Census, 1776" (Maryland State Archives).

The roots of the surname of “Green” has also proved elusive. Records do not show if Modesty used that surname, or if Rit was the first to use that name. According to Ann Fitzhugh Miller, a Tubman friend and biographer, Tubman believed that Rit’s mother, Modesty, had been “brought in a slave ship from Africa,” and that Rit “was the daughter of a white man, an American.”⁶² Rit’s father could have been Atthow Pattison, or a man named Green. While there are several male Greens in the region at the time, including Ralph Green who lived nearby on the Transquaking River and who enslaved thirteen people in 1776 and fifteen in 1783, there is no evidentiary trail to determine a relationship.⁶³ If Modesty had come from Africa, it is more than likely Pattison purchased her directly from the captain of a ship or a middleman, but that record has not been found.

Probably born sometime between 1780 and 1789, Tubman’s mother Rit grew up in Atthow Pattison’s household with her mother Modesty and possibly other close kin. Pattison, a modest tobacco farmer, lived with his family along the Little Blackwater River as it empties into the Blackwater River near the Little Blackwater Bridge. A wood frame home, kitchen house, barn, and “3 Logg’d houses”—possibly a slave quarter and additional buildings for family or tenants—sat on 265 acres of fields, woodland, marsh, and orchards.⁶⁴ A special tax assessment in 1783, levied on residents to pay for the Revolutionary War, lists Atthow with four enslaved people: a male between the ages of eight and fourteen, a female between fourteen and thirty-six, a child under eight, and a person over forty-five years old. Perhaps Bess is the person over forty-five; Modesty could be the young woman, and the child could be Rit or someone else.⁶⁵

⁶² Miller, “Harriet Tubman.” Miller is the granddaughter of Gerrit Smith, anti-slavery activist, Underground Railroad stationmaster, John Brown supporter, and a friend of Tubman’s from Peterboro, New York. There is no other documentation suggesting that Rit’s father was a white man. The identity of the white man remains unknown; Atthow Pattison seems a logical choice, or it could have been a man named Green; however this is indirect contrast to Sanborn’s much earlier assertion that Tubman “has not a drop of white blood in her veins.” See Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].”

⁶³ “Maryland Colonial Census, 1776” (Maryland State Archives). Maryland, “1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, Md.” Middle District, 5. The unidentified enslaved people in 1783 include three boys between the ages of eight and fourteen, three males fourteen to forty-five, two females fourteen to thirty-six, five children under the age of eight, and two older enslaved people (men over forty-five or women over thirty-six.)

⁶⁴ “1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, MD.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.

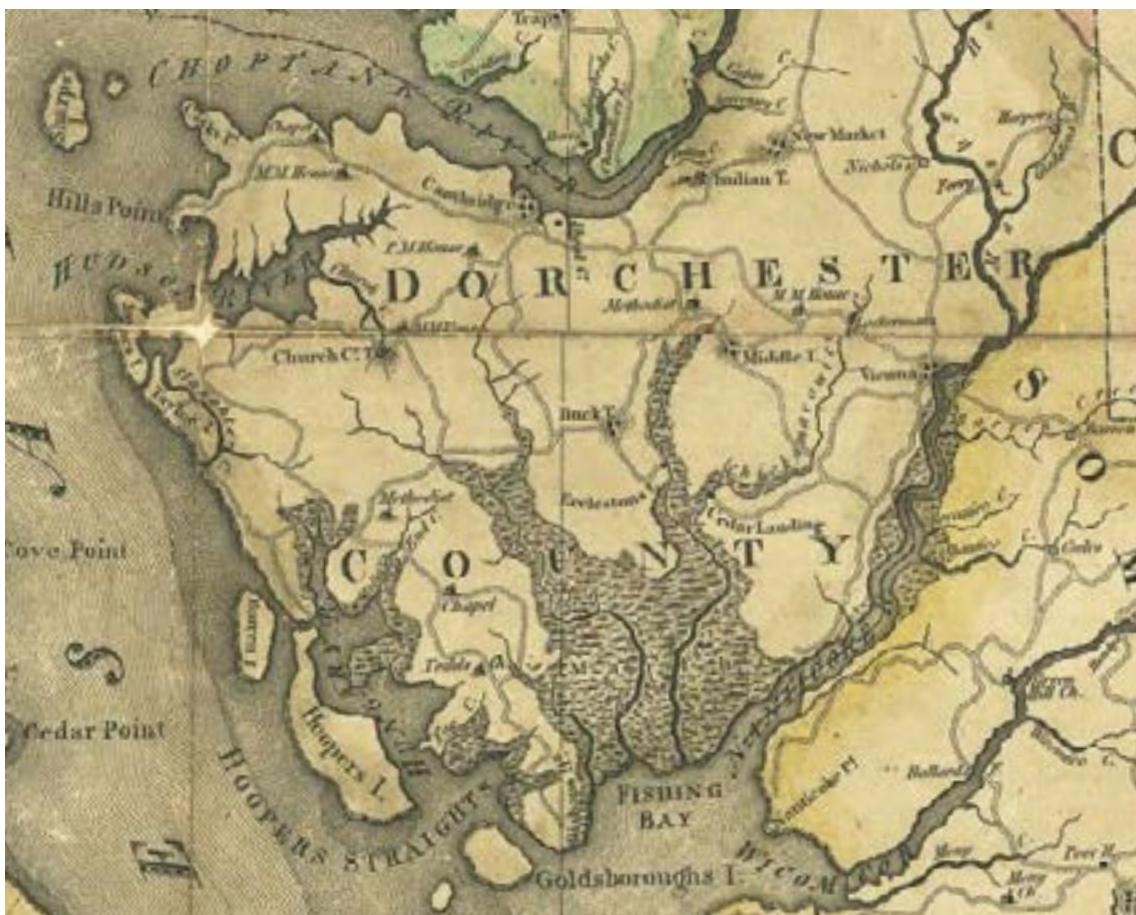


Figure 3.8. Dorchester County featuring Bucktown, Church Creek, Cambridge, and the Choptank River, in “Map of the State of Maryland” by Dennis Griffith, 1794. Library of Congress.

By 1790, Pattison’s household had grown to twelve individuals, five whites and seven enslaved people.⁶⁶ The higher number of enslaved people compared to the five listed in 1783 could reflect the birth of additional children, like Tubman’s mother Rit, to the enslaved women in Pattison’s household. When Atthow Pattison wrote his will in 1791, no enslaved man was among his assets, nor was Modesty listed.⁶⁷ Pattison may have gifted her to his daughter Elizabeth before he settled his estate. Elizabeth lived on her father’s land and, at some point, brought Modesty into her own household after marrying her first cousin, William Pattison around 1780.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Bureau of the Census. *United States Federal Census*, 1790. Dorchester County, MD.

⁶⁷ Atthow Pattison, “Will of Atthow Pattison, Est. #0-35-E” (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester County Court House, Registrar of Wills, January 18, 1791).

⁶⁸ Thompson, “Thompson Deposition.” Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, Anthony Thompson’s son, who was a little boy when Mary Pattison Brodess married his father and brought Rit to their household, later recalled that “he knew Modesty, the mother of Rit and she belonged to Elizabeth Pattison [Mary Pattison’s mother].” William had inherited one enslaved man, Mial, in 1776, from his grandfather, John Pattison, and in 1783, the tax assessment lists William with one enslaved male aged fourteen to forty-five years old. This man came from the same household as Bess, the woman Atthow inherited from John Pattison. Maryland, “1783 Supply Tax, Dorchester County, MD.”

Pattison gave one enslaved woman, Minty, to his grandson, Samuel Keene. Two additional enslaved women, Bess and Suke, went to his daughter Elizabeth. He gave Rittia, “a girl,” to his granddaughter Mary Pattison, Elizabeth’s child. Pattison’s will instructed that each enslaved female and their “increase” remain enslaved until they “arrive to the age of forty-five years of age.”⁶⁹

Manumitting his enslaved property at the relatively advanced age of forty-five years, the maximum allowed under the 1796 revision of the 1790 law, secured their most productive labor and childbearing years into perpetuity for his heirs.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, limiting Rit’s and her children’s term of enslavement lowered her market value, slightly, to Pattison’s heirs if they ever sought to sell them in the future, because aged enslaved people generally had lesser financial value. No doubt Pattison was aware of this, but like some of his neighbors, Pattison believed he was ensuring profits for his heirs while courting religious virtue. He also knew he could relieve his descendants of the responsibility of aged enslaved people during their declining years.

Pattison’s granddaughter Mary married Joseph Brodess, a local farmer in 1800. Joseph and Mary settled into a home next door to Mary’s mother, Elizabeth, east of the Little Black Water bridge, with five enslaved people.⁷¹ Elizabeth, a widow by 1800, was the head of a large household of fifteen white and black individuals, including seven bondspeople. Brodess probably helped his mother-in-law manage her plantation. Indeed, given such a large household, including several children and no adult white males, Elizabeth most likely needed her son-in-law’s assistance. Joseph owned undeveloped property nearby in Bucktown but working his mother-in-law’s productive, cultivated land had its advantages.⁷²

Free blacks appear in the remnant manuscript of the 1790 Dorchester County census, and by 1800, a significant free black community began showing signs of community building and settlement. In 1800, Maryland’s total free black population more than doubled to more than 19,000 from about 8,000 in 1790, a 140% increase and representing six percent of the state’s total population. Dorchester’s free population exploded to 2,365 from an under-reported 538 during the same period. Using the state’s numbers as a guideline,

⁶⁹ Pattison, “Will of Atthow Pattison, Est. #0-35-E.”

⁷⁰ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 149–54. When Pattison died in 1797, the wording of his will still met the requirements of the amended law of 1796 and securing the manumission of Rit and her children when they reached the age of forty-five. However, because Pattison did not specifically say what his wishes were with respect to the enslaved people once they reached forty-five, the intent of the will remained legally ambiguous. As we shall see in a later chapter, this oversight on the part of Pattison (or his lawyer) would leave the issue of liberty for Rit and her children, including Tubman, in legal limbo, even if his *intention* was that they be free once they attained the age of forty-five.

⁷¹ Bureau of the Census, “United States Federal Census,” (1790). Dorchester County, MD.

⁷² Brodess and his siblings, Edward and Elizabeth, had inherited several hundred acres in Bucktown from their father, Edward Brodess, Sr., who died in 1796. The tract of land he inherited from his father did not contain the family homestead, which went to his older brother and heir apparent, Edward Brodess, Jr., who sold it to Clement Waters in 1803. Waters later acquired the Bucktown Village Store property. Dorchester County Land Records, MDSA, 1803.

one could expect that Dorchester's actual free population could have hovered around 950 people in 1790. The numbers reveal an interesting phenomenon. During the last ten years of the eighteenth century, Dorchester County's *enslaved* population dropped from 5,337 to 4,566 people, a fifteen percent decline, and surely represents hundreds of additions to the free community, though the sale of enslaved people to the Deep South happened, too. The free black population at the start of the nineteenth century represented 34% of all people of African descent in the county, reflecting the effects of manumissions and births of free children.⁷³

With her daughter Mary and son-in-law Joseph Brodess, Elizabeth Pattison lived near a small black settlement. Ben, a “Negro” head of a household of eighteen free blacks, lived three homesites away. He was part of nearly 150 free people living in their own homes or the homes of white landowners in the area. Clusters of free black households appear in several districts within the Monument boundaries: near Madison and White Marsh, Peters Neck near the Blackwater River, around the Little Blackwater bridge, and at Bucktown.⁷⁴

⁷³ Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, 87, 476, 478.

⁷⁴ Bureau of the Census, “United States Federal Census,” (1800). Other small communities begin to take shape beyond the NM boundaries, including near Cambridge, and further northeast in Caroline County.

James Tracy	2
John S. Parley	
James Taylor	2
Doris Waller	
Handley Negro	
John White	
Phenix Handley	1
Rid. Doug	1 - 2 - 1 -
Mrs. Wye	
Lou Robinson	
Lynn Woolfolk	
Sophie West	
Elijah Peterson	1 - 2 -
Oliver Wye	
Frank Wye	
Mr. Norman	
Christopher Norman	2
Osgood Hare	
William Stefford	1 - 1 - 1 -
Ernest Brown	1 - 1 - 1 -
Henry Wye	
Aug. Pitt	3
John White	5
Joseph Negro	
Eric. Robinson	

Figure 3.9. “Ben Negro,” 1800 Census, Little Blackwater Bridge district. Note 18 free people of color in Ben’s household, and neighbor Levi Robinson with 8 free people of color. United States Census.

In 1800, Anthony and Polly Thompson were living at Blackwater with their three young sons, Anthony C., Absalom, and Edward, one unidentified free black person, and nine enslaved people.⁷⁵ The identity of the sole free black person in the Thompson household has not been discovered, but nearly ninety free black people lived nearby in Peter's Neck. Among those free people lived another man named Ben and his wife, Set. Manumitted by Levin Ross in 1794, their two children remained enslaved. Seven-year-old Leah and five-year-old Aaron had to serve until they were twenty-five-years old. In 1800, Levin Ross's household included eight free blacks, and it is likely that Ben and Set are among them.⁷⁶ A man named Christmas also lived nearby, with eleven free people in his

⁷⁵ Census, "United States Federal Census." Edward Thompson was born in 1787, Absalom in 1789, and Anthony in 1793. The gender and age of the free black person is unknown.

⁷⁶ See Court, "Land Records," Liber HD 8 folio 112. Census, "United States Federal Census."

household. Thompson's neighbor Thomas Colson rented a plot of land to four free blacks: Benjamin, Joseph, Charles, and George in June 1803 with the intention of selling the land to the men on an installment plan over time.⁷⁷ It is there, on Thompson's plantation and the lands surrounding it, that Tubman's familial and social communities would struggle to take root and flourish over the next several decades, exemplifying a place increasingly becoming America's "middle ground" between a free world and a slave one for African Americans.⁷⁸

The middle ground, however, stood in sharp contrast to developments farther south and west. The expansion of cotton production in the Deep South ushered in a violent and more lethal transformation of slavery in the United States. While the cultivation of cotton, practiced since the early seventeenth century in the Chesapeake, remained peripheral to the growing and harvesting of tobacco in the Chesapeake for 150 years, by the late eighteenth century more American planters devoted acreage to cotton. Rising prices and increasing demand for cotton textiles in North America and overseas, ample enslaved labor, and enterprising American entrepreneurs invested in the newly attractive crop. The Sea Islands along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina saw production explode during the ten years between 1790 and 1800, from 10,000 pounds to 6.4 million.⁷⁹ To support that level of production, Sea Island planters invested heavily in enslaved labor, including some of it from Africa furnished through the transatlantic trade that still flourished in the years before the 1787 congressional compromise permitting the trade until 1808. These slave-holders also relied on purchases of enslaved people from the Chesapeake. Just as tobacco production began to wane and alternative agricultural production took its place and moderately diminishing the need for enslaved labor, the demand for enslaved "seasoned" people from the Chesapeake increased. Chesapeake enslavers received high prices for their bonds people, pocketing the cash rather than manumitting them.

A newly redesigned cotton gin introduced in 1793 by American inventor Eli Whitney transformed the cotton industry and the institution of slavery in North America. The separation of cotton fibers from their seeds proved labor intensive and slow. The new gin increased production of cleaned cotton fifty-fold. A "cotton rush" ensued, sparking a race for land to cultivate and the labor to do the work. The population of enslaved people in South Carolina and Georgia, for instance, swelled nearly four times between 1790 and 1810.⁸⁰ The profitability of cotton planting drove planters to expand their operations, but they soon found ample competition from new cotton speculators eager to start their own cotton plantations. The lure of untilled territory to the west and south fueled a land grab in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas over the next sixty years up to the

⁷⁷ Court, "Land Records," Liber HD 20 folio 368-371.

⁷⁸ Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*.

⁷⁹ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 102. See all of Chapter 5, in particular.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 102–3. The Haitian Revolution, begun in 1791, significantly diminished cotton production in Saint-Domingue and forced British manufacturers to look elsewhere for their supply of cotton. This, too, fueled the expanding cotton industry in the fledgling United States. Ibid., 96–97.

Civil War. The prices for enslaved people jumped dramatically and in tandem, fueling a booming market in human property.



Figure 3.10. Whitney's redesigned cotton gin dramatically increased cotton production and helped spark the expansion of cotton plantations in the South and Southwest, which required millions of enslaved laborers. Library of Congress.

An astonishing 170,000 Africans were imported to the United States and its territories between 1783 and the abolition of the international slave trade in 1808, a full “one-third of all slaves imported to North America since 1619,” surpassed only by an estimated 250,000 enslaved people who were forcibly transferred during a similar twenty-five year time span from the Upper South to the Deep South.⁸¹

Between 1790 and 1860, however, North America witnessed the forced displacement of more than 1 million enslaved people from the Chesapeake alone, marking the beginning of a new American holocaust on the “Migration Generation” of Africans and African Americans.⁸² Torn from their families, forced through violence and threats to work, the sweat and blood of enslaved people fed the ambitions and wealth accumulation of

⁸¹ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, 109.

⁸² Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 157–63.

white elites and entrepreneurs who claimed “inalienable” rights to an “empire of cotton.”⁸³ Black families on the Eastern Shore faced these threats daily. Some Eastern Shore white planters uprooted their own families and their enslaved property to stake out new plantations. Other enslavers took cash from Deep South slave traders prowling Chesapeake communities looking for labor to resell at a profit. Amid these volcanic transformations in the new nation and expanding interstate slave trading and deteriorating conditions for the enslaved in the new century, Harriet Ross Tubman’s ancestors’ ability to survive and create families and communities would be profoundly tested.

Summary

The American Revolution and the early years of the new nation refashioned the human and physical landscapes of the Eastern Shore. The “revolutionary generations” of free black and enslaved people witnessed an expansion of slavery in America while also experiencing the manifestations of the new, liberal ideals of a budding democracy—that “all men are created equal.” The promise of freedom, while realized in northern states, was short circuited by determined slaveholding interests wedded to wealth, power, and racism that perpetuated slavery in the South. Quakers and some Evangelical Christian groups challenged slavery, sparking anti-slavery activism and manumissions, helping the establishment of stable and expanding free black communities on the Eastern Shore. Mapping the origins and scope of the social and familial worlds of the ancestral Ross family and their close neighbors reveals the real and virtual landscapes of disparate but linked communities of shared values and experiences. The history of these communities helps shed light on the extensive communication and support systems that kept individuals and families connected within an increasingly restrictive world. Tubman’s family and friends navigated multiple physical and human landscapes as they struggled and endured, forging the backbone of networks of mutual support that eventually provided the vital skills Tubman required to negotiate enslavement and pursue strategies for freedom. But westward expansion would impose a new paradigm on the “migration generations,” who, because of the rise of cotton agriculture in the Deep South and Southwest, would experience the most brutal and unforgiving era of slavery in North America.

⁸³ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, 105–7. Much of this land was taken from Native Americans, who were expelled and driven further west. A discussion of the Louisiana Purchase, which opened vast territories for white settlement can be found in the next chapter. For further discussion of the internal slave trade and forced migration of enslaved people, see also, Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*.

CHAPTER 4

1800–1822

Introduction

As the country faced a new century, more conservative religious interpretations and influences supporting slavery and slaveholding diminished the political and religious ideals of freedom that had previously informed waves of manumissions in the post-Revolutionary War period. A changing local economy and the rise of cotton production in the lower South dramatically altered the incentives for Maryland's slave owners. Rather than manumit their slaves, many planter families began selling them to traders plying Chesapeake communities, looking for fresh sources of labor to satisfy the rapidly expanding southern economies. The banning of the transatlantic slave trade to the United States in 1808 generated further competition for enslaved labor, driving up labor costs to planters. These transitions signal the beginning of sixty years of what Ira Berlin defines as the "migration generations." For black families, the constant possibility of separation emerged in the nineteenth century as one of the greatest threats to their well-being. Slaveholders, anxious and fearful about the security and stability of their enslaved labor force and the growing free black population, responded by creating more restrictive environments.

Harriet Tubman's parents, Ben and Rit Ross, meet and start their family as an enslaved couple on the Anthony Thompson plantation in Peter's Neck, south of Madison on the Big Blackwater River during this period. The Ross family's experiences on these landscapes and interactions with black and white communities begins to take shape in this chapter, witnessed through the creation and transformation of family and community bonds, work patterns, economic independence, and the evolving nature of slavery and freedom.

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Revolution, followed by liberation and independence in Haiti in 1804 sparked hope for the enslaved, while striking fear in slaveholders in the South.¹ Though few in actual numbers, several insurrection plots in the United States during the first few decades of the nineteenth century fed those fears. A plot involving hundreds of armed blacks, led by an enslaved blacksmith named Gabriel in

¹ The Haitian Revolution started in 1791.

Richmond, Virginia, in August 1800 shook slavery's foundations in the Chesapeake. Thwarted at the last minute, Virginia authorities captured Gabriel and several co-conspirators, gleaned confessions by torture, and then conducted public hangings. Gabriel showed no remorse and his men defiantly claimed they wanted to fight for freedom, "a natural right."² Slaveholders, again, were reminded that the spirit of rebellion resided in the hearts and minds of enslaved people, and were forced to examine the moral and economic viability of enslaving human beings in a nation founded on independence and "liberty" from tyranny. In 1805, an enslaved man named Doff plotted "to raise an Insurrection to kill the white citizens" of Dorchester County. A quick trial and hanging temporarily satisfied anxious slaveholders.³ Less than a decade later, during the War of 1812, British forces established a base on Tangier Island at the mouth of the Chesapeake, where they made numerous successful attempts to entice bondspeople away from their owners to join the ranks of the British military, as the "Colonial Marines." Jerry, Martha, and their three children, Joseph, Mary, and Jerry fled to the British in 1814 from Benjamin Phillips, a slaveholder on Hooper's Island in Dorchester.⁴ Visions of armed former slaves renewed slaveholders' deep-seated fears of insurrection and reignited fears of British-slave collusion reminiscent of the Revolutionary War period.⁵

² Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*. 84–89.

³ Debbie Moxley, *Dorchester County Criminal Court Docket, 1791–1805* (Cambridge, MD: Privately Printed. Dorchester County Historical Society, 1986).

⁴ "Slavery and the War of 1812 - Case Studies in Maryland," <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/warcountys.html> (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives).

⁵ Christopher George, *Terror on the Chesapeake. The War of 1812 on the Bay* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 2000), 68–69. The last battle of the war in the Chesapeake took place on Taylor's Island, a short distance from the NM boundaries. Called the Battle of the Ice Mound, a small group of local men from nearby Madison captured the British sloop Dauntless after its crew raided the town. See Robert G. Stewart, "The Battle of the Ice Mound, February 7, 1815," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 70 (1975).

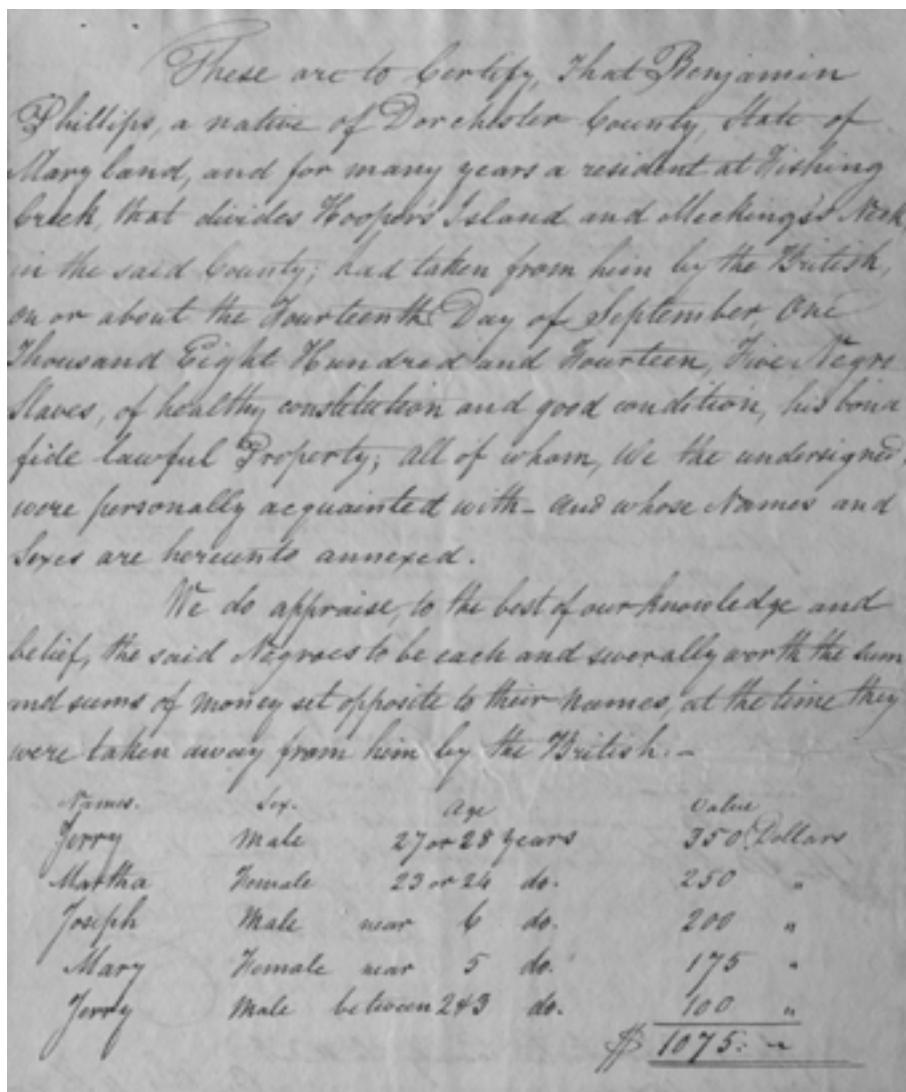


Figure 4.1. A portion of Benjamin Phillips's War of 1812 reparations claim for the loss of his enslaved people, Jerry, Martha, Joseph, Mary (child), Jerry (child.) National Archives.

Serious discussions of deporting free and enslaved blacks to Africa and some British colonies sparked resettlement proposals, but slaveholder's dependence on unfree labor in the Chesapeake soon diverted attention to the "problem" of free people of color, not the enslaved or the institution of slavery. One response to the fear of free black "agitators" and activists was the founding of the colonization movement, which sought to remove free blacks from the United States by sending them back to Africa. Starting in the mid-1810s, the movement gained many supporters—primarily white slave owners in the South but also northern whites disturbed by growing free black populations. Free blacks were a small minority within the movement, arguing that life in Africa would free them from oppression and discrimination they endured in America. Established in 1816, the American Colonization Society expanded rapidly, with state societies forming during the next two

decades, including the Maryland Colonization Society, founded in 1827.⁶ The colonization movement sponsored and funded the travel expenses of free and newly emancipated enslaved people to Cape Palmas, Liberia, a newly created country taken from indigenous Africans through purchase and forced displacement on the west coast of Africa.⁷ Several Dorchester County slaveholders and free blacks encouraged the migration. Stephen Benson, a free-born African American from Cambridge, moved to Cape Palmas with his family in 1822, among the first of many to follow.⁸ Colonization schemes blossomed over the next forty years, with limited results.⁹



Figure 4.2. Stephen Allen Benson, born in Cambridge, MD. Benson became the second president of Liberia.
Library of Congress.

President Thomas Jefferson's purchase of the Louisiana Territory for a mere \$15,000,000 from France in 1803—nearly 830,000 square miles west of the Mississippi

⁶ Jerry M. Hynson, *Maryland Colonization Society Manumission Book, 1832–1860*, vol. 3, Maryland Freedom Papers (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2010). Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 141–42.

⁷ For a brief history of Liberia, see Allan Huffman, “Tumult and transition in ‘Little America,’” Smithsonian Magazine, November 2003. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/tumult-and-transition-in-little-america-92437262/>

⁸ Benson later served in a variety of military and political positions, eventually becoming president of Liberia in 1856. See Dr. Kay Najiyyah McKelvey, “Early Black Dorchester, 1776–1870: A History of the Struggle of African Americans in Dorchester County, Maryland, to Be Free to Make Their Own Choices,” ed. University of Maryland College Park (University of Michigan International (UMI), 1990), 220–22.

⁹ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 91–93. Some of the Dorchester County people include Dr. Anthony Thompson and free blacks Stephen Benson, Benjamin Jenifer and Thomas Fuller.

River—doubled the size of the United States.¹⁰ The acquisition had dire consequences for the enslaved. Growing demand for unfree labor in the Deep South and the Southwest generated a human marketplace that transferred enslaved people in the Upper South/Chesapeake to the South, Midwest, and Southwest, destroying and separating families and condemning more generations of people of African descent to lifelong bondage.



Figure 4.3. Map of the United States of America: with the contiguous British and Spanish possessions, 1816.
Library of Congress.

The banning of the transatlantic slave trade to the United States in 1808 generated further competition for enslaved labor, driving up labor costs to planters. Slaveholders in the mid-Atlantic met those needs, choosing profits in their pockets over manumitting their human property, sparking a dramatic increase in the interstate commerce in enslaved labor, the beginning of seventy years of what Ira Berlin defines as the “migration generations.” From 1790 to 1860, slaveholders in the Chesapeake sold more than 1 million women, men, and children, including infants to the Deep South, the Mississippi Valley, and western markets, forcibly tearing them from their homes.¹¹

Additional threats to black families emerged on the Eastern Shore when some white planters uprooted their families to settle lands opening for development in the South and the West, bringing their enslaved people with them. Younger residents of Dorchester

¹⁰ Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), 170–71, 251; Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 163–71.

¹¹ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 161.

County migrated to North Carolina, Georgia, and farther west and south in search of better opportunities.¹² Both migrations—enslaved captives accompanying their migrating enslavers and those sold and forcibly transferred—would constitute a “second middle passage,” and rapidly expand the institution of slavery across a vast swath of America’s geography not only east of the Mississippi River but west and north, too.¹³ In Dorchester County, thousands of enslaved people were sent by their migrating enslavers to, or sold to traders and buyers from, Kentucky, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Missouri.¹⁴ William and Thomas Hayward of Dorchester County, for instance, moved their families to Tallahassee, Florida; as early settlers they became part of that territory’s economic and political power structure. Their enslaved people suffered permanent separation from their families and friends.¹⁵

More conservative religious interpretations and influences supporting slavery and slaveholding further diminished the political and religious ideals of freedom that had previously informed waves of manumissions in the years after the Revolution. Free and enslaved blacks constituted twenty-five percent of Methodist converts before the Revolution; by 1800 they were so numerous that white congregants enforced strict segregated seating, either in balconies, back pews, or outside. Other religious groups did the same. Earlier integrated fellowship in private homes and small chapels gave way to widespread racial discrimination, ceding earlier anti-slavery sentiment to more powerful pro-slavery ideology. The Baptist Church in Woolford, just outside the National Monument boundaries at the intersection of Taylors Island Road and Harrisville Road, is an example of this trend. Established in 1791, the church featured segregated entrances and a “slave balcony” for black congregants.¹⁶

¹² See Debra Moxie, “Thompson Land Records,” in *Dorchester County Land Records Abstracts by James McAllister, Jr.* (Dorchester Co., MD: Dorchester County Genealogical Magazine, n.d.); and D. F. Thompson, “The Thompson Family in Dorchester County and Maryland,” *Democrat and News*, Jan. 7, 1910. “The Thompsons in Dorchester,” *Democrat and News*, Jan. 28, 1910. Kay Najiyyah McElvey, “Early Black Dorchester, 1776–1870: A History of the Struggle of African Americans in Dorchester County, Maryland, to Be Free to Make Their Own Choices,” ed. University of Maryland (College Park, MD, 1991). Anthony Thompson’s brother, Thomas, for instance, sold the majority of his landholdings, furniture and other property throughout the 1780s and early 1790s in preparation for a move to North Carolina. In 1803, Edward Brodess Sr., sold his property and set out for Mississippi with several other family members.

¹³ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, 157–63.

¹⁴ See Dorchester County Court, “Chattel Records,” in *Dorchester County Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives). “Land Records; Johnson, Soul by Soul; The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas. See also, Sydney Howard Gay, “Record of Fugitives 1855 [–1856],” in *Sydney Howard Gay Papers, 1743–1931*, ed. Columbia University (Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1855–1856). “Statement of Eliza Manoga,” Miscellaneous Manuscript note. Eliza Manokey told Gay that a nephew of her enslaver Ann Staplefort Grieves to her enslaved son to Missouri.

¹⁵ Freedmen’s Bureau, “Freedmen’s Bureau Bank Records” (Salt Lake City: Church of the Latter Day Saints, 1866–1876).

¹⁶ “Woolford Baptist Meeting House, D-231.”



Figure 4.8. Woolford's Baptist Meeting House, established in 1791 in Dorchester County, MD (left); Segregated entrance door at Woolford's Baptist Meeting House (right). Maryland Historical Trust.

Beginning in the 1790s, African Americans in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and New England broke free from established churches because of this discrimination. They created their own denominations and built their own churches, including the African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches, featuring black preachers and governing boards. On the Eastern Shore, the independent black church movement came later in the 1830s, modified to accommodate white overseers who monitored black preachers and membership activities.¹⁷

Between 1800 and 1810, Dorchester's enslaved population increased ten percent to 5,032, while statewide it grew almost six percent. The county's free black population rose 12.5 percent, mimicking the statewide growth of 13 percent, but during the same period Dorchester's free black population embodied 34% of the total African American inhabitants, compared to 30 percent statewide.¹⁸ This human landscape, part free, part enslaved, is where Harriet Tubman's parents came of age.

On June 14, 1801, Mary Pattison Brodess gave birth to a son, Edward. Within a year her husband Joseph was dead, and she quickly married again.¹⁹ Anthony Thompson had lost his wife, Polly, and with three young boys at home he needed a wife to manage his household; she needed someone to support her and her young son. Mary's rapid remarriage represents the realities of life for women in colonial and antebellum Maryland. Her first husband possessed few assets—250 acres of unimproved land near Bucktown, four enslaved people, and few other sources of wealth. Those assets, by virtue of inheritance

¹⁷ Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 95–97.

¹⁸ Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, 86–88.

¹⁹ Debra Moxie, *Great Choptank Parish Records* (Cambridge, MD.: Dorchester County Historical and Genealogical Society).

laws of the time, now belonged to Edward, not Mary. Securing her future and that of her son by marrying within the community to a man of better social and financial standing ensured her survival.

Mary moved six miles from her home near her mother Elizabeth Pattison at the Little Blackwater Bridge to Thompson's expanding plantation at Peter's Neck along the Blackwater River and Thompson's Creek. She brought young Rit Green, and three or four enslaved men, possibly Shadrack, Frederick, and Sam, to Thompson's now-one-thousand-acre estate.²⁰ Through Mary and Anthony's marriage, Rit and Ben Ross became members of the same household, eventually marrying and starting their own family around 1808.²¹ By 1810, Thompson enslaved 15 people—the additions from nine in 1800 could be Rit, the four men, and perhaps Rit's young daughter, Linah, who was born around 1808.²² Sometime before the census was taken in 1810, Mary Pattison Brodess died, leaving her minor son and her enslaved people under Thompson's guardianship.²³ Rit presumably worked for Thompson or was hired out by him for the benefit of young Edward Brodess's future inheritance, enabling Rit and Ben to maintain a stable family life. Their young family grew to four children by 1820; in addition to Linah, who was born in 1808; Mariah Ritty arrived around 1811, Soph in 1813, and Robert in 1816.²⁴

²⁰ Eastern Shore Court of Appeals, "Edward Brodess in Account with Anthony Thompson His Guardian for the Years 1821 and 1822," in *Edward Brodess, Jr. v. Anthony Thompson* (Annapolis: MDSA, 1828).

²¹ This is the estimated date based on testimony given by Rev. Dr. Anthony C. Thompson in October 1853. He said that Rit's eldest daughter, Linah, was approximately 45 years of age. I have used the term "married" to recognize the known and documented committed relationship Rit Green and Ben Ross shared until their deaths in the latter part of the 19th century. Thompson, "Thompson Deposition."

²² Ibid.

²³ Bureau of the Census, "United States Federal Census," (1810). Thompson is listed as "Anthony Thomas." This household includes 1 male under ten years old, who is assumed to be Edward Brodess. There are three other males, ages sixteen to twenty-six, who are probably Thompson's sons, Edward, Anthony and Absalom. There is one female under ten years of age. The identity of this child is unknown; she may be Thompson's niece Barsheba whom he identifies in his will in 1836. In 1810 Thompson petitioned the Orphans Court, and in 1811 was awarded guardianship of Edward Brodess, thus legally assuming responsibility for maintaining Edward's inheritance, feeding and clothing him, as well as providing for his education. Dorchester County Court, "Dorchester County Short Judgments, 1818–1827," in *Dorchester County Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives), 157.

²⁴ See Thompson, "Thompson Deposition." Eliza Ann Brodess, "Three Hundred Dollars Reward," Cambridge Democrat, October 3, 1849. Emma P. Telford, "Harriet: The Modern Moses of Heroism and Visions," in *Harriet Tubman File* (Auburn, NY: Cayuga County Museum, circa 1905).

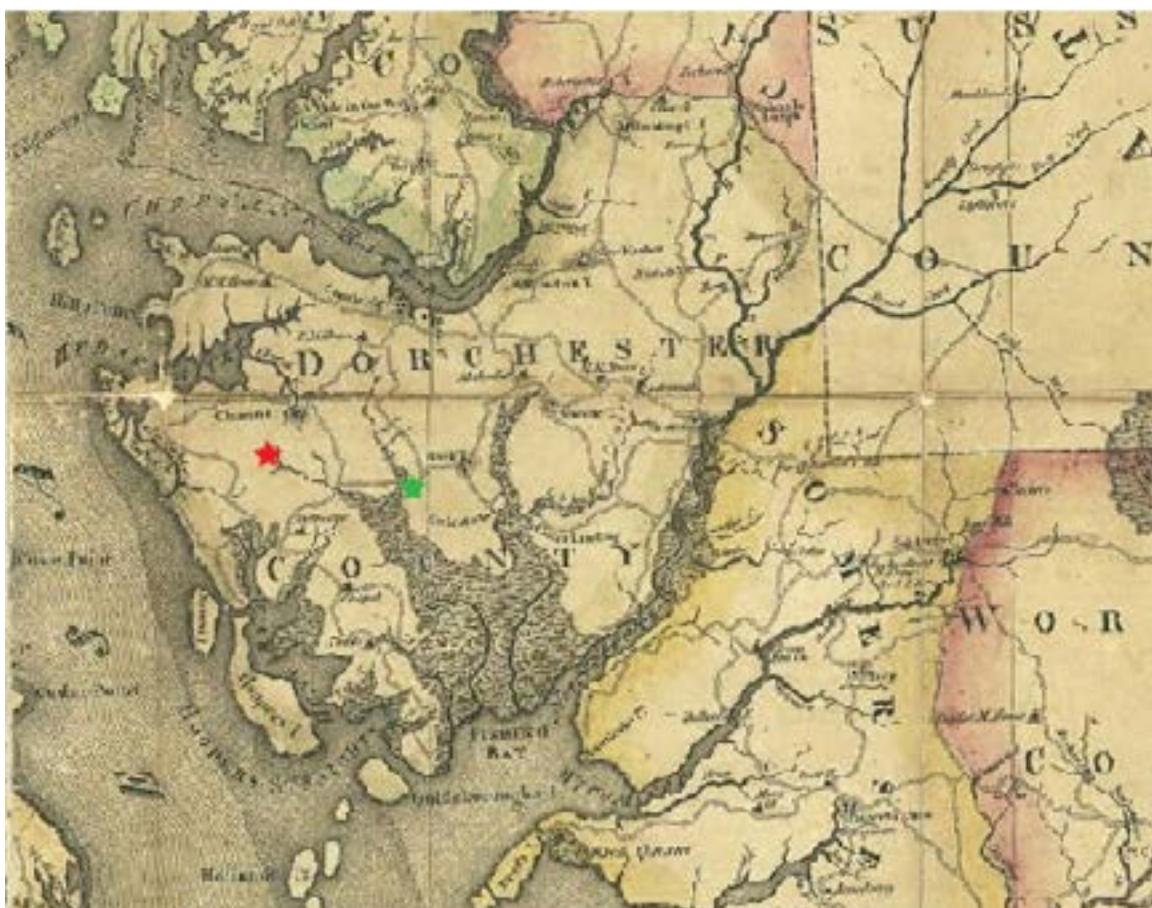


Figure 4.9. Dorchester County portion of 1794 map by Dennis Griffith, showing Pattison farm (right) location at Little Blackwater Bridge and Thompson plantation (left) along the Blackwater River. Dorchester County in “Map of the State of Maryland” by Dennis Griffith, 1794. Library of Congress.

Although it is unclear as to how Anthony Thompson came to own Ben Ross, Ben may have had extensive kin relationships with both free and enslaved people in the Peter’s Neck area and beyond.²⁵ The landscapes of relationships span many miles and generations. Harriet Tubman’s grandmother, Modesty, lived on Pattison’s property for an undetermined number of years after Rit left with Mary and moved to the Thompson plantation. Though the Thompson plantation sat about 6 miles to the west of the Pattison plantation and their neighbors along the Little Blackwater River near the bridge, their interactions were likely frequent and essential to maintaining social, political, and economic wellbeing. One Pattison neighbor, Dorothy Staplefort, whose farm sat just across the Little Blackwater

²⁵ Anthony C. Thompson, “List of Anthony Thompson’s Negroes, 1839,” in *Levin Richardson Collection, 1758–1865* (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society). This list of enslaved people was created in 1839 subsequent to the death of Anthony Thompson Sr. and served as a guide to Dr. Anthony C. Thompson and his brother, Dr. Absalom Thompson, for the distribution of the estate’s forty-three enslaved people. Next to each person’s name Thompson listed his or her time left to serve, as well as notes on their “Relations.” Next to Ben Ross’s name (first name on the list and the person with the least amount of time to serve as of January 1839) Thompson noted: “Wife and Children belonging to Edward Brodess.” No documentation survives showing that Anthony Thompson purchased or sold any of his enslaved people.

River maintained close ties to the Thompsons as evidenced through relationships created by the enslaved people she owned. A full one third of Thompson's enslaved people carried the surname "Manokey" or "Manoca," like several of Staplefort's enslaved people. Two of Thompson's enslaved men, Bill Banks and Isaac Kiah, were married to women enslaved by the Stapleforts, who by law also enslaved their children. Tubman's sister, Linah, married Harkless Jolly, one of the Stapleforts' enslaved men.²⁶

By the 1830s approximately fifty free black families lived in the immediate area around the Thompson properties, the great majority having intermarried with dozens more enslaved families held in bondage to neighboring local white landowners.²⁷ On the Eastern Shore of Maryland, most black people, enslaved and free alike, moved around according to the land ownership patterns, occupational choices, and living arrangements of the region's white families. Many black families maintained familial and community ties throughout a broad geographic area. Family separations were not always precipitated by sale; some whites owned (or rented) land and farms miles apart, requiring a shifting of their enslaved and hired black labor force throughout the year, or over a period of years when new land had been purchased and the cycle of clearing and establishing new farms began. White women left their familial homes when they wed, bringing enslaved people—usually enslaved women or girls—to their new husband's household.²⁸ This pattern of intra-regional movement forced people to create communication and travel networks enabling them to maintain ties to family, community, and business. Navigation along the rivers—the distance by water was significantly shorter than traveling by rudimentary roads—facilitated the building and preservation of social and familial networks of black and white families.

Between 1800 and 1810, Anthony Thompson constructed a new home on his plantation at Peter's Neck. The property contained rich resources in white and red oak, arable land for crops, and navigable water to ship and receive goods. The Federal style wood frame home replaced a log house built during the last half of the eighteenth century

²⁶ See Estate Papers of Dorothy Staplefort, "Last Will and Testament of Dorothy Staplefort." Liber THH 1, Folio 251 (December 22, 1835) *Register of Wills, Dorchester County Court House*; and Estate Papers" List of Anthony Thompson's Negroes, 1839." Levin Richardson Collection, 1758–1865. MS 1405. Maryland Historical Society. Baltimore, MD. See also, "Last Will and Testament of Anthony Thompson." Liber THH 1, Estate No. 0-65-C. *Register of Wills, Dorchester County Court House*. Estate No. 0-65-C. Cambridge, MD. See also *ibid*. Atthow Pattison, "Will of Atthow Pattison, Est. #0-35-E." Dorchester County Court House, Registrar of Wills. Cambridge, MD. Bill Banks was a free man when Eliza ran away. He was set free in February 1846. See "Anthony C. Thompson to John Manoca and William Banks, Negroes." *Dorchester County Court Chattel Records*. C691. 1-4-4-43, MDSA.

²⁷ See U.S. Census, Dorchester County, MD, 1830; and see Estate Papers of Dorothy Staplefort, "Last Will and Testament of Dorothy Staplefort." Liber THH 1, Folio 251 (December 22, 1835) *Register of Wills, Dorchester County Court House*. Cambridge, MD. In 1835, Dorothy Staplefort enslaved 35 men, women and children

²⁸ Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 21. Jones-Rogers's research reveals that parents were far more likely to gift enslaved females. Enslaved males brought higher prices in the marketplace, and male heirs generally acquired them. Nevertheless, enslaved women, as Jones-Rogers points out, represented more potential wealth through their ability to deliver enslaved children into the future.

and represented Thompson's ascent to the upper middle class. Barns and outbuildings for animals, equipment, a smoke house, a creamery or icehouse, wharves, wells, and slave quarters may have improved the property. Under the direction of enslaved people, horses, mules, and oxen delivered transportation and the power to plow, till, and harvest the fields and haul timber in the forests, while cattle and milch cows, sheep, chickens, geese, goats, and pigs provided food and clothing. They grew corn, wheat, potatoes, squash, greens, and beans, and set seines to catch fish, traps for muskrats, and snares for rabbits and other small animals. The property hosted hollowed sweet gum logs for beehives. Cords of chopped wood, wood planks, and shingles stood piled nearby. A wharf, or "landing" on Thompson's Creek, and another on the Blackwater River at Indian Landing Road to the west, served small vessels.²⁹

An "architectural masterpiece" with "more sophistication than most houses in the area," the house, sixty feet by forty feet and two and one-half stories high with chimneys at either end, was grand for its day. Federal style details on mantles, walls, stairs, and doors reveal fine carpentry and milling.³⁰ Ben Ross, a skilled man and "timber inspector" who "superintended the cutting and hauling of great quantities of timber for the Baltimore shipyards," for Thompson, probably helped build the home with other enslaved and free carpenters.³¹



Figure 4.10. Anthony Thompson's home built circa 1800–1810. Photo circa 1917.
The house collapsed during the 1970s. Courtesy Karen Brooks.

²⁹ Anthony Thompson, "Last Will and Testament of Anthony Thompson," in *Register of Wills, Dorchester County Court House* (Cambridge, MD: Estate No. 0-65-C, May 12, 1836); John D. Parker, "John D. Parker [Estate] Inventory," in *Registrar of Wills*, ed. Dorchester County Court House (Cambridge, MD 1868).

³⁰ "Brooks Farm, D-36."

³¹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 75.

Throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first two decades of the nineteenth century, Thompson continued to expand his landholdings throughout the region, buying vast tracks of forest that his enslaved people, including Ben Ross, set about cutting and shipping. Thompson was one of the more enterprising landowners in the area taking advantage of the changing economic opportunities in Dorchester County. A growing demand for timber to supply shipbuilders along the shore, particularly at Church Creek, Madison [Tobacco Stick,] Cambridge, and further away in Annapolis, Baltimore, and beyond to New England fueled better financial prospects for Dorchester landowners.³² When demand depleted timber resources on the Upper Shore, Thompson and other Dorchester County speculators invested heavily in forested land in the western and southern districts of the county, and their supplies of oak, pine, and maple proved crucial to shipbuilders near and far.

To support timbering and farming on newly cleared land, Thompson and his neighbors also relied on free labor to supplement their enslaved workers. In response, free black laborers settled in this region, creating a blended community of enslaved and free black families. Many of these laborers also worked to cut Stewart's Canal, now called Coursey's Creek. The canal, initiated around 1811, connected Parson's Creek to the head of the Blackwater River to help move timber and agricultural products quickly and efficiently out of the region. Completed in 1832, the canal eventually connected Madison Bay via an additional branch that rerouted and expanded the original Parson's Creek to Blackwater access. These canal diggers and their free and enslaved family members augmented pre-existing communities and established long-term viable blended communities, which survived into the twentieth century, supplying the labor to harvest and ship the timber for decades.

³² Geoffrey M. Footner, *Tidewater Triumph: The Development and Worldwide Success of the Chesapeake Pilot Schooner*. (Cantreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1998), 136.

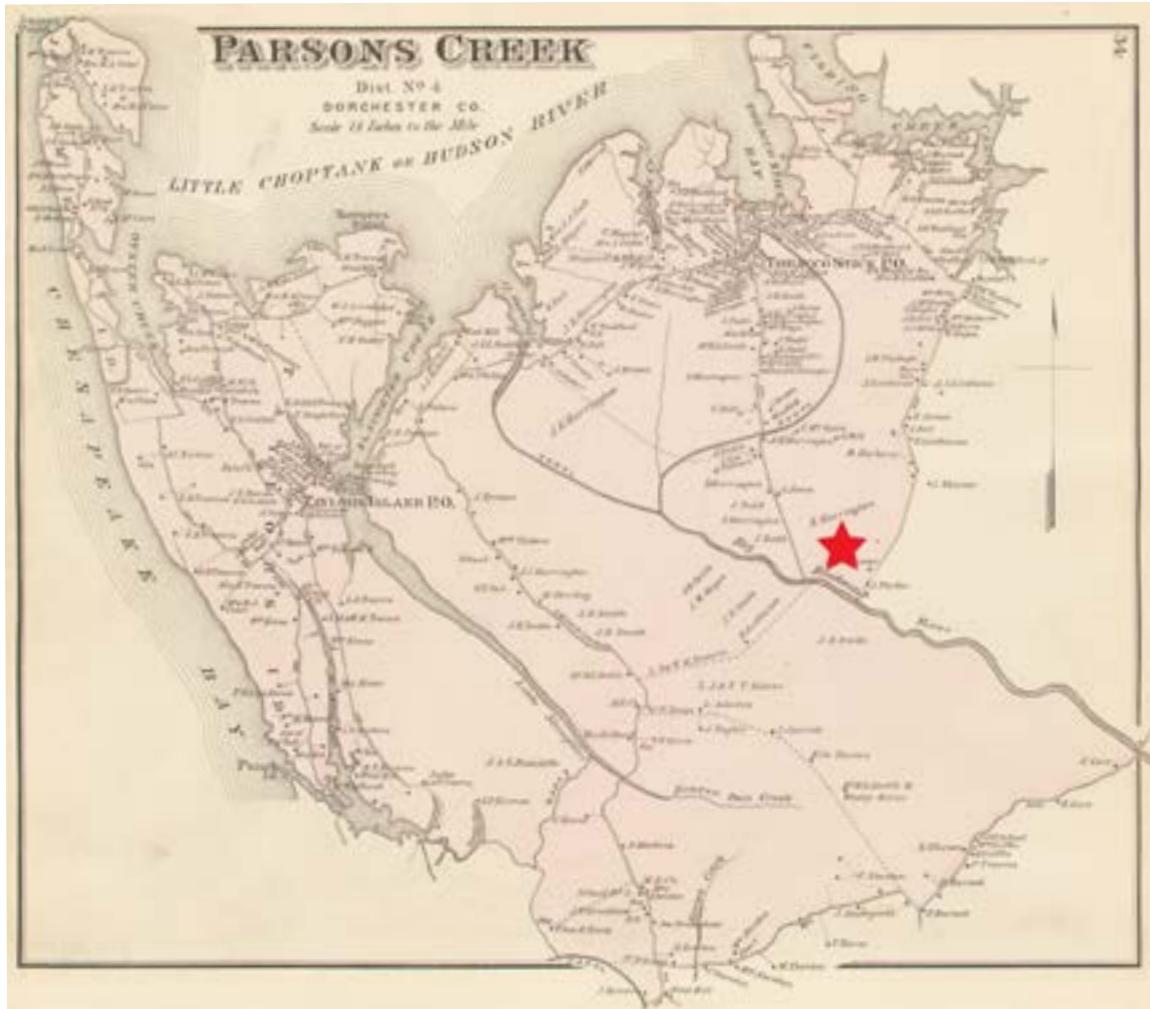


Figure 4.11. Stewart's Canal linking Parson's Creek, the Blackwater River, and Tobaccos Stick [Madison] Bay as shown on 1877 map. (Thompson home plantation starred. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.)

The lives of free people of color in Maryland was highly circumscribed however, and as their population grew, white people further challenged their freedoms by enacting new laws and codes restricting their political rights and economic options. In 1776, all free landowners, black and white, could vote; by 1783, only those blacks who had been free prior to 1783 and owned property could vote. In 1796, African Americans could no longer testify against a white person in court. And finally, in 1802 Maryland legislators stripped free propertied blacks of voting rights entirely, just as landless whites were gaining access to the vote.³³

Some of the free black households throughout Peter's Neck were likely related to families enslaved by Thompson. Simon Ross, who was born free but who may have been a blood relative to Ben Ross, also lived here, constituting another part of this dynamic black community whose labor supported the commercial and agricultural aspirations of the

³³ Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, 119–20.

area's white landowners. This community constituted Tubman's family's primary familial and social world.³⁴

The Pattisons, Thompsons, and the Stewarts, who lived in Madison, all practiced various forms of manumission, supplementing a vibrant and tightly knit black community that proved crucial to the survival of Tubman and family over decades of harsh enslavement. On July 28, 1817, Levin Stewart, a prosperous shipbuilder, manumitted his enslaved people "for diverse good causes and considerations." Their freedom varied from immediate emancipation to liberty 30 years in the future. Six-month-old Dick Bowley had thirty-one years to serve, while his mother Binah, aged twenty-eight, would be free in 1827, ten years later.³⁵ Binah could have been African born, like Modesty, Harriet's grandmother.³⁶ Perhaps married to a free black, Binah had five children, all enslaved by Stewart. Her two other boys, Major and John Bowley were liberated in the 1817 deed; two daughters, Harriet and Terry were born later, and Stewart amended his manumissions to include them.³⁷ Living and working in the same area of Dorchester county, they would become part of a well-established free black community centered around Harrisville Road, White Marsh, and the shipyards in Madison, Church Creek and later, in Cambridge.

Levin's friend, James Pattison, followed suit that September. Rev. John Seward, a prominent local Methodist minister, may have influenced both Pattison and Stewart. Seward, who probably acquired his more than thirty enslaved people through his three marriages, manumitted them all on a staggered manumission schedule, much like Stewart. Perhaps Seward had directly pleaded with his congregants to do as he did.³⁸ These three manumission deeds from 1817 represent a significant portion of not only manumissions for that year, but because of the staggered manumission schedules, these groups of slaves represent a noteworthy number of the many Certificates of Freedom to be awarded during the next four decades. Trained as shipwrights and carpenters, blacksmiths and sail makers, these enslaved people, like the Bowleys, were part of an elite group of highly skilled enslaved people. They were also highly mobile, too, affording them unusual freedom. After Levin died in 1825, Joseph and Levin's son John T. honored the manumission schedules set by Levin before his death.

³⁴ This community is quite evident in the U.S. Census 1820–1870 for the area centered on White Marsh, Harrisville, Oldfield and Buttons Neck Roads, south of Madison, Woolford and Church Creek to the Blackwater River.

³⁵ Levin Stewart, "Levin Stewart to Sundry Negroes," in *Dorchester County Court, Court Papers, 1797–1851. Original Papers* (Annapolis: MDSA, July 28, 1817). See also, Elaine McGill, *Certificates of Freedom, Dorchester County Court 1806–1864*, ed. transcriber (Privately Printed, 2001). This is a transcription of the actual Certificates of Freedom Record Book, 1806–1864 for Dorchester County held at the Maryland State Archives.

³⁶ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall's research into slave names indicates that Binah was an African name, Muslim in origin and generally found on the West Coast of Africa.

³⁷ Stewart, "Levin Stewart Manumission."

³⁸ John Seward, "John Seward to Sundry Negroes, January 15, 1817," in *Dorchester County Court, Court Papers, 1743–1849. Original Papers*. (Annapolis: MDSA, 1817). Stewart later moved to Georgetown and sold or gave many of his enslaved people to his brother Joseph, and his son, John T. Stewart.

In 1814, Anthony Thompson petitioned the Maryland Assembly to open a road from the Baptist Meeting House in Woolford, south to “Indian Landing on Black Water River,” passing near and through his property.³⁹ Called Thompson’s New Road, and then later, Harrisville Road, it provided access for Thompson and his white neighbors the Fitzhughs, Joneses, Robinsons, and free and enslaved people to navigable water and markets on either end; Church Creek and the Little Choptank River to the north, and the Big Blackwater River and Fishing Bay to the south, easing transportation of timber and agricultural products. Remnants of an old historic corduroy road—a roadbed lined with oak timbers and used to aid oxen and horses grip the road surface when hauling heavy loads—is visible at low tide where the road ends at the Blackwater River. A wooden footbridge straddles the river at this point today.

Travel by water remained the major avenue of transportation for people and products. Maritime industries and activities supported systems of exchange for commercial, transportation, communication, and social purposes, linking the Eastern Shore to national and global events, people, and markets. Information, goods, culture, and language traveled the globe via black and white sailors navigating from port to port, connecting communities by facilitating the exchange of vital news and information from outside the region. These maritime workers managed a broad network of informants, but black mariners and watermen participated in a dual network; one open and accessible by whites and blacks, and a second operated secretly for the benefit of African Americans, free and enslaved.⁴⁰

Despite the inequities and injustices of enslavement, Rit and Ben appeared to have maintained a relatively stable family life at Peter’s Neck. Young Edward Brodess and his mother Mary lived there, too; if Mary had children with Thompson, they died too young to be registered in the region’s baptismal records.⁴¹ Sometime before the census was taken in 1810, Mary Pattison Brodess Thompson died, leaving her minor son and enslaved people

³⁹ *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland* [Vol. 192], vol. 192, Chapter CXXIX, Jan. 28, 1814, Archives of Maryland (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 2002), 1529. Court, “Land Records.” Liber ER folio 613. The road was completed in 1817.

⁴⁰ See Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*. And, W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seaman in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). David S. Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁴¹ Bureau of the Census, “United States Federal Census,” (1820). There is a girl, between the ages of ten and fourteen in the Thompson household in 1820. Her name may be Barsheba Thompson, but more research is needed to confirm how she is related. Thompson may have fathered a son out of wedlock, too. A young man, William Williams, petitioned the court in 1830 to legally change his name to William W. Thompson. Anthony Thompson subsequently gifted land and other assets to William. Maryland General Assembly, “An Act to Change the Name of William W. Williams, of Dorchester County, to That of William W. Thompson,” ed. Session Laws (Annapolis: Maryland General Assembly, 1830).

in the care of Thompson, Edward's stepfather and guardian.⁴² Though legally enslaved by young Brodess, Rit continued working for Thompson or hired out by him for the benefit of the boy's small inheritance, enabling her to maintain a home with Ben. Thompson was legally bound by Maryland law to use income from Brodess's inheritance for the maintenance and education of his ward, only, and to secure and preserve the estate's assets for Brodess's use once he reached the age of maturity after June 22, 1822.⁴³

The 1810s brought economic uncertainty to Eastern Shore residents. While demand for export products such as grain and timber reached all-time highs during the War of 1812, peace brought European products flooding back into American markets. Grain and timber prices dropped dramatically, severely affecting Eastern Shore businesspeople. Chesapeake farmers, manufacturers, and merchants faced increasing competition and barriers to trade with escalating tariffs and taxes imposed on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴⁴ The fortunes of many of Dorchester's elite families waned; in fact, even Thompson, one of the county's largest landholders and slaveowners and a pillar of the community, was imprisoned for debt in 1817. Some Dorchester individuals and families struck out for the west and Deep South in search of better economic opportunities. Despite debt problems, Anthony Thompson recovered, enabling him to expand his landholdings and rebuild his wealth.

In June 1820, the Orphans Court of Dorchester County authorized Anthony Thompson to proceed with the construction of a house, "a single story 32 by 20 [ft.] two rooms below with two plank floors and brick chimney, and also a barn of good material" on Edward Brodess's inherited farm near Bucktown. Built under the supervision of Brodess's uncle, Gourney Crow Pattison (his mother, Mary's, brother), the house and barn cost thirteen hundred dollars, improvements that nearly exceeded the value of his liquid inheritance.⁴⁵ At the time, Thompson kept meticulous income and expenses account records for Brodess's estate. He hired Brodess's four enslaved people - Frederick, Shadrack, Sam, and Rit—crediting the estate's accounts for what he paid for their labor and debiting them for lost time due to sickness or injury. He charged Brodess's estate for clothing and feeding Rit's children who were too young to force into labor. He recorded expenses from a local tailor and shop keeper for clothing and "sundries" for young

⁴² Census, "United States Federal Census." Thompson is listed as "Anthony Thomas." This household includes 1 male under ten years old, presumably Edward Brodess. There are three other males, ages sixteen to twenty-six and likely Thompson's sons, Edward, Anthony, and Absalom. There is one female under ten years of age. The identity of this child is unknown; she may be Thompson's niece Barsheba whom he identifies in his will in 1836. In 1810 Thompson petitioned the Orphans Court, and in 1811 was awarded guardianship of Edward Brodess, thus legally assuming responsibility for maintaining Edward's inheritance, feeding and clothing him, as well as providing for his education. Court, "Short," 157.

⁴³ Appeals, "Brodess V. Thompson."

⁴⁴ Brugger, *Maryland*, 196–99.

⁴⁵ *Brodess V. Thompson*; Appeals, "Brodess V. Thompson."

Edward, too, including pricey items like silk stockings, gold buttons, fancy shirts and coats, shoes, and hats.⁴⁶

By the time the census taker recorded Thompson's household that year, thirty-nine enslaved people lived on his property, including the Ross family. The largest slaveholder in the district, Thompson owned more than four-and-one-half percent of all the enslaved people in Election District 3—an area stretching from Church Creek to Madison and south to the Blackwater River, a large portion of which sits with the NM boundaries. Three-hundred-and-eighty-seven free blacks living in the district represented almost 50 percent of African Americans and twenty-two percent of all free people in the area.⁴⁷

For Ben and Rit and their family, the crisis of separation loomed as Brodess approached twenty-one in 1822, the age of maturity and the legal age at which he could claim his inheritance and independence from his stepfather's control. Now, the Ross family's seemingly stable life was about to change dramatically.

Summary

The opening of Deep South lands and the newly opened territories west of the Mississippi for cotton, rice, sugar and indigo production put pressure on labor supplies. Grain, corn, flax, and other foodstuffs production replaced tobacco on the Eastern Shore reducing the need for year-round enslaved labor source. Growing demand for unfree labor in the Deep South generated a human marketplace, which physically transferred thousands of enslaved people in the Upper South/Chesapeake to the South, Midwest, and Southwest, destroying and separating families and condemning more generations of people of African descent to lifelong bondage. The banning of the transatlantic slave trade to the United States in 1808 generated further competition for enslaved labor, driving up labor costs to planters. Slaveholders in the mid-Atlantic met those needs, sparking a dramatic increase in the interstate commerce in enslaved labor. These transitions and events signal the beginning of sixty years of migration generations. Additional threats to black families emerged on the Eastern Shore when some white planters uprooted their own families and enslaved people to claim land opening for development in the South and West. Denied their freedom and autonomy, Harriet Ross Tubman's enslaved family begins to take shape, forging kin and community relationships in the face of daily threats to their familial and social bonds.

⁴⁶ "Brodess V. Thompson."

⁴⁷ Census, "United States Federal Census." Election District 3. Total free blacks: 387; whites: 1,354; enslaved people: 818.

PART TWO

Harriet Ross Tubman Occupation Period—

Birth, Enslavement, Freedom, and the Underground Railroad

CHAPTER 5

1822–1835

Introduction

Born to enslaved parents, Harriet Ross was the fifth of nine children of Harriet “Rit” Green and Benjamin Ross. The Ross family’s relatively stable life on the Thompson plantation abruptly came to an end when Edward Brodess claimed his rights to his property, including his enslaved people, from his stepfather Anthony Thompson during the early 1820s. Moving to Brodess’s farm in Bucktown marked the beginning of heartbreaking family separations through hiring out and sales of Tubman’s sisters. Her childhood and young adulthood would be brutal, physically and emotionally. Nearly killed as the result of a horrific head injury, Tubman survived to grow strong, deeply spiritual, and accomplished.

.....

Harriet Tubman, like most enslaved people, was uncertain of her own birth date. Franklin Sanborn, a close friend and biographer who wrote in 1863 that Tubman was born “as near as she can remember, in 1820 or in 1821, in Dorchester County, on the Eastern shore of Maryland, and not far from the town of Cambridge.”¹ Frederick Douglass, abolitionist, statesman, and self-liberator was also a native of the Eastern Shore. He, too, was unsure of the date of his birth. “I have no accurate knowledge of my age,” he wrote in his autobiography in 1845, “never having seen any authentic record containing it. By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant. I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday. They seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time.”²

¹ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].”

² Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Written by Himself*, ed. Benjamin Quarles (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1971; repr., 6th), 23.

Anthony Thompson's record keeping provides a clue: on March 15, 1822, he paid a midwife two dollars to attend to Rit.³ This is likely a record of Harriet Tubman's birth that day or sometime during the days or even a week or two prior to that date. When Tubman was born, Rit would have been still under the control of, and working for, Thompson as he managed his minor stepson's inherited assets. He hired Rit for sixteen dollars per year, though he deducted expenses for "lost time...board and attendance" during a period of sickness.⁴ This may have been for lost time associated with her pregnancy, though there are similar debits for lost time for Sam and Frederick, suggesting they may have suffered from a local epidemic of some sort.⁵ He listed expenses for "board and clothing for two Negro children," from January to November 1822 at a cost of \$2.00 per month. These children are probably Robert and Soph, who were both under the age of ten at that time and may not have been hired out, but rather worked about the farm.⁶ Thompson hired ten-year-old Mariah Ritty for food and clothing, as was the custom for young enslaved children. Teenaged Linah hired out at \$12.00 per year during 1821 and 1822, and Samuel, Shadrach, and Frederick brought fifty dollars per year each to Brodess's account.⁷ The practice, of leasing pregnant women and women with small children for board and clothing was common. Thompson possibly kept Rit with Ben, paying as little as possible to his ward for her assumed reduced labor.⁸

³ Appeals, "Brodess V. Thompson." See also, Brodess, "Minty Reward." When Tubman fled in the fall of 1849, Eliza Brodess, Edward's widow, claimed Tubman was twenty-seven years old. Additional testimony in an 1850s lawsuit—reported on later in this report—also describes Tubman born this year. Original Equity Papers Bill of Complaint, Case 249, "Gourney C. Pattison, William Pattison and Others Vs. Eliza Brodess, Eliza Brodess and John Mills Administrators of Edward Brodess, and Thomas Willis.," in *Dorchester County Circuit Court (Equity papers)* (Annapolis: MDSA, 1853).

⁴ Appeals, "Brodess V. Thompson." Thompson charged a total of \$7.63 for Rit's care.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For an in-depth study and analysis of enslaved youth life, please see King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America*.

⁷ Appeals, "Brodess V. Thompson." "Edward Brodess in Account with Anthony Thompson his Guardian for the years 1821 and 1822."

⁸ Mills, "Mills Deposition."

Figure 5.1. Anthony Thompson's guardian account showing a March 15 [1822] \$2 payment to a midwife to assist Tubman's mother Rit (in brackets). Maryland State Archives.

Ben and Rit named their baby girl Araminta, calling her Minty for short, and possibly in honor of a relative black female relative, or at the least one for whom she felt familial affection.⁹ Interestingly, one of Pattison's family members, Samuel Keene sold "Minty" and a child called "Ritty" to his cousin, also named Samuel Keene.¹⁰ The persistence of Ritty and Minty may represent close relatives of Rit, or a favorite name imposed by white enslavers.

⁹ As noted earlier, Samuel Keene, Mary Pattison Brodess Thompson's cousin, inherited an enslaved woman named Minty from his grandfather Atthow Pattison, who could have been related to Rit. He later sold her. See Samuel of Ezekiel to Samuel Keene of Henry Keene, "Bill of Sale; 25 H.D. 395," in *Chattel Records, Dorchester County Court House* (Cambridge, MD 1809), 1809. What became of Suke and Bess, is unknown, though more detailed research in the chattel and land records of the time-period may reveal the fates of these two women and their children.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1809.



Figure 5.2. Child actress posed in a hand-crafted cradle based on Harriet Tubman’s description. Clip from Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center orientation film “Soldier of Freedom.” The cradle is located in the visitor center, with the caption: “The Eastern Shore of Maryland Dorchester County is where I was born. The first thing I remember, was lying in de cradle. You seen these trees that are hollow. Take a big tree, cut it down, put a bode [board] in each end, make a cradle of it and call it a ‘gum.’ Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Where Brodess was living from 1820 to 1822 is not known. Not listed in Thompson’s census record in 1820, he may have been enrolled in school somewhere; Thompson paid room and board, and purchased fine clothing for him in 1821 and 1822, indicating that Brodess was not farming his own property but living elsewhere, probably in a town or city setting (no expenses were recorded for farm implements or animals.) Thompson leased Brodess’s property in Bucktown during 1821 and 1822 to an unknown farmer. Completed in January 1822, the house and barn were ready for Brodess to take possession, but records indicate he did not do so until at least 1823, and possibly later.¹¹

The 1794 Griffiths Map of Dorchester County first notes “Bucks Town.” At that time, the crossroads was sparsely populated. The Ennalls family—the most prosperous family in Dorchester County during the 18th century—had acquired hundreds of acres in the region beginning in the mid-1700s from the heirs of an English family, the Taylors, who patented the lands around Bucktown during the late 1600s.¹² By the 1790s, the Mills, Scotts, Brodenses, Ecclestons, and other white families had purchased land from the Ennalls heirs and were farming in and near Bucktown. Thomas Scott and Edward Brodess Sr. (great uncle of Edward Brodess Jr., who enslaved Harriet Tubman), purchased most of the

¹¹ “Brodess Farm, D-746.”; see also, Seidel, “The 2001–2003 Archaeological Investigations at the Brodess Farm Site (18do419), the Possible Harriet Tubman Birth Site, Dorchester County, Maryland.”

¹² Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland’s Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain*; *ibid.*

property around the crossroads between the mid-1780s and early 1800s, though Brodess Sr. sold most of his landholdings by 1803 as he prepared to leave the region to become a pioneer in the newly opened Mississippi territory. Prior to 1800, tobacco and timber harvesting defined economic interests in the area, but when Scott died at the turn of the century, his heirs subdivided some of the land and created a series of small residential lots, encouraging settlement to create a larger village, and a store soon served the small community around the crossroads.¹³



Figure 5.3. Buck T[own]. Dennis Griffith Map, 1794. Library of Congress.

Edward Brodess Jr. reached adulthood and independence from his stepfather in June 1822. Expecting reimbursement when he submitted his guardian account to the court for approval, Thompson paid for the improvements to Brodess's property out of his own pocket. Brodess refused to pay Thompson once he gained control of his assets, so Thompson promptly sued in county court. Brodess eluded repeated attempts by Thomas H. Hicks, then sheriff (and later governor of Maryland,) to make him appear before Dorchester County Orphan's Court in Cambridge to answer Thompson's suit for payment.

¹³ "Meredith/Bradshaw House/Bucktown Storekeepers House, D-774"; "Bucktown Village Store, D-80."

Thompson was a formidable foe; facing a wealthy, longtime resident and elite member of the community, Brodess was clearly in no hurry to appear before the court.¹⁴

Thompson argued that Brodess owed him over eighteen hundred dollars “for diverse goods wares and merchandise,”¹⁵ including expenses for clothing, board, food, the care of Rit, her children and the three enslaved men, and other items. Brodess finally appeared at court in April 1824, and promised to pay Thompson, but three years later, Thompson was still waiting for payment, despite a final county court judgment in April 1827 ordering Brodess to pay immediately. Supported by his dead mother’s Pattison relatives, Brodess appealed the case to the District Court of Appeals in Easton, in neighboring Talbot County. Arguing that the Dorchester court did not have the legal authority in 1820 to authorize Thompson to build on Brodess’s inherited land, Brodess made a final attempt to avoid reimbursing his stepfather. The appeals court agreed, charging that the orphans court had exceeded its legal authority, encumbering Brodess’s estate beyond legal consent.¹⁶ Thompson lost his case, and no doubt the court battle left both men bitterly divided.

During those years fighting his stepfather in court, Brodess moved into his new house in Bucktown, probably sometime between 1823 and his marriage to Eliza Ann Keene on March 2, 1824, leaving behind the more affluent lifestyle his stepfather afforded. The matter of living space raises questions about where they all lived. A small, one-and-one-half story Cape Cod-style home with a barn provided little room for at a minimum three adult enslaved men, Rit and six children—she had given birth to Ben, Jr., in 1823—plus enslaved people Eliza brought to the marriage. Brodess most likely required the labor of Sam, Frederick, and Shadrach to help him run his farm. Brodess could have built a separate shelter for his enslaved people, though no records showing slave quarters on his property at that time exist. Rit could have lived in a separate kitchen house, or she and her children, including young Minty, could have remained with Ben at the Thompson plantation for an undetermined period.

Given the strained relationship between Thompson and Brodess, it seems unlikely that Rit and the Ross siblings remained in Thompson’s employ for very long. Eventually forcibly removed, Tubman and her siblings left Thompson’s plantation, leaving behind social connections and community networks in Peters Neck. Their time separated from Ben would prove devastating to the entire family, beginning decades of forced separation through hiring out and cruel treatment by temporary masters. Though separated from their father, young Tubman and her siblings maintained strong bonds with the black

¹⁴ *Brodess V. Thompson*; Appeals, “Brodess V. Thompson.” 1–4. The court records refer to “Edward Brodess Junior late of Dorchester County yeoman.” The difficulty in getting Brodess to appear in court indicates he may not have been living in the county at the time. He may have been living in Talbot County with Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, his stepbrother, or he could have been living with his uncle Edward, then living in Mississippi. The record remains unclear as to Brodess’s whereabouts until 1824.

¹⁵ *Brodess V. Thompson*; Appeals, “Brodess V. Thompson.”

¹⁶ Maryland Court of Appeals, *Decisions of the Court of Appeals of Maryland*, Vol. 1, 1827–1828 (Annapolis: Jonas Green?, 1828), 125–26; and *Brodess V. Thompson*. This case is still cited in guardianship cases today.

community in and around Thompson's plantation, which provided a consistent and nurturing force throughout Tubman's unstable childhood and young adulthood.

The move to Bucktown also signaled the beginning of Brodess's destruction of the Ross family through sale. In 1825, he sold an enslaved girl named "Rhody," to Dempsey P. Kane, a slave trader from Mississippi. Listed as sixteen years old, this young girl is likely Tubman's sister Mariah Ritty—transcriptions in court records are notoriously inaccurate, and the name was spelled Rhody instead of Ritty.¹⁷ Brodess sold a fifteen-year-old boy named James on the same day.¹⁸ James probably belonged to Eliza Brodess.¹⁹

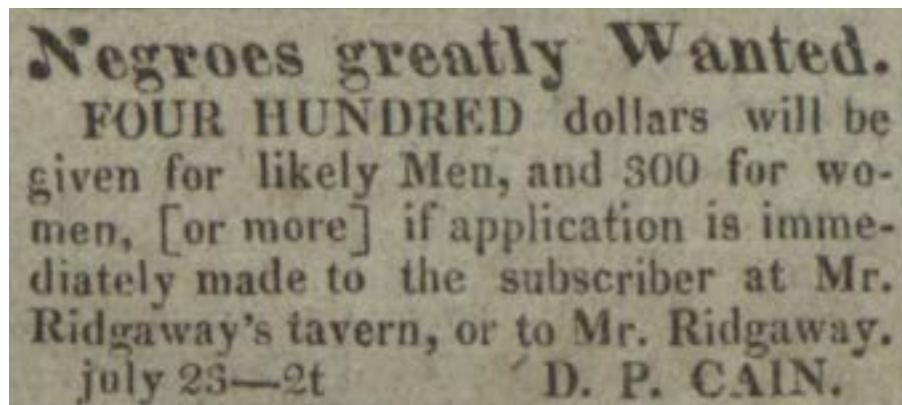


Figure 5.4. Slave traders, like Dempsey P. Cain from Mississippi, roamed the Eastern Shore of Maryland purchasing men, women and children and separating them from their loved ones.
Maryland State Archives.

While some slaveholders were determined to sell their enslaved people within the community to avoid breaking apart families, the economic incentives were often too tempting for cash strapped whites. After the War of 1812, the Eastern Shore experienced a dramatic increase in the sale of slaves to active slave traders plying the Chesapeake communities. Indebted landowners and encumbered estates found ready cash courtesy of the slave traders eager to sell to high paying Deep South plantation owners, who paid much more than local buyers. Professional slave traders were becoming more common on the Eastern Shore, and the sight of "slave coffles"—groups of enslaved people chained together for their journey south—created a destabilizing force within the community.²⁰ Escalating for the next forty years, sales of slaves to parties from outside the county and State sent shock waves throughout the black communities of the Eastern Shore.

¹⁷ "Edward Brodess to Dempsey P. Kane," vol. Liber 9 ER 624 p. 625, Dorchester County Land Records (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, July, 1825).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Pattisons later identified Mariah Ritty as one of Rit's children. See "Equity Papers 249," in *Dorchester County Circuit Court* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1852); Bill of Complaint, "Case 249."

²⁰ Legacy of Slavery in Maryland, "Dorchester County Slave Purchasers, 1823–1836," <http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/research/slavebuy.html>.



Figure 5.5. “The Coffle Gang.” Slave traders chained newly purchased enslaved people together and forced them to walk long distances for transfer to the Deep South markets. New York Public Library.

The courthouse at Cambridge was the center of the largest slave market on the Eastern Shore. The Woolfolk brothers, slave dealers from Baltimore, eventually opened a branch office in Cambridge; they were met by such competitors as Thomas Overlay, who on one occasion advertised for “50 to 100 likely Negroes, from ten to twenty-five years of age, of both sexes, for which the highest market prices will be given in cash.”²¹ Other dealers included Hope Slater of Baltimore, Henry Boyce of Louisiana, who was willing to “give the best price for those between the ages of 12 and 25 years,”²² and James Cox of Scott County, Kentucky, who, on one occasion, purchased thirty-eight slaves, including men, women and children, 6 months to 31 years, from John W. Hanes for \$6,610.²³ Austin Woolfolk, one of the largest, most successful and most notorious of slave traders from Baltimore, claimed he paid the “highest prices” for enslaved people. In the New Orleans market Woolfolk knew he could double the price and make a significant profit.²⁴

²¹ “Cash,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, December 25, 1830.

²² “Notice [August 30, 1828],” *Cambridge Chronicle*, August 30, 1828.

²³ Debra Moxie, *Dorchester County Genealogical Magazine* (Cambridge, MD: Privately Printed). July 1995, Vol. XV, no. 2, 8

²⁴ “[Advertisement],” *Cambridge Chronicle*, January 9, 1836. See also Frederick Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, rpt. 1996), 39–44.

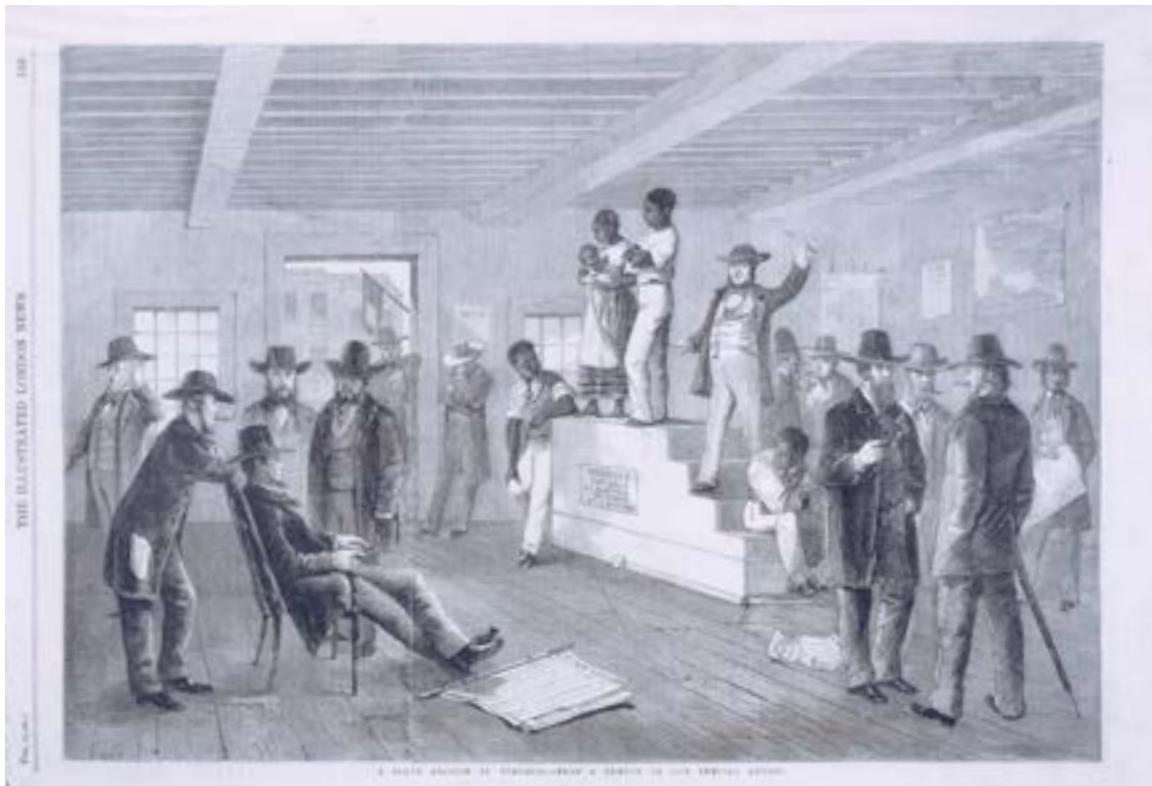


Figure 5.6. Auctions of enslaved women, children, and men were commonplace. New York Public Library.

Local dealers often posed as representatives for larger slave traders from outside of Maryland. Charles LeCompte, a local slave dealer in East New Market, sold over one-hundred people during 1827 to traders from Mississippi and Kentucky, mostly teenagers and young adults, though he also sold infants and young children separate from their parents.²⁵ Deep South and western traders relied on local middlemen to negotiate better deals. Peter Lowber, who later became constable of East New Market, was very active selling human chattel. In November of 1829, Lowber sold to James Baldock of Scott County, Kentucky, 10 enslaved people, mostly under the age of ten for \$1,210.²⁶ Over the next few months, Lowber sold many more people to Bartholomew Manlove, Winder C. Dingle, and George Bates, all from Kentucky.²⁷

²⁵ Dorchester County Court, “Chattel Records,” in *Dorchester County Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 1827–1833).

²⁶ Moxie, *Dorchester County Genealogical Magazine*, January 1997, Vol. XVI no. 5, 4.

²⁷ Ibid. January 1997, Vol. XVI, no. 5, 4; and, May 1997, Vol XVII, no. 1. 7.

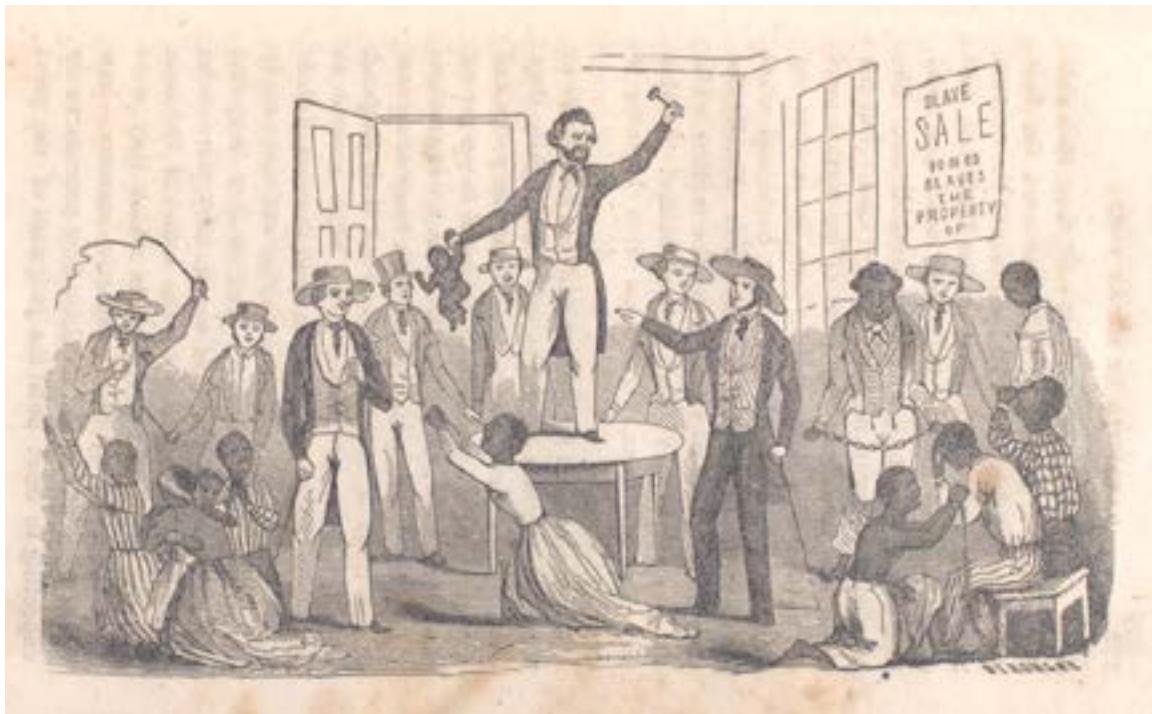


Figure 5.7. Auction of an enslaved infant away from its distraught mother reveals the devastating cruelty and callous disregard for black families. New York Public Library.

Transactions by individual planters supplemented sales to traders. Aspiring entrepreneurs traveled to the Eastern Shore to purchase bonds people directly from their enslavers for their own use on plantations in the Deep South. They sought to buy directly and save themselves hundreds of dollars on each slave. An enslaved person purchased for \$400 in Cambridge could cost nearly \$800 in Mississippi or Louisiana.²⁸ John Thompson, Anthony Thompson's nephew who moved to Tennessee, came back to Dorchester to purchase labor for his farm. In November 1819, he bought fifty-year-old Rose and her daughter, Leah, Leah's husband Jack, twenty-two-year-old Daniel, twenty-five-year-old Sarah and her five-month-old son, Abraham.²⁹

Some enslaved people chose to flee rather than risking sale to an unknown future in the cotton, sugar, and rice fields. Thirty-six-year-old Bob Manoca [Manokey], fled from the Staplefort plantation on the west side of the Little Blackwater River near the Little Blackwater Bridge on December 10, 1828. He was “a great sawyer, having followed it ever since he was about 18 years of age,” the Stapleforts wrote in their advertisement, offering a \$150 reward for his capture.³⁰ The Stapleforts believed that Manoca was heading to Baltimore, then on to Philadelphia or New York. Given his experience as a sawyer and the

²⁸ Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South*, esp. p. 30. For additional scholarship on the slave trade, see Johnson, *Soul by Soul*; and Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade. The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440–1870* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

²⁹ Court, “Land Records.” Liber ER 6 folio 83–85, 92.

³⁰ *Baltimore Advertiser & Daily Gazette*, December 30, 1828.

Staplefort's home on a navigable river, Manoca would have been familiar with the watermen who manned the vessels carrying timber to shipyards throughout the Chesapeake and as far away as New England. Such relationships would have facilitated quick and reliable transportation for his escape.³¹ During the first week of April 1831, Joseph Keene and his pregnant wife Nellie stole a small boat and sailed their seven children, ages three to eighteen, to freedom from Parsons Creek. Enslaved by Levin Woolford, the Keene family took an unusual and risky course bringing the whole family away at once.³² Woolford believed that the family headed toward the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, newly completed eighteen months before and seventy-five miles north of the Little Choptank River via the Chesapeake Bay. The C&D Canal ran a little less than fourteen miles east from Back Creek, a tributary of the Elk River in Cecil County in Maryland, through Delaware and emptied into the Delaware Bay at Delaware City. From there it was less than forty miles to the Pennsylvania border on the Delaware River, and a few more short miles to Philadelphia. Keene could have sailed his family to freedom in less than three days.³³ Keene also could have sailed his family to Baltimore and sought shelter with free black families in the city, or sailed to the Susquehanna River, and then found his way to Pennsylvania from there. He could have also navigated south through the Chesapeake Bay and into the Atlantic and sailed his family to New Jersey or beyond—though in a small boat this may have been risky.³⁴ The Keene's and Manoca were just a few of the hundreds who fled from the Eastern Shore between 1820 and 1835.³⁵

³¹ The site is an NTF site.

³² Court, “Land Records.” Liber ER 13 folio 562-564. See *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 9, 1831.

³³ For details about the C&D Canal, see Ralph D. Gray, *The National Waterway: A History of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal 1769–1985*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

³⁴ Woolford's property is within the boundaries of the National Monument. See the NTF report for the Keene Family escape.

³⁵ “Dorchester County Slave Purchasers, 1823–1836.”

\$300 REWARD,



Will be given for the apprehension
of negro woman
NELLY KEENE,
and her seven or eight children

if taken out of this state—or \$200
if taken in the state and out of the county—or
if in the county, one hundred dollars will be
given—provided they shall be secured so that
the subscriber gets them again: Or a propor-
tionate reward will be paid for the delivery of
any of them. They runaway on Wednesday
night, the 6th inst. & are no doubt all together
and accompanied by her husband and their fa-
ther, Joe Keene, by whom they were decoyed.
They embarked in a sail-canoe, belonging also
to the subscriber, about 23 feet long, white a-
bove the water, with one gaff-sail, it having
been stript of the other sails, & being pioneered
by Joe, who is a sailor of some experience and
notoriety, and a shrewd, crafty fellow now a
fugitive from a southern master, they will un-
questionable make good use of their time, and
probably aim to pass up the bay and through
the C. & D. Canal. Joe is about 50 years old
and five feet 4 or 5 inches high.

NELLY, aforesaid, his wife is about 35
years old, 5 feet 1 or two 2 inches high, of
chesnut color and pregnant.

ELIZA is about 18 years old, 4 feet 8 or 9
inches high, well made, likely and of a light
chesnut color.

JOE 17 years of age, about 5 feet high, is
also well made and of a chesnut color.

GEORGE is about 16, 4 feet 8 or 10 inches
high.

It is deemed unnecessary to describe the
smaller negroes, as they are in all probability
in company with the larger ones.

LEVIN WOOLFORD.

Parson's Creek, Dor. Co. Md. April 16.

Figure 5.8. Reward advertisement for the capture of the Keene family in April 1831. The Keenes' flight was unusual—large families with small children rarely escaped together successfully. The Keenes' triumphant escape likely breathed life into the hopes of other freedom seeking friends and family. Maryland State Archives.

The economic advantages of selling enslaved people for Eastern Shore slaveholders escalated temporarily after the admission of Missouri as a slave state in 1820. To keep the balance of free and slave states, however, Congress admitted Maine as a free state and further restricted slavery to south of the 36°30' latitude in the rest of the Louisiana Territory. Called the “Missouri Compromise,” the legislation opened up more opportunities for slaveholders to settle other southern lands, but it also galvanized a growing abolition activism and a “free-soil” faction—a nascent movement that would grow in strength during the next thirty years, arguing that free people working for wages in a free society was morally and economically sustainable and better for society. Some anti-slavery advocates in Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia became emboldened, organizing meetings and submitted petitions advocating for the end of slavery.³⁶ Their influence would remain small, but the compromise signaled a growing uneasiness with a clearly divided nation struggling with enslaving people in a country derived from republican ideals of freedom and equality.

By the 1820s, anti-slavery dissidents were confronting the powerful pro-slavery interests in Maryland through the pages of the press. In Baltimore, the site of the largest domestic slave market in the Chesapeake, Benjamin Lundy began printing *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, a small but nascent anti-slavery newspaper. Initially supportive of the colonization movement, Lundy changed his views after Baltimore blacks convinced him that the abolition of slavery could not be gradual but must be immediate. After Lundy published a scathing editorial on the character of Austin Woolfolk, Baltimore’s most successful slave trader, in 1827, Woolfolk attacked him outside the print shop. Brought to court on charges of assault, Woolfolk met a sympathetic ear in the pro-slavery judge, who ordered Woolfolk to only pay a one-dollar fine. The judge then argued that Lundy deserved the beating because Woolfolk provided such an important service to the citizens of Maryland.³⁷

³⁶ Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*, 185–87.

³⁷ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, 193–94.

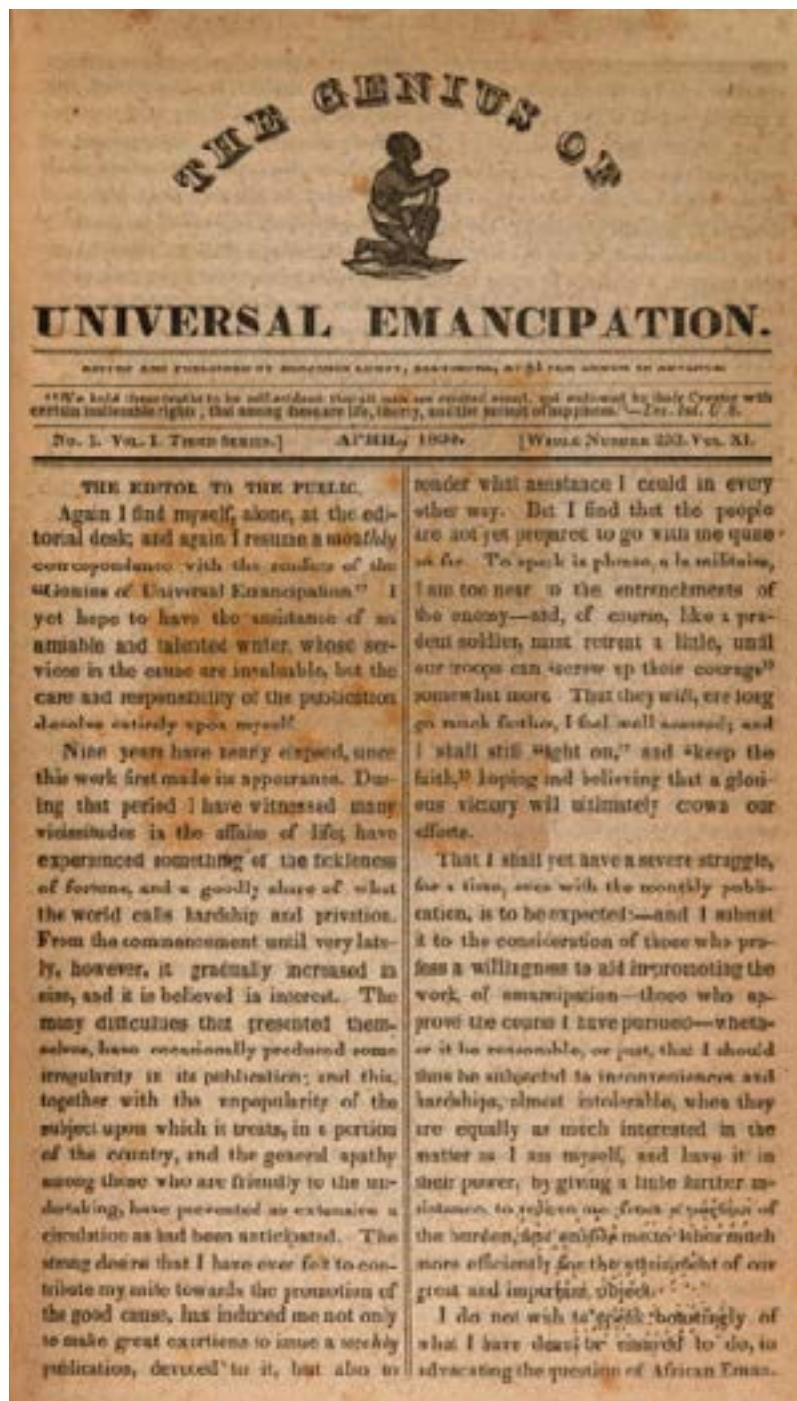


Figure 5.9. Benjamin Lundy's paper, "The Genius of Universal Emancipation," was an early monthly anti-slavery publication. New York Public Library.

While Lundy was publishing and lecturing about the evils of slavery, Samuel Cornish, a free born African American from Delaware, launched *Freedom's Journal* in 1827 in New York City, the first African American owned newspaper in the country. Though short-lived—he published for about three years—*Freedom's Journal* was very influential in

both the black community and white abolitionist circles. One of his sales agents, David Walker, had settled in Boston where he ran a second-hand clothing store in the city's black neighborhood on Beacon Hill. A radical abolitionist, Walker wrote and published a selection of essays assailing slavery, slaveholders, and their enablers. Arguing that "freedom is your natural right," Walker encouraged African Americans to seize their future and strike a blow at slavery and slaveholders. Blacks, he charged, had already spilled "Blood and tears" for the country and deserved their share of its riches. He vilified the colonization movement and urged African Americans to take up arms. To spread his message, Walker "stuffed copies of the pamphlet into the pockets of the pants and jackets he sold to sailors who frequented his shop. He sewed some copies into the linings of garments, too, sometimes without the knowledge of the buyer. Carried on vessels shipping out of Boston to Southern ports, the pamphlet reached a wide geographic market. When southern white authorities discovered copies circulating among free blacks in their communities, they prevented black sailors, "black jacks" from leaving their vessels or jailed them while in port. White hysteria sparked rumors of slave revolts, and southern authorities passed laws banning the *Appeal* and any other anti-slavery materials. A bounty was placed on Walker's head.³⁸

³⁸ Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, 196–99.

1822-1835

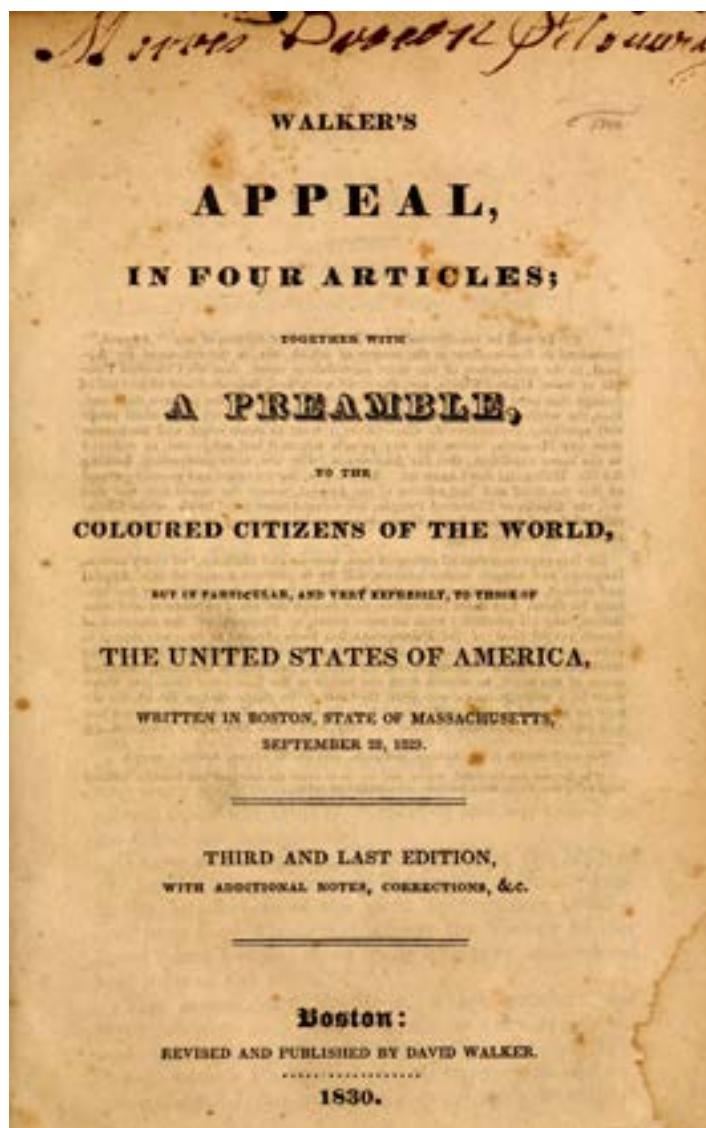


Figure 5.10. Southern slaveholders were so concerned about David Walker's "Appeal" message of freedom through slave revolt that they banned its distribution. Black mariners hid copies in their clothing and aboard vessels they sailed to southern ports. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Boston cultivated a growing abolition minority. One of the most famous anti-slavery activists, William Lloyd Garrison apprenticed with Lundy at his shop in Baltimore during the late 1820s. His radicalization as an "immediatist"—an abolitionist who believed in and advocated for the immediate and unconditional emancipation of all enslaved people—was nurtured by African Americans who visited Lundy's shop, read his papers, and argued their views. Garrison moved to Boston in 1831 after serving a six-month jail sentence for libeling a Massachusetts ship captain and slave trader named Francis Todd in the pages of the *The Genius*. In Boston, Garrison launched the most successful and consequential anti-slavery newspaper of the ante-bellum era, *The Liberator*. Together with other

small periodicals published intermittently in disparate communities in the North and South, these papers provided a voice to African Americans, who could spread their views broadly and quickly in the newly expanding literate political landscape of the nineteenth century.³⁹ The spread of these ideas, their circulation abetted by black mariners, further heightened slaveholders' fears of violence and even revolution.



Figure 5.11. William Lloyd Garrison became one of the most radical abolitionists in America by the Civil War.
Massachusetts Historical Society.

When Edward Brodess moved to his inherited homestead in Bucktown in the mid-1820s, the farm encompassed about 240 acres, with about 140 improved for agriculture. A farm this size did not require the labor of all his enslaved people, especially small children. Brodess started a pattern of hiring Rit and the Ross children out to his new neighbors for cash until he could use their labor himself or sell them. Hiring out brought fear and anguish to the family. First, Tubman recalled caring for younger siblings—probably Ben, born around 1823, and Rachel, born about 1825, but also perhaps Henry, born about 1829 or 1830—while her mother worked.

“When I was four or five years old, my mother cooked up to the big house and left me to take care of the baby an’ my little brother. I use to be in a hurry for her to go, so’s I could play the baby was a pig in a bag, and’ hold him up by the bottom of his dress. I had a nice frolic with that baby, swinging him all around, his feet in the dress and his little head and arms touching the floor, because I

³⁹ Ibid., 194–95.

was too small to hold him higher. It was late nights before my mother got home, and when he'd get worrying I'd cut a fat chunk of pork and toast it on the coals and put it in his mouth. One night he went to sleep with that hanging out, and when my mother come home she thought I'd done kill him. I nursed that there baby till he was so big I couldn't tote him any mo'.”⁴⁰

The dangers inherent in leaving such young children alone to fend for themselves must have weighed heavily on Rit’s mind, a painful reminder of the daily injustices and cruelties inflicted upon enslaved families.

When Tubman was about six, Brodess started leasing her to neighbors. James Cook, a yeoman farmer who lived a couple of miles from the Brodesses, near the Little Blackwater Bridge, hired her to learn weaving.⁴¹ She may have stayed with the Cooks for as long as two years, during which time Cook and his wife were cruel, beating and starving her until her health deteriorated and she had to be returned to Brodess. She cleaned, cared for their infant children, and tended to Cook’s muskrat traps.⁴² The marshy wetlands of Dorchester County provided an ideal habitat for muskrats, with plenty of vegetation, soft peaty soil to build burrows, and ample, shallow fresh water suitable for a semi-aquatic life. Catching muskrats requires setting traps on the banks of streams where they burrow, or in the marshes where they build domed houses. Trapping muskrats would be a difficult task for a young child, but in cold water during the winter trapping season, when muskrat pelts are at their finest, even more so. At some point, Tubman became sick with measles, but Cook forced her to work the traps in the cold water. She became gravely ill.⁴³

⁴⁰ Telford, “Harriet.”

⁴¹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 73. An examination of the 1830 census indicates that Cook lived perhaps two or three miles from the Brodess plantation, next door to Brodess’s cousin and uncle, both named Gourney Crow Pattison. Listed as the head of household of four whites in the 1830 census, Cook also held nine enslaved people. These included two enslaved males under the age of ten, one between ten and twenty-four, and one between fifty-five and one hundred years old, and four enslaved females, including one under ten, one between ten and twenty-four, one between twenty-four and thirty-six, and one from thirty-six to fifty-five. Cook’s own family included one white woman between twenty and thirty, and two boys under the age of five. Cook rented this property. Though the census recorded these enslaved people in Cook’s household, it does not mean he legally owned them, but rather, he most likely hired them, and the census taker counted them as part of his household.

⁴² See “Hughes Chapel, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Nause-Waiwash Longhouse, D-282.” for history of the probable site of the Cook’s residence during Tubman’s occupation.

⁴³ Valued for their pelts, muskrats provided meat, too. See Frank R. Smith, “Muskrat Investigations in Dorchester County, Md, 1930–1934,” (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1938).



Figure 5.12. Common Muskrats live on the edges of marshes. Courtesy Bob Travis.



Figure 5.13. Muskrat's domed lodge. Courtesy Vail Marston.

Rit nursed her weakened child back to health, only to have her hired out again and again. “I use to sleep’ on the floor in front of the fireplace an there I’d lie and cry an cry.” Harriet recalled seventy years later.⁴⁴ Sent back to the Cook’s, young Tubman became defiant, refusing to learn to weave.⁴⁵ A series of temporary enslavers caused suffering and intense homesickness throughout her entire childhood.

⁴⁴ Telford, “Harriet.” 4.

⁴⁵ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 73–74.

While Brodess struggled as a yeoman farmer, his stepfather continued to prosper. Thompson and neighboring landowners grew wealthy filling demand for timber to build fast and rugged schooners during the War of 1812. Despite financial setbacks when the war was over and demand for ships dropped, they rebounded. The swift Chesapeake Bay schooners proved irresistible to merchants, including traders still plying the illegal transatlantic slave trade. The vessel's speed helped them elude capture by British naval patrols and pirates alike. Outlawed in 1793 in the United States, the building of ships specifically for the slave trade became a clandestine operation; it would take another twenty-five years before the penalties were serious enough to "drive most Americans out of direct participation in the trade."⁴⁶ Poor enforcement made the risk reward assessment weigh in favor of building them. Risking capital punishment, Chesapeake shipbuilders, including those in Church Creek and other sites in Dorchester County, provided the fast schooners and brigs for the illegal trade. They also retrofitted existing ships to accommodate the needs and requirements for holding and feeding captive human beings in the holds of the ships.⁴⁷

Economic growth and physical expansion in the new nation offered additional markets for Eastern Shore timber, encouraging the building of canals and roads, sawmills and small shipyards to ease access and accommodate shipments of timber to Chesapeake, mid-Atlantic and New England businesses. Canals were necessary to supplement the many small rivers and streams throughout the Eastern Shore to support access and shipment of raw products. Joseph Stewart, Anthony Thompson and Robert Tubman were among the seven commissioners appointed to oversee the construction and operation of the Black Water and Parson's Creek Canal Company.⁴⁸ After twenty years of construction—and requiring a tremendous amount of manual labor, the canal was built primarily by enslaved and free blacks—the canal was finished in the 1830s. It was incredibly difficult work; canal laborers toiled in water all day, digging, dredging, and tearing out hundreds of acres of marshland, forest, and swamp. Disease was rampant and the mortality rate extremely high. Unlike canals built in the north by free and mostly immigrant labor, enslaved labor built the majority of Southern canals.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ See Quentin and Ann Jensen Snediker, *Chesapeake Bay Schooners* (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1992), 33–35.

⁴⁷ *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland [Vol. 3182]*, vol. 3182, Chapter CXI, 6th Jan., Archives of Maryland (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 2002), 712.

⁴⁸ *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland*, vol. Chapter 54, 5 Feb. 1830, Archives of Maryland (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives, 2002).

⁴⁹ Cecelski, *Waterman's Song*.



Figure 5.14. Stewart's Canal as it looks today facing North. Author Photo.



Figure 5.15. Stewart's Canal facing South as it looks today. Author photo.

Tubman's father, Ben Ross—a skilled logger and supervisor—most likely worked building this canal as one of Thompson's enslaved workers.⁵⁰ Now known as Coursey's Creek, the canal still exists little changed from its original configuration in the 1830s and is situated within the boundaries of the NM. The land is low-lying and subject to flooding, and though the harvesting of timber cleared large swaths of land for agricultural

⁵⁰ Thompson could access this canal by way of the Blackwater River, or via White Marsh Road, which ran north to Tobacco Stick from the Blackwater River.

production, windmills probably helped pump excess water from the low-lying land. Windmills powered grindstones for milling of corn, wheat and oats, too. Steam powered saws fueled small mills to cut some of the timber into smaller boards, planks, shingles and staves, while vessels, loaded and stacked shipped the larger uncut trees to shipyards and mills to be stripped and sawn. Thompson, Stewart and their neighbors built great wealth from their natural and human resources.

By 1830, Thompson's enslaved community had become smaller, down to thirty-two from thirty-nine in 1820, but at seventy years old he was still one of the largest slaveholders in the district. The free black population in the county jumped twenty percent during the decade.⁵¹ The free black community in Peter's Neck expanded too, with many households including blended families—manumitted people, their free born children, and the enslaved developed a teeming community. Thompson's enslaved people could follow rutted dirt paths that crisscrossed the landscape, joining Thompson's farm along Harrisville Road to the western border of his property and a free black settlement near White Marsh Road.⁵²

Jacob Jackson and his family were also part of this community.⁵³ Born enslaved to John Jones, Jackson became free by deed executed by Jones's son, Thomas, in 1826. Jones had already sold the thirty-year-old Jackson to James Tall, a Madison farmer and merchant, for a term of ten more years.⁵⁴ Technically enslaved until he turned forty in 1836, the 1830 U.S. Census lists Jackson as the head of a free household with three other adult free blacks.⁵⁵ He married a local free woman, Dinah Bell, and over the next decade and a half they had several children together, as well as raise orphaned children of neighbors.⁵⁶ Historic

⁵¹ Bureau of the Census, "United States Federal Census," (1830). Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860*, 86–88.

⁵² Some paths are still visible on the landscape today.

⁵³ See U.S. Census, Dorchester County, Maryland for Jacob Jackson and White Marsh/Madison community—1830; 1840; 1850, District 3; 1860, District 4 and District 9; 1870, District 4; and 1880, Parson's Creek District.

⁵⁴ See County, "Certificates of Freedom," 59; and Certificate of Freedom, 69. By a deed recorded on March 23, 1795. The extended Jones family manumitted dozens of enslaved people between 1790 and 1860. Jackson may be been a descendant of "Jacob," and enslaved man recorded in 1775 inventory for the estate of Thomas Jones. See *Prerogative Court Records*. Dorchester County Inventories, 1775, Liber 120 folio 317. The wording of the manumission is peculiar, and Jackson may have been Lhttps://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/coagser/c600/c689/000000/000001/pdf/mdsa_c689_1.pdf

⁵⁵ See U.S. Census, Dorchester County, Maryland for Jacob Jackson and White Marsh/Madison community—1830; 1840; 1850, District 3; 1860, District 4 and District 9; 1870, District 4; and 1880, Parson's Creek District.

⁵⁶ Jerry M. Hynson, *Free African Americans of Maryland, 1832: Including Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Ann's, and St. Mary's Countie* (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 2000), 69. See "Orphans Court Records," in *Dorchester County Orphans Court* (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester County Registrar of Wills, 1847–1854). The court bound brothers Josiah and William James Robinson, 13 and 10, and Rosetta Jackson, 11, to Jacob on March 21, 1853. Jackson also purchased an enslaved girl, Lucy, in 1858, and then set her free.

Malone's Church represents a physical and cultural manifestation of the foundation of this historic community.⁵⁷

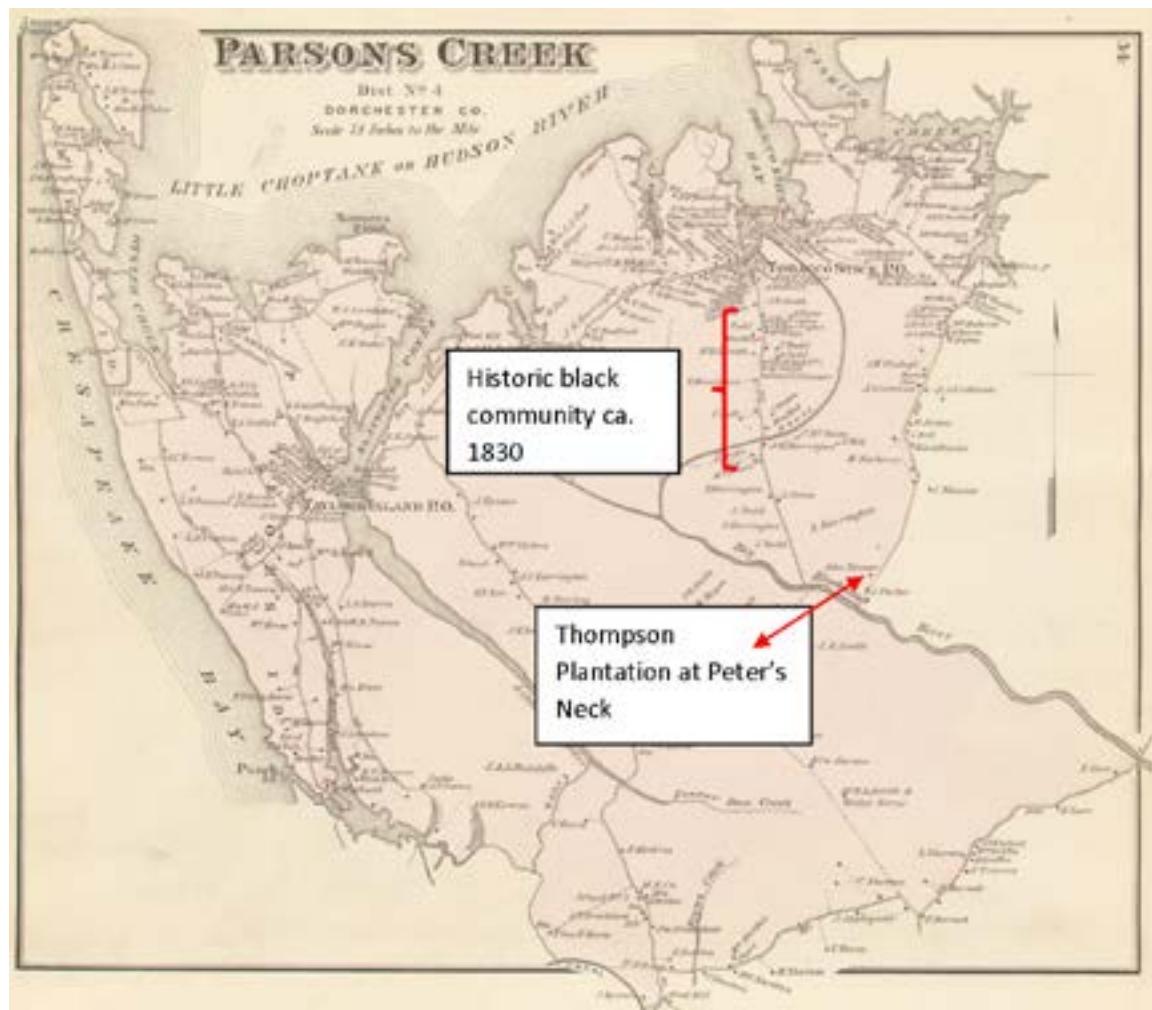


Figure 5.16. Showing proximity of free black settlement south of Madison [Tobacco Stick] and the Anthony Thompson plantation where Ben Ross lived in the Parson's Creek District, Dorchester County, Maryland. Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

Jackson and his wife, Dinah legally indentured the orphaned children, probably to secure them from indenture and virtual enslavement by white neighbors. Jackson was an entrepreneur, operating a small farm and raising sheep for wool and food, and provided veterinary services to local black and white families. During the 1840s, Jackson acquired from James Stewart approximately 140 acres north and west of his small farm along White

⁵⁷ "Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586." Malone's church sits on property gifted to the Community by Jeremiah Malone, also once enslaved by Thomas Jones. Set free in 1836, Malone and established himself on property along White Marsh Road.

Marsh Road.⁵⁸ This larger, new farm reflected prosperity and economic advancement for the Jacksons. They raised chickens and hogs in addition to sheep, horses, cows and oxen.⁵⁹ Situated just south of present-day Route 16 west of Madison before Stewart's Canal, the property sits within the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park boundaries.

Ben Ross, separated by about ten miles from his family in Bucktown, would see his family when he had time to travel. In 1832, the Rosses celebrated the birth of their ninth and last child, Moses. By then, their daughter Linah had married Harkless Jolly, a man enslaved by the Staplefort family at the Little Blackwater Bridge, and the Jollies had two daughters, Kessiah, born in 1824, and Harriet in 1832. The Brodless family grew, too. By 1830, Eliza Brodless had given birth to two sons, John and Joseph, and would soon have three more boys: William, Richard, and Charles.⁶⁰ Their household would become even more crowded as more children joined the family during the 1830s.

Restrictions on travel for free and enslaved African Americans tightened after the Nat Turner Rebellion in Virginia in August 1831. The insurrection, which claimed the lives of nearly 200 whites and blacks in Southampton County, changed the nature of white/black relationships in the South. Southern slaveholders saw their worst nightmare come true; killed by their enslaved people while they slept.⁶¹ For Dorchester County residents, however, Turner's attack only added to fears already worsening in the community. In February, a few short months earlier, a young enslaved woman named Henny murdered her enslaver Betsy Thompson Insley. After a whipping, Henny turned on her enslaver and threw lye in her face, butchered her with an ax and hid the body in a closet. After a brief trial and conviction, local white residents greeted Henny's hanging with great relief that June.⁶²

⁵⁸ For Jackson's deeds, see Todd & Harrington, FJH 5 folio 483-484; Jackson & Camper, WJ 1 folio 217-218; Jackson & Browhan FJH 5 folio 385; Brown & Brown FJH 5 folio 385-386; Jackson & Stewart FJH 3 folio 372-373; Stewart & Coursey WJ 4 folio 122-123; Stewart & Lockerman ER 3 Folio 126-128; Stewart & Jackson FJH 3 folio 372; Slater, et al & Harrington FJH 3 Folio 373; Jackson & Stewart FJH 4 Folio 169.

⁵⁹ "Assessment Record," in *Dorchester County Board of County Commissioners* (Cambridge, MD: MDSA, 1852).

⁶⁰ "T.H.H. 1."

⁶¹ Kenneth S. Greenberg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents* (New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996), 26.

⁶² "Execution of Henny, in Cambridge, in 1831," in *Dorchester County Historical Society, Vertical Files* (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester County Public Library, 1908).



Figure 5.17. “Nat Turner & His Confederates in Conference.” New York Public Library.

No doubt many slaveholders began to look at their enslaved people with a different understanding, and perhaps their fears and anxieties prompted many to relieve themselves of the situation. The Dorchester County Court papers record a remarkable rise in manumissions and requests for Certificates of Freedom, required by whites of free blacks to prove they are free. In this more restrictive environment, freedom papers were an absolute necessity for free blacks; for slaveholders, manumitting some of their enslaved people answered their fears. In 1831 there were 54 such manumissions and requests for freedom papers, up from 36 the year before. In 1832, however, the number increased dramatically to 119.⁶³ For others, however, more sales to Southern slave traders relieved them of lingering fears.

Some slaveholders freed bonds people on the condition they emigrate to Liberia on the West Coast of Africa. The Maryland Colonization Society encouraged migration and funded the travel expenses of newly emancipated people to Liberia on the west coast of Africa. Slaveholders, anti-slavery activists, and non-slaveholders found the society’s aims moderately appealing. Emigrant numbers were low, but after Nat Turner’s attack Marylanders took a greater interest when the legislature granted \$10,000 per year toward colonization efforts to rid the state of free and newly freed blacks. Dorchester County slaveholders represented a significant number of the Maryland society’s leadership, and

⁶³ County, “Certificates of Freedom”; Court, “Dorchester Chattel Records.”

one of the colony's first settlers and leaders was a free black named James Benson from Cambridge. Most free people had no interest in moving to Africa. Free born or manumitted and raised in Maryland, family and community ties prevented considerations of leaving their homes for an unknown colony across the Atlantic Ocean.⁶⁴

Though very little information is known about the various masters to whom Brodess leased Tubman and her siblings, she later told an interviewer that she "seldom lived with her owner but was usually 'hired out' to different persons."⁶⁵ The separations for the Ross family required family members to employ clandestine measures to be together, especially in the new restrictive environment. Brodess hired Rit and her daughter Linah out to a neighbor, Polish Mills, for food and clothing only; Rit was nursing her youngest child, Moses, and Henry, aged two-years-old "could run about."⁶⁶ Tubman, in the meantime, was living either with the Brodesses nearby, or had already been hired out as a field hand to another neighboring farmer. The family sneaked out of their homes—risking severe punishment—to visit their mother at Mills's plantation at night. On the night of November 12, 1833, Tubman's brother, who had been guarding the door and standing as sentinel, watching for slave patrols coming near, called to her to come see the night sky. The stars "were all shooting whichway," Tubman later recalled.⁶⁷ A remarkable meteor shower—the Leonid—cast thousands of shooting stars across the night sky. An Annapolis, Maryland observer noted that the "light was so intense," and that the meteors "fell like snow." Another observer in Boston wrote that the sky had the "appearance of a thick shower of fire."⁶⁸ An Eastern Shore resident recalled the meteor shower resembled a "snow storm of fiery flakes—so thick and numerous were they."⁶⁹ The meteor shower sparked fear and awe in millions of people. Tubman and her family "all thought the end of the world had come."⁷⁰

It was probably not too long after this event, when Tubman was still an adolescent and hired out as a field hand on a neighboring plantation, that she received an almost fatal blow to the head from a stone or iron weight intended to fell another slave. This injury

⁶⁴ Brugger, *Maryland*, 206–15. Whitman, *Challenging Slavery in the Chesapeake: Black and White Resistance to Human Bondage, 1775–1865*, 141–42. Wright, *The Free Negro in Maryland 1634–1860.*, throughout. See also research and essays on the Maryland Colonization Society at the Maryland State Archives http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/mscs_overview.pdf

⁶⁵ Ednah Dow Littlehale Cheney, "Moses," *Freedmen's Record*, March 1865.

⁶⁶ "Equity Papers 394," in *Dorchester County Circuit Court* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1855).

⁶⁷ "Aunt Harriet Was Very Old."

⁶⁸ John P. Pratt, "Spectacular Meteor Shower Might Repeat," *Meridian Magazine*, October 15, 1999.

⁶⁹ Samuel Harrison, "Meteor Shower," in *Harrison Collection*, MS 432 (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society).

⁷⁰ "Aunt Harriet Was Very Old." This meteoric event was the result of debris shed by the comet Tempel-Tuttle. Normally occurring every 33 years, the meteor "storm" caused by the passing of this comet near the earth in 1833 was by far the most spectacular. According to Samuel Harrison of Talbot County, "superstition attached a disastrous meaning to this appearance. The end of the world was thought to be drawing near." He also wrote that he was "under the impression that religious awe was the feeling inspired in most minds at the time." See Harrison, "Meteor Shower."

changed the course of her life, not only through the physical disability it caused, but also because the physiological changes that redefined the way Tubman viewed the world. She had been hired out for her clothing and food to Thomas Barnett, “de w[orst] man in de neighborhood.”⁷¹ It was in the fall, a busy time on farms and Tubman was assigned to breaking flax in the field. “My hair had never been combed and it stood out like a bushel basket,” Tubman recalled, “an’ when I’d get through eatin’ I’d wipe the grease’ off my fingers’ on my hair and ‘I expect that thar hair saved my life.’” The plantation’s cook needed her help carrying goods from the local store in Bucktown.⁷² Ashamed by her messy hair, she grabbed a shawl from the kitchen and wrapped her head before heading to the cross-roads. Nearby, an enslaved young man belonging to Barnett was fleeing an angry overseer in a nearby field, who pursued him to the store. Tubman and the cook arrived as the overseer chased the man into the store. He called out to Tubman to stop the young man, but she refused. As the young man fled past Tubman and out the door, the “overseer caught up a two-pound weight from the counter and threw it at the fugitive, but it fell short and struck Harriet a stunning blow on the head.”⁷³



Figure 5.18. Bucktown Village Store where Harriet Tubman, then Minty Ross, endured a near-fatal head injury when she was about thirteen years old.
Dorchester County Office of Tourism.

⁷¹ This event probably happened sometime between 1834 and 1835.

⁷² The Bucktown Store history can be found in Appendix B.

⁷³ Franklin Sanborn wrote that the slaveholder’s name was Barrett, but census records confirm this person is more than likely Thomas Barnett. The names of the defiant enslaved young man and the irate overseer remain unknown. Thomas Barnett leased a large piece of property in Bucktown. Thomas Barnett’s father, Thomas, Sr., was a successful planter, owning a large tract of property just east and southeast of the Brodess’s plantation, near the Bucktown crossroads. Thomas Barnett, Jr. married Eliza Pitt in 1833, and later owned a plantation on the road from Airey’s to Bucktown, perhaps a mile and a half east and north of the Brodess property. Franklin Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [1863],” *The Commonwealth*, July 17, 1863.

Tubman later told interviewer Emma Telford the last thing she remembered was the overseer “raising up his arm to throw an iron weight at one of the slaves and that was the last I knew.” She remembered vividly how the weight “broke my skull and cut a piece of that shawl clean off and drove it into my head. They carried me to the house all bleeding an’ fainting. I had no bed, no place to lie down on at all, and they lay me on the seat of the loom, and I stayed there all that day and next.” Receiving no medical attention, Tubman returned to the field. “I went to work again and there I worked with the blood and sweat rolling down my face till I couldn’t see.”⁷⁴

The skull fracture nearly killed her, and she suffered from debilitating headaches and seizures for the rest of her life. She may have also suffered from Temporal Lobe Epilepsy, or TLE, which caused her to unexpectedly lose consciousness. “Disabled and sick, her flesh all wasted away,” the Barnetts returned her to Brodess. He attempted to sell her, but no buyer was interested in purchasing a wounded and disabled teenager. “They said they wouldn’t give a sixpence for me,” Tubman later recalled.⁷⁵

It was a very long time before Tubman recovered from the injury, which left “a wound ever afterwards visible.”⁷⁶ Rit nursed her crippled child back to health. Thereafter, Tubman was often subject to unexpected episodes of “lethargy . . . coming upon her in the midst of conversation, or whatever she may be doing, and throwing her into a deep slumber, from which she will presently rouse herself, and go on with her conversation or work.”⁷⁷

Tubman was unable to control the aftereffects of the head injury. Sometimes, it was “almost impossible to rouse her,” and seizures would come during conversation, or while performing a task.⁷⁸ Years later, friends noted that her injury still plagued her, making her “very lethargic. She cannot remain quiet fifteen minutes without appearing to fall asleep. It is not a refreshing slumber; but a heavy, weary condition which exhausts her.”⁷⁹ Wilbur Seibert interviewed Harriet Tubman in the mid-1890s, sixty years after the incident and recorded with surprise that her injury “caused her at frequent intervals (say of half an hour or so) to lose consciousness for three or four minutes. She explained that her head would drop, and she would become silent, but I was not to become alarmed; she would arouse and continue her talk without losing the thread of her conversation.”⁸⁰

There are many symptoms that plagued Tubman, some physical and some more temporal. The head injury seemingly fortified her growing religious enthusiasm, and vivid

⁷⁴ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].”

⁷⁵ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 14.

⁷⁶ Sanborn, “The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as ‘Moses’ or ‘Harriet Tubman’.”

⁷⁷ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 75. See also Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].”

⁷⁸ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 13

⁷⁹ Cheney, “Moses.”

⁸⁰ Earl Conrad, *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection*, Microfilm, 2 reels vols. (New York, N.Y.: Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division: The New York Public Library). Letter, Wilbur Seibert to Earl Conrad, September 4, 1939. Roll 1, Box 2, folder 39.

dreams and aural and visual sensations or hallucinations accompanied many of her seizures. She claimed to hear music, singing and voices, rushing water, and roaring flames. She sometimes dreamed she was floating above the earth, looking down at her friends and family members working in the fields. These seizures often intruded on her daily work and activities.⁸¹

Tubman's religiosity was unquestionably rooted in powerful Methodist evangelical teachings invigorated by a mystical and deeply personal spiritual experience. Her seizures reinforced her notions of a powerful spiritual being guiding and protecting her divine instruction. Tubman "used to dream of flying over fields and towns, and rivers and mountains, looking down upon them 'like a bird'."⁸²

The visions Tubman experienced were central to her inner spirituality and reinforced religious beliefs nurtured through strong African cultural traditions and powerful evangelical thought. Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, Anthony Thompson's son practiced medicine but was also an ordained Methodist minister. He forced Tubman and other enslaved people under his control to attend his services. Ben and Rit claimed Thompson was just "pretending to preach," and was nothing but "a wolf in sheep's clothing."⁸³ Though they attended Thompson's periodic services, the Ross family also felt influenced by Episcopal, Baptist, and Catholic teachings. Tubman and her family likely integrated different religious practices into their daily lives. The Pattisons, Thompsons, and Brodess's initially belonged to Episcopal churches in the Dorchester County before becoming Methodists; some of the white Keenes, Tubmans, and Rosses were originally Catholic. Tubman was known to fast on Fridays, a practice then typical of Catholics, though some Methodists and Episcopalian also followed this habit; her parents abstained entirely from food on Fridays.⁸⁴ Tubman said her father did "it for conscience; we was taught to do so down South. He says if he denies himself for the sufferings of his Lord an' Master, Jesus will sustain him."⁸⁵

In the early years of the nineteenth century, slaveholders became increasingly concerned about the possible subversive messages preached by black ministers and required their enslaved people, like Tubman and her family, to attend their Christian services. In Bucktown, oral tradition and local lore suggests that Tubman, her family, and many of the area's free and enslaved blacks attended two possible sites of worship. One is the current site of Bazel's Methodist Episcopal Church, located on Bucktown Road, slightly southwest of the Bucktown crossroads, and only half of a mile southeast of the Brodess

⁸¹ "Moses." See also Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 457–65.

⁸² Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]." Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 79.

⁸³ William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., rpt. edition 1970), 411.

⁸⁴ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 108–9

⁸⁵ Ibid.

property.⁸⁶ In the years following Nat Turner's Rebellion, when gatherings of free and enslaved people were strictly monitored or forbidden, it is unlikely that Tubman's family attended services in the clearing by the woods near that location during the antebellum period unless a white overseer supervised their services.⁸⁷ The first church structure was built in 1876.



Figure 5.19. Bazel Church and an older structure as they looked during the 1980s. The smaller building is no longer standing, and the church roof has collapsed into the interior of the building as of September 2019.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Maryland Historical Trust.

Scott's Chapel, slightly north on Bucktown Road, is another historically significant church for the local African American community and probably the most likely place of worship for the area's enslaved community.⁸⁸ Founded in 1812 as a Methodist church, the current building was constructed in 1891 on land donated to the church in 1858 by John Scott. Burials began in 1792 in the graveyard. A segregated church, black congregants would have been required to worship in a balcony, in the back of the pews, or outside the windows within earshot. Wherever Tubman worshiped, her faith was deep, and founded

⁸⁶ “Bazel’s Chapel (Bazel’s Methodist Episcopal Church), D-274.”

⁸⁷ The area near the road was mostly fields and clear of trees at that time.

⁸⁸ This church is also known as Bucktown United Methodist Church. “Scotts Chapel (Aka Bucktown Methodist Episcopal Church, Bucktown United Methodist Church), D-270.”

upon strong religious teachings, whether these were specifically Methodist, Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist, or of African origin. Thomas Garrett, a Quaker in Wilmington, Delaware felt that he “never met with any person, of any color, who had more confidence in the voice of God, as spoken direct to her soul... and her faith in a Supreme Power truly was great.”⁸⁹



Figure 5.20. Scott's Chapel on Bucktown Road. Like worshipers in the church, the cemetery was segregated, too.
Dorchester County Office of Tourism.

The role that Evangelical Protestantism played in the lives of nineteenth-century enslaved people is fundamental to Tubman’s spiritual strength and endurance. The African American community relied on faith to endure threats to their lives, their family stability, to the existence of their very community. In this oppressive environment, Tubman and her family found ways to negotiate the cruelties of slavery, the loss of freedom and self-determination. Methodism was one source of strength, blending smoothly with cultural and religious traditions that survived the middle passage from Africa. First generation Africans, like her grandmother Modesty, embodied a living African connection and memory for the

⁸⁹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 49.

Tubman and the Ross family. Tubman's religious fervor and trust in God to protect and guide her evolved from a fusion of these traditions.

In many ways, evangelical Protestantism represented a paradox in the antebellum South. On the one hand, many white Southerners looked to the bible and its teachings to support the institution of slavery and the racism it inspired. On the other hand, evangelicism sustained and fortified generations of enslaved African Americans while white preachers instructed them to remain subordinated to their masters. The spirit and meaning of biblical texts had a fluidity that helped enslaved people embrace a worldview shaped by African and American influences.⁹⁰ Black evangelicals rejected white versions of the Bible; they believed that God intended to set them free, delivering them in "this world."⁹¹ Spirituals emphasized the Old Testament and the trials of God's chosen people, representing a black liberation theology that held out hope for deliverance in their own lifetimes.⁹²

Very proscribed already, Maryland passed new legislation forbidding blacks to "assemble or attend meetings for religious purposes which were not conducted by a white licensed clergyman or some respectable white of the neighborhood authorized by the clergy."⁹³ However, free and enslaved African Americans found ways to reject or negotiate the messages they received from white ministers. The opportunity to gather at camp meetings allowed family and friends to meet and to renew their faith and hope for deliverance from their bondage, but many enslavers required their enslaved workers to attend white churches. As the decade passed, the need for independent black churches took root, and

⁹⁰ For in depth and detailed discussions of African American religious life, see Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Albert J. Raboteau, *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African American Religious History*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); and Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau, eds., *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 1997); Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Sylvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); and Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Nell Painter, *Sojourner Truth, A Life A Symbol*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordon, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976); Milton C. Sernett, ed. *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 141–71; Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 129–63, 225–56.; and Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁹¹ Lawrence W. Levine, "Slave Songs and Slave Consciousness," in *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*., ed. Timothy E. Fulop, and Albert J. Raboteau (New York: Routledge, 1997), 78.

⁹² *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977)., 81. Levine and other historians have discussed the process by which existing cultural and spiritual belief systems from West Africa coexisted or interacted with Evangelical Protestantism and European Christianity in the slave quarters, where, Levine argues, "slaves nor their African forebears ever drew modernity's clear line between the sacred and the secular... Their spirituals indicate clearly that there were alternatives open to them - alternatives which they themselves fashioned out of the fusion of their African heritage and their new religion," 73.

⁹³ Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 199.

black communities founded Methodist churches in Cambridge and other towns on the Eastern Shore, nurturing and fortifying black families.

Camp meetings were frequent, especially during the summer months, and well attended by both whites and blacks on the Eastern Shore. Attendees from Baltimore and the western shore of Maryland eagerly traveled to meetings in the Choptank River region in Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot counties. Ennalls Springs, located three miles from East New Market and ten miles northeast of Bucktown, was a popular site for camp meetings, with fresh water, shade trees and easy access by water and roads. Notices appeared in newspapers announcing the next camp meeting site, usually on land owned by devout and well-to-do Methodist plantation owners. “A Camp Meeting will be commenced on the 12th of September next, in the woods of Mr. Levin Stephens, near Buck Town—where there is a sufficiency of water, and where ample provisions will be made for horses,” an advertisement in an 1828 Cambridge newspaper announced.⁹⁴ Given the close proximity to the Brodess’s plantation, Tubman’s family could have attended. William Cornish, an enslaved man from Madison who later escaped to Canada while attending a meeting in Caroline County, was allowed by his confident enslaver to travel as far away as Baltimore and “stay a week or two... to go to a camp meeting.”⁹⁵ Jacob Johnson’s Calvert County master gave him permission to cross the Chesapeake in a canoe to attend a camp meeting at Taylor’s Island in Dorchester in August of 1828. After Jacob failed to return, his enslaver posted a runaway notice in the local Cambridge newspaper, where Jacob’s free father lived.⁹⁶ Such liberties and escapes concerned many Maryland whites. Free and enslaved people “roaming abroad or meeting in numbers on Sunday” inspired legislation imposing restrictions on unaccompanied blacks (meaning, without white enslavers or other white authority figures) at camp meetings, but the law was ignored.

⁹⁴ “Brodess V. Thompson,” 4.

⁹⁵ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 423–26.

⁹⁶ “Reward,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, September 8, 1828.



Figure 5.21. Artist's rendering of a Methodist Camp Meeting of African American worshipers.
New York Public Library.

Though the specific details of Tubman's religious awakening and instruction remains obscured, she found solace and empowerment through a blending of Christian and African teachings. Daily survival, however, remained her biggest challenge as she faced the world with disabling epileptic seizures and headaches that compromised her ability to meet the demands placed on her body as an enslaved worker. Rit's nursing skills saved Tubman's life after the incident at the Bucktown Store. Medical treatments, including folk remedies, and basic health care during the early nineteenth century, if offered to her by Brodess, was often ineffectual and sometimes dangerous. Her parents, siblings, and friends helped support her through her recovery and stabilization, but the threat of sale by Brodess loomed even larger because of her fragile health. She survived, however, transforming herself into a strong and resilient woman.

Summary

Harriet Tubman's birth and childhood witnessed—and suffered through—the changing nature of slavery and freedom on the Eastern Shore. The growing and widespread practice of hiring out, division and separation of enslaved families due to inheritance patterns and white migration to the West and Deep South, and increased tension due to white fears of slave rebellion disrupted and shattered black families, including Tubman's. Unfettered violence perpetrated by slaveholders struggling to control resistant enslaved people increased the danger to the enslaved. A near-fatal head injury altered Tubman's physical and spiritual being, reconfiguring her world view, manifested through epileptic seizures and enthusiastic religious inspiration. Evangelical Christianity in the south became more embedded in the institution of slavery, offering solace for the enslaved while providing religious justification for slaveholders.

CHAPTER 6

1836–1849

Introduction

Despite constant family separation because of Brodess's preference for leasing his enslaved people, the Ross family maintained strong bonds. The interpersonal relationships between free, enslaved, and blended families and communities in Dorchester and surrounding counties were made possible by a broad network of historic roads and paths, some only accessible by foot today, and water routes, some of which are less apparent to modern eyes within the monument boundaries. As Tubman matured during her teen and young adult years, her spiritual life intensified and health issues related to her head wound required constant accommodation. Hired by Edward Brodess to the Stewart family in Madison brought Tubman back to the region of her birth and where her father lived, launching her tutelage on the docks, in the fields, and in the forests from Madison to the Blackwater River, shaping Tubman in multiple ways geared toward her survival. The continued migration South and West of white slaveholders—and the consequent forced migration of their enslaved workers—during the 1830s and 1840s devastated black communities in Dorchester. Slave traders still roamed the Eastern Shore, further terrorizing and fracturing black families. Enslaved people and their free loved ones resisted, fueling persistent efforts to escape by some, setting the stage for Tubman's own liberation and rescue missions during the 1850s.

.....

Harriet Tubman spent months recovering from her near-fatal head injury. Once she was well enough to work, Brodess leased her to the Stewart family in Madison, bringing her close to where her father lived, and relatives and friends she was separated from as a child.¹ She worked as a domestic, where, she later told a friend, she “would beat up the feather beds, make believe she was working hard, and when she had blown them up she would throw herself in the middle of them.”² Enslaved women did not always view domestic work in a positive light because the close

¹ Rit moved back to the Peter's Neck area and lived with Ben off and on from about 1836 to the mid-1840s. See U.S. Census 1840. Dorchester County, MD.

² Earl Conrad, “Interview with Helen W. Tatlock [Mrs. William Tatlock],” in *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library).

scrutiny of mistresses, long hours, and sometimes the physical vulnerability enslaved women faced from white men's sexual advances led many to prefer outdoor work. On smaller farms and plantations, enslaved women worked in the fields and house, while middle- and upper-class white women remained focused on domestic life.³

As she grew healthier and stronger, Tubman worked in the Stewarts' fields, where she was required to "draw a loaded stone boat."⁴ She was forced into the "rudest of labors, [she] drove oxen, carted, and plowed and did all the work of a man."⁵ She hauled logs, and could cut half a cord of wood a day.⁶ She claimed that Stewart "would often exhibit her feats of strength to his friends."⁷ Eventually, Tubman joined stevedores on the wharves in Madison, packing and loading grain milled at the Stewarts' windmill. She lifted "huge barrels" loaded with goods bound for the market and pulled heavily laden boats through the canal system "like an ox."⁸

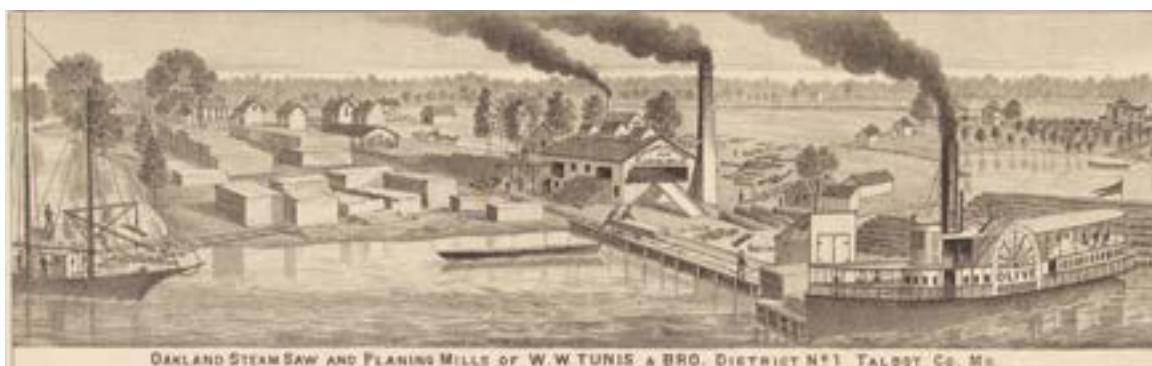


Figure 6.1. A waterfront scene similar to what Madison may have looked like during the mid-1800s.

Steam and sailing vessels loaded raw and milled timber and other products from wharves like these.

Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

Tubman later told an interviewer that during this period she lived "much with her father and mother," and labored for other larger landholders and farmers in the area.⁹ She claimed to have loved "great physical activity,"¹⁰ and noted that the "amount exacted of a

³ Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*. Jones, *Labor*. See especially chapter one. For another excellent examination of female slave life see, Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

⁴ Drake, "The Moses of Her People. Amazing Life Work of Harriet Tubman." A "stone boat" is a sleigh used to haul hay and other agricultural produce in the fields. A stone boat is also a shallow flat-bottomed canal boat, used to transport goods through shallow and narrow canals.

⁵ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]"; and Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 75.

⁶ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]."

⁷ Drake, "The Moses of Her People. Amazing Life Work of Harriet Tubman."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sanborn, "The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as 'Moses' or 'Harriet Tubman'."

¹⁰ Cheney, "Moses," 35.

woman for her time was fifty or sixty dollars, of a man, one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars.”¹¹



Figure 6.2. Road to Ben Ross’s cabin site in Peter’s Neck during the 1830s through the mid-1840s. Author Photo.

Her move back to Peters Neck coincided with the death of seventy-four-year-old Anthony Thompson in November 1836. For Ben Ross and the other people enslaved by Thompson, this marked the beginning of a period of insecurity, instability, and fear. The death of a slaveholder initiated an uncertain time for the enslaved people of the deceased’s estate; the division of the real and personal assets among heirs and the payment of outstanding debts often meant the sale of bondspeople to satisfy creditors, eliciting the break-up of families and the fracturing of community relationships. Though it appears that Thompson never sold any of his enslaved people, and although hired out or required to work away from family and friends, the Thompson enslaved community experienced a measure of stability, allowing the creation and maintenance of long-term and intimate community and family relationships.

As Thompson lay dying, he dictated his last will and testament. Somewhat mindful of family relationships, he manumitted each of his forty-three enslaved people according to a specific timetable, ranging from immediate emancipation to the longest possible limited term of service of forty-four years.¹² In addition to setting all of them free, he devised his large estate in Peter’s Neck and other assets between various heirs, including his sons Drs. Anthony C. and Absalom Thompson and their children.

¹¹ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17]”; and Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 75.

¹² According to Maryland law, a slave over the age of forty-five could not be set free.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Time to Serv.</u>	<u>Relations</u>
1 Ben	1 - 4	Wife & Children belonging to Edward Brooks -
2 Jack	14 - 4	Wife & Children free
3 Bill	6 - 4	Wife belonging to Mrs - Stepford -
4 Aaron	20 - 4	a Cripple - no wife
5 Almon	22 - 4	not married
6 Joshua	16 - 4	not married
7 Jasper	19 - 4	not married
8 Moses	17 - 4	Wife & Child, belonging to Mary -
9 Isaac	6 - 4	Wife belonging to Mrs. Stepford -
<u>WOMEN & CHILDREN -</u>		
10 Sarah	4 - 4	Widow belonging to Dr. Talbot -
11 Lucy	25 - 4	
12 Charles	27 - 4	
13 Bob	35 - 4	
14 Rebecca	38 - 4	
15 Charity	40 - 4	

Figure 6.30. A table drawn up by Dr. Anthony C. Thompson in 1839 for probate purposes documenting the future terms of service for each enslaved individual based on his deceased father's wishes. Ben Ross is at the top of the list (see Table 1 as follows). Maryland Historical Society.

This list, located in the Levin Richardson Collection at the Maryland Historical Society, is a remarkable record for black family genealogy.¹³ Organized by name and time left to serve, the list includes notations on personal and familial relationships for each person. The first name on the 1839 list is Ben Ross, who, by 1839, had one year and four months left to serve before manumission. There were four children born to enslaved women after Thompson died, and their terms of service were recorded as "for life."¹⁴ Remarkably, the Thompson brothers attempted to accommodate family relationships, with Absalom maintaining under his control those enslaved people already working for him with ties to Talbot County where he lived.

¹³ "List."

¹⁴ Dr. Anthony C. Thompson would later further reduce their terms of service.

Table 1

*Anthony Thompson's Inventory of Slaves,
Written by Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, January 1839.¹⁵*

Names	Time to Serve		Relations
	Yr.	Mo.	
1. Ben [Ross]	1	4	Wife and children belonging to Edward Brodess
2. Jack [Manokey]	14	4	Wife and children free
3. Bill [Banks]	6	4	Wife belonging to Mrs. Stapleford
4. Aaron [Manokey]	20	4	A cripple—no wife
5. Allen	22	4	Not married
6. Joshua [Tyler?]	16	4	Not married
7. Draper [Manokey]	17	4	Not married
8. Moses [Manokey]	17	4	Wife & child belonging to Mrs. Murray
9. Isaac [Kiah]	6	4	Wife belonging to Mrs. Stapleford
Women and Children			
10. Sarah Ann [Reed] [Saunders, Spriggs]	4	4	Husband belonging to Dr. Tubman
11. Jacob [Saunders]	25	4	[Sarah's child]
12. Charles [Saunders]	27	4	[Sarah's child]
13. Bob [Saunders or Spriggs?]	35	4	[Sarah's child]
14. Rebecca [Spriggs]	38	4	[Sarah's child]
15. Charity [Spriggs]	40	4	[Sarah's child]
16. Sarah Jane [Young]	17	4	Husband belonging to Mr. John Crawford
17. Angeline [Young]	39	4	[Sarah's child]
18. Cassan[dra or Cassey] [Young Nichols]	38	4	<i>[notation illegible]</i> [Sarah's child]
19. Nancy [Young]	For life		[Sarah's child]
20. Hooper [Young?]	For life		[Sarah's child]
21. Leah [Ennals Slacum?]	8	4	Husband belonging to Capt. Solomon Mitchell
22. Jerry [Ennals Slacum]	39	4	[Leah's child]
23. Mary [Slacum]	For life		[Leah's child]

¹⁵ Thompson, "List." Notes in italics are additions presumably made by Anthony C. Thompson at a later date. Additions by author in brackets.

24. Infant [Eliza Jane Slacum Cane]	For life	[Leah's child]
25. Betsy [Bowley]	14	4 Husband, Major Bowley, free
26. Alfred [Bowley]	24	4
27. Maria [Bowley? Manokey? Bailey]	21	4 Not married (<i>delicate</i>)
28. Pheba [Tyler]	26	4 Not married, is my house girl & was raised by me ACT [Anthony C. Thompson] <i>sister to J.T.</i>
29. Harriot	26	4 Not married
30. Hanner	28	4 Husband in Talbot [Co.]—belonging to Mrs. Haddaway—[?] Hanner lives with Absalom [Thompson]
31. Sophia [Green, aka Sophia Brown]	26	4 Not married
32. Emeline [Manokey?]	32	4 [referring to Emilie and Charlotte together] Phillis's children & sisters to Eliza & Matilda who belong to Absalom [Thompson]
33. Charlotte [Manokey?]	32	4
34. Mary [Manokey Ross Wells]	37	4 [referring to Mary and Susan together] Old Jerry's children and are to remain with him to certain ages by the will
35. Susan [Manokey]	38	4
36. Levin [Tyler]	37	4 No parents, raised in my family—ACT [Anthony C. Thompson]
37. Pheba [Kiah Ferrare]	38	4 Isaac's child—
38. Jerry [Manokey]	Free	
39. Polly [Manokey]	Free	
40. Phillis [Manokey?]	Free	
41. Eliza [Manokey]		Awarded to Absalom [Thompson]
42. Matilda [Manokey]		Awarded to Absalom [Thompson]
43. Job		Awarded to Absalom [Thompson]

Ross, and fellow bondsperson Jerry Manokey were among Thompson's most highly esteemed enslaved workers. Thompson manumitted Ross four years after his death; Jerry

immediately.¹⁶ Thompson gave Ross ten acres of land, “for and during his lifetime... laid out to his house binding with the road” on the west side of Harrisville Road, with the “privilege of cutting timber” for his support.¹⁷ While manumissions was not uncommon, Thompson’s provision for the material support of Ross through life tenancy and rights to timber on the property was extremely unusual. Thompson did the same for Manokey.

Though Thompson carefully crafted a manumission schedule for his enslaved people, he still guaranteed the benefits of their labor would accrue to his sons Anthony C. and Absalom. Gradual emancipation dissipated the slave owners’ need to provide for the board and care for aged bondspeople, too, and the children born of enslaved women would provide slave labor well into the future.

Unlike black community life on large isolated plantations of the Deep South and Southwest, Dorchester County bondspeople, in general, experienced far greater mobility, increasing their opportunities for social, cultural, and economic exchanges. Generations of closely allied white families and their enslaved people living near free black families and growing communities fostered a rhythm of economic and social activity that provided some benefits. Free and enslaved labor worked side by side on the plantations during planting and harvest seasons, in the forests harvesting timber, on the wharves loading and unloading goods, and in the shipyards building and refitting ships for merchants, traders and speculators. Friendships formed, marriages took place, and free and enslaved families became intertwined.

Anthony Thompson’s enslaved people reflect this phenomenon. Most of his enslaved women were not married to his enslaved men. Some were married to free men, others to men enslaved nearby in Church Creek, Madison, Little Blackwater Bridge, Smithville, and Cambridge, while some married men enslaved in Talbot County. Betsy Bowley, for instance, married Major, the son of Binah Bowley, both of whom were manumitted in a deed signed by Levin Stewart of Madison in 1817. Sarah Ann Reed married a man enslaved by Dr. Robert Tubman, who owned properties in Cambridge and south of the Blackwater River. The proximity of these white families enabled Bowley and Reed to maintain stable family relationships. Hanner, on the other hand, was married to man enslaved by Thomas Haddaway of Talbot County. While it would appear that this particular relationship would have problems due to separation, in fact, Hanner, hired out to Dr. Absalom Thompson, was then living at on his Bayside plantation on the Chesapeake in Talbot County, enabling her to live with or maintain close contact with her husband.¹⁸

¹⁶ Thompson, “Anthony Thompson Will.” “ten acres of land for and during his life time, peaceable to remain to be laid out to his house binding with the road on the west side with the privilege of cutting timber on any part of my land for the support of the same...” Though Ben Ross had been born sometime during the 1780s, Anthony Thompson provided for Ben’s manumission in 1840, leaving Ben older than the legal age limit for Maryland manumissions; Ben was in his fifties in 1840, making it an illegal manumission.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Thompson, “List.”

Thompson's enslaved men were married to women who did not belong to him, too. Bill Banks and Isaac Kiah were married to women enslaved by a Dorothy Staplefort heir, Ann Martin Staplefort who lived on the Staplefort property on the Little Blackwater River.¹⁹ Ann Staplefort enslaved Harkless Jolly, Linah Ross's husband and the father of Kessiah Jolly Bowley and her sister, Harriet. These relationships demonstrate the mobility of enslaved people and reveal long term important community and economic ties cultivated through the social and commercial interactions of slaveholding families over broad geographic landscapes.

Though Tubman and her siblings spent portions of their childhoods and early adulthoods in and around Bucktown working for different enslavers while Brodess collected their rents, their familial and social world remained rooted with their father and the free and enslaved communities at Peter's Neck. Despite the ten-mile distance between them, the Ross children remained closely attached to the black community near and on Thompson's plantation, relationships that survived their removal to Bucktown. Tubman's niece, Kessiah, Linah's daughter and only two years younger than Tubman, married John Bowley sometime in the early 1840s. Kessiah was probably rented by Brodess to a landowner in the Madison area, enabling Kessiah to continue her familial and social ties to the Parson's Creek and Peter's Neck districts and Ben Ross's home base near Harrisville Road and the Thompson property. Tubman's brother, Robert, married Mary Manokey, one of Jerry Manokey's daughters. Though still enslaved by Thompson when she married Robert around 1850, Mary was set for manumission in 1862. Tubman's brother Ben, conversely, married Jane Kane, who lived to the east of Thompson's plantation enslaved by Horatio Jones who lived along Buttons Creek (and within the monument boundaries.)

¹⁹ Ibid. Her full name, after several marriages, was Ann Martin Staplefort Staplefort Grieves.

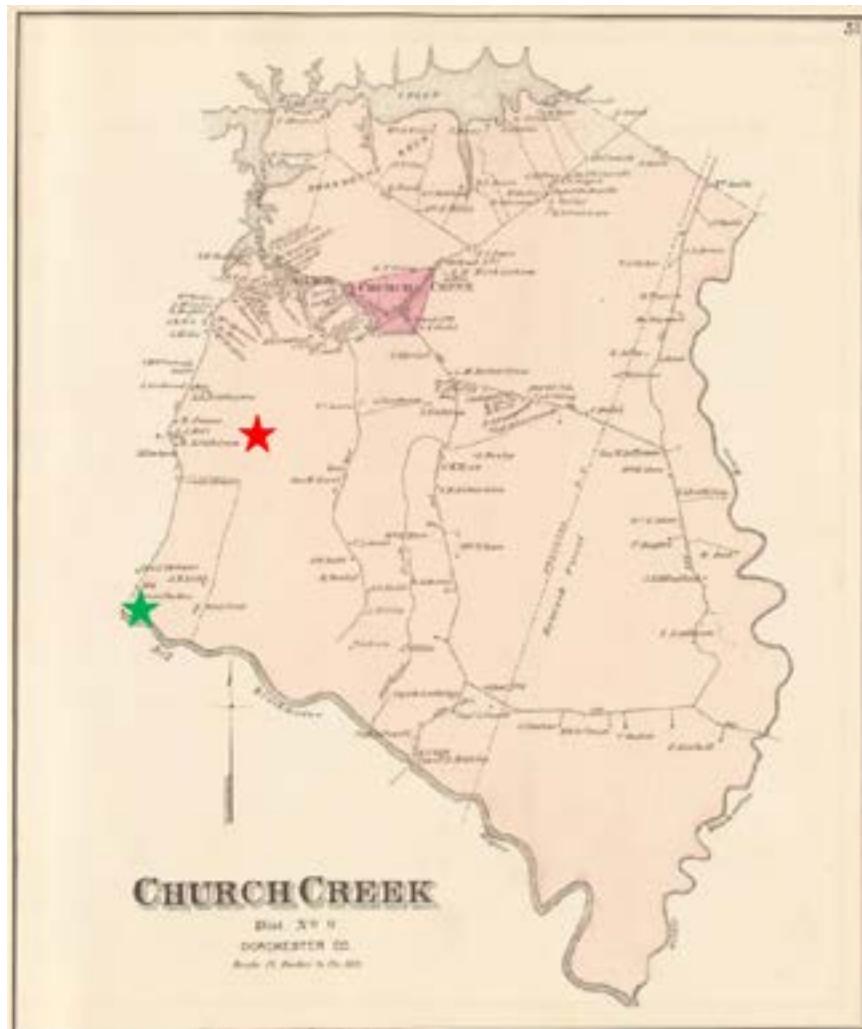


Figure 6.4: Church Creek district showing Jones plantation (top right) and the former Thompson home site (bottom left).
Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

Jerry and Polly Manokey were freed immediately on Thompson's death, and their children John, Aaron, Moses, Eliza, and Matilda were given limited terms of servitude, ranging from eighteen to thirty-three more years. Their youngest children, Mary and Susan, were to serve forty-one and thirty-eight more years, but remained with Jerry and Polly until they were fifteen and eleven years old, respectively.²⁰ Thompson allotted the Manokeys the use of ten acres of land "to be laid out to him round his house where the said

²⁰ Thompson, "Anthony Thompson Will." According to the 1840 census, Jerry Manokey and Polly were between the ages of 55 and 100, and their youngest daughters, Mary (about 8 years old) and Susan (about 10 years old) are listed in this household, though they are not free. Reversing the practice of his father to never sell his enslaved people, Dr. Anthony C. Thompson sold Susan on April 22, 1847, to William V.M. Edmundson, for \$200. Dorchester County Court Records, "Anthony C. Thompson to Wm. V.M. Edmundson," in *Chattel Records* (Annapolis: MDSA, 1842–1847). Tragically, Edmundson sold Susan to Margaret Tindle, the wife of a slave trader. Miles Tindle later sold Susan out of the state illegally. See Dorchester County Circuit Court Docket, April 1851, Appearance #7.

Jerry now lives, together with the privilege of cutting timber on any part of my land... to remain peaceable and quietly during his life." Thompson also directed his estate to provide Jerry with one year of bread, and in "time of need."²¹ No other Thompson enslaved person received the material support accorded Manokey and Ross, indicating the unusual nature of the bequest.²² The rest of the enslaved community, Thompson directed, be leased "at the customary wagers [sp] of the county," giving two-thirds of the proceeds to Dr. Anthony C. Thompson's and one-third to Dr. Absalom Thompson.

After Thompson's death, Jerry and Polly Manokey remained in the Peter's Neck community. Surrounded by family and friends, the Manokeys worked and raised their young daughters who remained at home with them. Jerry, like Ben, may have continued working for Dr. Anthony C. Thompson at Peter's Neck—for wages now that he was free—or he may have worked for Joseph Stewart or John D. Parker, both of whom continued harvesting the region's timber and expanding their land under cultivation. He probably paid Dr. Thompson for the ability to keep his daughters at home. The community landscapes in Peter's Neck reflect the nature of freedom for blacks on the Eastern Shore. Most free families included enslaved members, and though some were able to live together, it was not the norm. These families lived in a middle ground of free and slave. They could not freely determine their futures. Enslaved family members could not always live with them, travel, or move away for better opportunities. This kept free family members tied to their enslaved families and communities.

With his wife and children still held in bondage, Ben Ross remained attached to the familial and social network in the region once he became free in 1840. Rit may have developed some community ties to Bucktown, but by 1840 it appears that she was living again with Ben in his cabin at Peter's Neck; Ross may have paid Brodess a fee to have Rit and some of his children with him.²³ He could provide for his family with wages he earned. Joseph Stewart's timber, shipbuilding, and merchant business required the expertise of an experienced logger and supervisor such as Ross. Stewart "was a builder, and for the work of

²¹ Thompson, "Anthony Thompson Will."

²² It is unclear how this arrangement worked once Thompson's land was sold to other parties, like Joseph Stewart and the Harrington brothers of Madison. Stewart purchased several parcels of Thompson's property in 1837. One deed specifically mentions "old Ben's house" as part of the property, but it makes no reference to Ross living there. The 1840 U.S. census shows Ben Ross and Jerry Manokey living there, surrounded by other free black households, some of whom appear in the 1830 U.S. census. See Dorchester County Land Records, "Samuel and Edward Harrington from James A. Stewart," 69 3WJ 53, June 22, 1846, which details the sale of former Thompson property, including 192 acres "now occupied by Mr. Parker, down by old Ben's"; and "Samuel and Edward Harrington from James A. Stewart," 69 3WJ 492.

²³ Rit probably moved back (and leased) to the Peter's Neck area and lived with Ben sometime around 1836 and remained there until the mid-1840s. In his household there are six free blacks. One male aged 0–10; 2 males 10–24; 1 male 36–55; 1 female aged 24–35, and one female 36–55. While all these people are shown as free, they are not. This is a common error in this census. While the older man is most certainly Ben, the older woman is probably Rit. The youngest child may be Moses, and the other three may be Ben and Rit's children, perhaps Henry and Ben and Harriet or one of her older sisters, probably Soph. Henry and Ben may have been working for Stewart as well. Edward Brodess is listed in the census with only three slaves on his property, one male aged 10–24, and two females aged 10–24. See 1840. Dorchester County, MD.

Ross used to receive as much as five dollars a day sometimes, he being a superior workman.”²⁴

Figure 6.5. 1840 U.S. Census showing “Benjamin Ross,” (4th name from bottom) with six “free” people in his household. Though not free, Rit, Tubman and several siblings lived with Ben while working nearby and the census taker may have assumed their status matched Ben’s. United States Census.

Though the social relationships and living arrangements for many of Thompson's people are unknown, fictive and virtual kinship relationships evolved in this community, too. In 1843, Ross purchased the freedom of Maria Bailey and Aaron Manokey, Jerry Manokey's disabled son.²⁵ For the small sum of ten dollars, Dr. Thompson agreed to the transaction, and moments later, Ross manumitted them. Living in the same enslaved community for most of their lives, Ben may have even helped raise them. Maria was married to Isaac Bailey, who, coincidentally, bore the same name as Frederick Douglass's

²⁴ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]."

²⁵ Notation next to Aaron's name in the probate list says, "a cripple."

grandfather.²⁶ Aaron's disability and Maria, identified as "delicate" in the probate record, may have suffered with a long-term illness (from which she later recovered), may have influenced their low monetary value.

Harriet hired out her time quite regularly during the 1840s, paying Brodess a yearly fee for the privilege of hiring herself to employers of her own choosing. Because Harriet was frequently sick because of her head injury, Brodess may have readily agreed to the arrangement. Dr. Anthony Thompson, "stood for her"—that is, he guaranteed the \$50–\$60 yearly payment demanded by Brodess for her labor.²⁷ Harriet repaid Thompson and kept any additional money she earned for herself, eventually saving enough "to buy a pair of steers, worth forty dollars."²⁸ A savvy businesswoman, Tubman then hired herself with her team of oxen, plowing in the fields and hauling timber in the woods, increasing her earnings potential.

After their father's death, Drs. Anthony and Absalom Thompson sold their inherited lands to other landowners in the region; the timber from there continued to be an important commodity. The natural resources provided economic prospects for free blacks living there, too, allowing for little interruption in paid work and enabling black families to purchase property. The economic vitality of the region provided other opportunities, too. The Bowley brothers, for instance, manumitted by Levin Stewart, were apprenticed as blacksmiths and ship carpenters while still young and under the control of Joseph Stewart.²⁹ These young men lived and worked at the epicenter of a thriving maritime community in Madison, where the Stewarts and other white families ran merchant businesses, shipyards, and more.

It was in this blended community of free and enslaved people that Harriet Tubman—still known as Minty Ross—met and married John Tubman, a local free black, sometime around 1844. She later said that when she married him, she dropped her birth name, Araminta, in favor of Harriet.³⁰ Slightly older, John was born to free parents, Thomas

²⁶ *Chattel Records* and Thompson, "List." See also, 1850 U.S. Census. Dorchester County, MD.

²⁷ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]." See also Sanborn, "The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as 'Moses' or 'Harriet Tubman'."

²⁸ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]."; and Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 75.

²⁹ Levin Stewart and his brother Joseph Stewart manumitted the Bowley brothers, Major, John, and Richard, and their cousin Simon Bowley during the 1840s. The Bowleys trained in a variety of skills related to shipbuilding. Once free, they hired themselves out as ship carpenters, eventually building at least one ship in partnership with Joseph Stewart's son, John T. Stewart. See Dorchester County Court Records, "Major Bowley to John Bowley, Richard Bowley, John T. Stewart," in *Chattel Records* (Annapolis: MDSA, 1847–1851). Major Bowley sells interest in "Vessel, now on the stocks at Steam Mill Wharf in Cambridge." John T. Stewart owned the "Sandy Hill shipyard" near Cambridge. See also Walter E. Huelle, *Footnotes to Dorchester History* (Cambridge, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1969). 63.

³⁰ Harriet Tubman Davis, "Papers for Harriet Tubman Davis," in *Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1892–1899).

and Priscilla Tubman, and raised in Peter's Neck somewhere close to White Marsh Road.³¹ As a free man, John had far greater mobility than Harriet, and he may have moved about the area quite frequently, working for various farmers or other employers, as labor needs changed throughout the seasons.³² It seems likely that John and Harriet hoped that they would be able to earn enough money to buy Harriet's freedom from Edward Brodess, if he was inclined to sell her. By marrying Harriet, John forfeited many rights. Any children born to Harriet would become Edward Brodess's lawful property. John Tubman lacked legal or parental rights to his own children. He could not freely share a life with Harriet without the consent of Brodess. Perhaps they both hoped, against great odds, that they could, in time, purchase Harriet's freedom from Brodess.

Once married, according to oral tradition in the Peter's Neck black community, John and Harriet likely lived together on or near Malone's Church property on White Marsh Road and not too far from where her father and mother lived near the former Thompson plantation.³³ A free community that had been growing there since the turn of the nineteenth century, it thrived into the twentieth century.³⁴

Brodess continued to struggle at farming; his property at Bucktown was not highly productive. His large family—he and Eliza now had eight children—required more income, but his farm was too small to consistently increase its yield to produce higher yearly returns. In times of financial stress, he turned his most liquid asset, his enslaved workers, to augment his income. During the late 1830s and early 1840s, Brodess sold Tubman's sisters

³¹ County, "Certificates of Freedom," January 4, 1850, "Negro man John Tubman aged about 32 years, 5 feet 9 ½ inches high, dark mulatto complexion, with a small scar on back of left hand, also one other at the top of calf of left leg, was Born free and raised in Dorchester County. Identified by James Smith, S.C. [Slaughter Creek]." See also McGill, *Certificates of Freedom*, 59, 66, 76, 79, and for John Tubman, p. 84. See also, Hynson, *Free African Americans of Maryland, 1832: Including Allegany, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Ann's, and St. Mary's Countie*. The 1840 census shows a John Tubman, head of a free black household, in the Parson's Creek District several dwellings from Ben Ross, Harriet's father. Nestled in the midst of a small free black settlement, this John Tubman, who is between 55 and 100 years old, also had a woman of the same age in his house, along with 2 females aged 10 to 24, two males under 10 and one 24 to 35 years of age. It is not known whether Harriet's husband, John Tubman, is in this household, as this older Tubman could be John's uncle. It seems likely, however, that young John Tubman could have been living here and placing him near Harriet.

³² See Sanborn, "The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as 'Moses' or 'Harriet Tubman'." For an excellent discussion of Maryland's particular circumstances relating to free black labor, see Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground*.

³³ Sanborn, "The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as 'Moses' or 'Harriet Tubman'." According to Sanborn, after Harriet married John Tubman, she left her parents' home and moved in with him, even though they "had different masters." See also, 1840. Ben Ross is listed in the Dorchester County Census, Parson's Creek District, p. 5. Ibid. p. 12 Oral tradition also suggests that Harriet and John Tubman lived together at one point near or on the current Malone's Church property on White Marsh Road. (Personal communication with John Creighton, referring to his interview with elder Walter Ross in Madison in the mid-1980s.) This church was established in 1864 on land deeded to the black community in 1862.

³⁴ The school closed during desegregation in the 1960s and has since been demolished. The cemetery, which contains graves from the early 1870s and includes several Civil War veterans, is still in use by local families to bury their loved ones. As jobs lured people to the canning factories in Cambridge and beyond, it dwindled, and the church closed in 1987.

Linah and Soph.³⁵ Both women were supposed to be free at age 45, but Brodess likely sold them illegally to slave traders. Soph was sold away from her infant, Ann, and Linah from her daughters, Kessiah and Harriet.³⁶ Tubman's brother recalled years later, while he stood imprisoned for debts owned by Brodess, Linah was “taken away from her children, hand-cuffed, and put into the jail where I was. Her irons were taken off; she was in great grief, crying all the time. ‘Oh my children! My poor children!’ til it appeared to me, she would kill herself for grief.”³⁷ Apparently, Brodess turned the four hundred dollars he received from illegally selling her as a “slave for life” into a land purchase, the record of which has yet to be found.³⁸ Soph had

“a young child, about two or three months old, & the master came after her to sell her to Georgia. Her husband had great confidence in a gentleman, who was a class-leader [minister], & he takes my sister and carries her to him to keep her from her master. He told him-

‘Get your wife and bring her to me, and I will take care of her.’ So he did it. At the same time, the old master [Brodess] had got him to look out and get her, and after her husband carries her there, this man turns round and lets the master understand it, & he comes and gets her & sells her down to Georgia, and leaves that young child...”³⁹

Ben and Rit had no control over Brodess’s actions. While some enslaved people had opportunities to secure a local buyer, the Rosses probably had no such prospect. Unfortunately, no records of the sales of the two sisters has been located. Most buyers would require a bill of sale to secure their title; registering the sale at the local Court House ensured legal ownership. Brodess may have avoided such a process by selling to a less than scrupulous buyer; by not registering the sale at the Dorchester County Court House Brodess could avoid paying taxes on the transaction. Brodess could have sold them in

³⁵ The fates of Sam, Frederick, and Shadrach mentioned in Anthony Thompson’s guardian’s account book for 1821 and 1822 are unknown. As with Linah and Soph, perhaps Brodess also sold them out of the state to distant relatives, in Baltimore, or to a trader for sale to the Deep South, or they could have died.

³⁶ “Equity Papers 249.”; “Bill of Complaint,” May 12, 1852.

³⁷ Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*. “Interview with James Seward,” 27–28.

³⁸ Bill of Complaint, “Case 249.” “Testimony of Polish Mills.” No record of the sale of Linah or Soph has been found either in the Dorchester, Talbot or Caroline County records. Even if Brodess had sold them to relatives then living in Mississippi, the transaction would have been illegal. Ben and Rit and their son Henry thought Linah and Soph had been sold to Georgia. See “Henry Stewart,” in Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 414, and “James Seward,” in Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*, 27–28. Also, in December 1842, the Sheriff of Dorchester County, William B. Dail, under order from the Dorchester County Court, ordered a sale of the majority of Brodess’s assets, including approximately 270 acres of land, his home, several farm animals and one man, “Ben, 19 years old.” See William B. Dail, “Sheriff’s Sale,” *Cambridge Chronicle*, December 24, 1842. Edward Brodess and his cousin Richard Pattison were being sued. Brodess did not lose his property, presumably because payment was made to satisfy the litigants in the case.

³⁹ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 414–16. The “class leader” was likely Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, who by this time was an ordained minister in the Methodist Church, though this person could have been a number of other local ministers. The three-month-old child is likely Ann, who would eventually be brought to Auburn, NY sometime before the Civil War and live with Tubman’s family.

Baltimore, but, unfortunately, Baltimore authorities destroyed those historic chattel records and bills of sale during the 1970s.

Ben and Rit would never forgive Brodess, and the rest of their lives in Maryland were fraught with fears of impeding sales of the rest of their children. When Brodess tried to sell Moses, Rit boldly defied him at great risk to her life. At an unknown later date, Brodess attempted to sell Rit's youngest son, Moses. According to Tubman's brother Henry,

“a Georgia man came and bought my brother; and after he had bought him, the master calls him to come to the house & catch the gentleman’s horse, but instead of his coming to catch the horse, my mother, who was out in the field, and knew what the master was doing, comes in. She had a suspicion that they were going to sell the boy, and went to the backside of the house, and heard the master count the money; and after he had counted out the money, the master says, ‘I ought to have fifty dollars more yet,’ and . . . the mother comes, she says, ‘What do you want of the boy?’ He wouldn’t tell her, but says to her, ‘Go and bring a pitcher of water’; and after she brought the pitcher of water, she goes to work again. Then he makes another excuse, & hollers to the boy to come & put the horse in to the carriage. But the mother comes again. Then he says, ‘What did you come for? I hollered for the boy.’ And she up & swore, and said he wanted the boy for that (ripping out an oath) Georgia man. He called three times, but the boy did not come; and a third time, he came to look for the boy, but the mother had hid him, & kept him hid, I suppose for a month.⁴⁰

Traders would stay for one or two months, purchase scores of enslaved people and hold them in “slave pens” or the county jail, until enough purchases made the trip South profitable. So Brodess had time to entice Moses out of hiding. Brodess enlisted the aid of another enslaved person, perhaps one of his wife’s bonds people, who apparently felt pressured or compelled to find favor from Brodess. He revealed Moses’s location—perhaps in Greenbrier Swamp, just south of the Brodess property. Its dense foliage, briars, weeds, and swampy muck makes it difficult terrain. Rit was suspicious when the enslaved man suggested that he bring food to Moses in the woods. She warned Moses ahead of time and sent the man into the woods with food. “At noon,” he went to the “bush, expecting the boy would be there. . . but the boy wasn’t.” Later that evening, a white neighbor, John Scott, accompanied by the collaborator knocked on Rit’s cabin door. Henry said his mother yelled:

“. . . ‘What do you want?’ Says he, ‘Mr. Scott wants to come to light a [cigar].’ She ripped out an oath, and said; ‘You are after my son; but the first man that comes into my house, I will split his head open.’ That frightened them, and they would not come in. So, she kept the boy hid until the Georgia man went away, and then she let him come out. Then the master came to the mother, and said he was

⁴⁰ Ibid., 414–16.

exceedingly glad she hid the boy, so that he couldn't sell him. He told her, 'when we wanted you to send the boy to the woods, we were there to catch him.'"⁴¹

Rit risked her own safety to protect her son, at what cost we do not know.



Figure 6.6: Brodessa property (starred) in relation to Bucktown Village—a distance of about one mile. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

41 Ibid.

Tubman's time working for the Stewarts in Madison, on the docks and in the forests, provided her with knowledge and skills that would ensure her survival and successful escape in the years to come. Black mariners were the hubs of a complex communication network spreading news, gossip and personal messages to blacks living throughout the Atlantic diaspora.⁴² The freedom of movement afforded watermen in general proved to be a vital link between otherwise isolated communities of free and enslaved black people throughout the Eastern seaboard and beyond. They were the keys to disseminating ideas of liberty and freedom, relaying the details of revolution in Haiti, sharing news of abolition and colonization efforts and other political issues, and passing messages between members of families separated from one another. These bonds people and other black workers like them represented spokes in the wheel of inter- and intra-regional communication.

Maritime trade networks and coastal ports were populated by a diverse group of maritime professionals, including ferrymen, single boatmen, crews manning large schooners, stevedores and other dock workers, ship carpenters and caulkers.⁴³ Even in remote parts of Dorchester County, economic survival required a constant flow of ships and boats of all sizes, and seamen and watermen of different races, to provide and operate a dependable network to transport their cargo to markets, near and far.⁴⁴ Ben Ross probably knew many of the local watermen and seamen who worked the boats in the region. From the Blackwater River to the Choptank, to Baltimore, Washington D.C., Norfolk, and further to Philadelphia, New York City, and many ports in New England, these black watermen provided a communication substitute for the newspapers and written words of the white community.⁴⁵ In addition to supervising the loading of timber onto vessels in Madison and Parson's Creek, Ross may have accompanied timber to Baltimore, ensuring safe passage to markets on Baltimore's bustling wharves. In this role he likely knew many mariners. Black watermen, or "blackjacks" were vital to the survival of many free and enslaved black communities and Ross was in a perfect position to participate in their regional system of trade and communication. The confidential and secret exchange of information across geographic, social, and cultural boundaries was crucial in providing Tubman and her family and friends with an effective and secure means of operating beyond the gaze of white masters.⁴⁶

Closer to home, canals eased travel and communication, enabling loved ones to visit more frequently, send messages easily - and escape together. Twenty-one-year-old Tom

⁴² Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*. Cecelski, Waterman's Song; W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seaman in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

⁴³ Scott, *The Common Wind*; Seth, *Recollections*.

⁴⁴ Scott, *The Common Wind*.

⁴⁵ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 39–41.

⁴⁶ See Scott, *The Common Wind*; Julius Sherrard Scott, III, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution." (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1986).; and Cecelski, *Waterman's Song*.

Ritter, for instance, lived and worked near Madison for his enslaver, Hugh McGuire. His wife, Nancy Ennals, worked for her enslaver, Vachel Keene, several miles southwest of McGuire along the Blackwater River near Golden Hill. The young couple maintained their relationship despite separation. On December 28, 1847, they fled together, likely taking advantage of water access through the canal to Parson's Creek for transportation to ports far away.⁴⁷

\$150 Reward.

RANAWAY from the subscriber on Tuesday the 28th ult., a negro woman by the name of *NANCY ENNALS*, about 23 or 24 years old, about 5 feet high, of a dark chesnut colour, and pleasant when spoken to. She took away with her a variety of clothing, a description of which is thought unnecessary. I will give \$50 if she is taken in the county and secured in Cambridge jail; one hundred dollars if taken out of the county and in the State, or I will give the above reward if taken out of the State and secured in Baltimore Jail.

VACHEL KEENE,
Lake's District, Dor. Co. Md.

Jan 8, 1848 tf

N. B. As a boy by the name of Tom Ritter, belonging to Mr. Hugh McGuire, left about the same time it is very probable that they are both together. V. K.

The Delaware Journal will copy three weeks, and send bill to this office for collection.

Figure 6.7. Reward advertisement for Tom Ritter and Nancy Ennals, who ran away in December 1847. Keene was still advertising for Nancy and Tom's capture in April 1848. Maryland State Archives.

During her time working and living in Peter's Neck, Tubman also developed a friendship with Jacob Jackson. Jackson's lands—which he acquired during the 1840s and 1850s—were situated near White Marsh Road at first, then near Parson's Creek within the

⁴⁷ See *Cambridge Chronicle*, January 15, 1848 for advertisements for Tom Ritter and Nancy Ennals. Four months earlier, Vince and Anthony Cornish fled Hugh McGuire and his neighbor, Peter Harrington. See *Cambridge Chronicle*, September 4, 1847. Maryland State Archives, Cambridge Chronicle Collection, MSA SC 2482. <http://speccol.msa.maryland.gov/pages/newspaper/diginumber.aspx?speccol=2842&id=246>

boundaries of the National Monument.⁴⁸ Jacob Jackson purchased his first farm in 1842 from Dennis Camper, though he may have been renting the twenty acres and farming the land already.⁴⁹ Nestled in a well-established free black community, Jackson prospered since he gained his freedom in 1836.

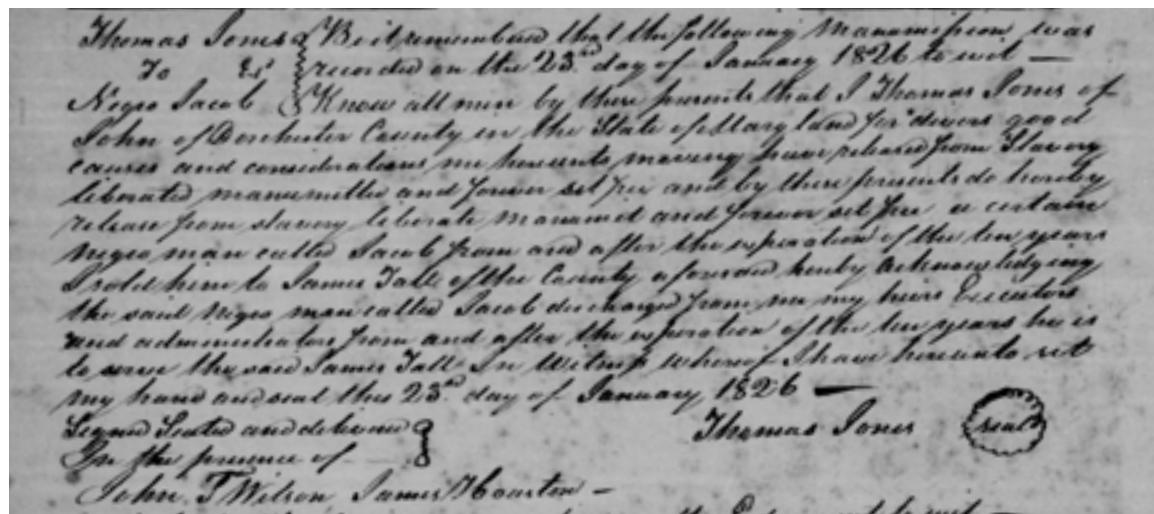


Figure 6.8. Jacob Jackson's manumission deed, January 1826. Though not technically free until 1836, Jackson lived as a free man and recorded in the 1830 and 1832 census as free. Dorchester County Court Records.

By 1852 and living on a larger farm west of Madison near Parson's Creek, Jackson owned about 150 acres of land, two horses, two oxen, three milch (milk) cows, three cattle, eleven sheep and twelve hogs. His land sat on the south side of the county road (Route 16) between Madison and Parson's Creek and the canal (Stewart's Canal aka Coursey's Creek). A decade later, Jackson and his wife Dinah had assets of more than \$2,500, attesting to their successful lives creating a comfortable home and economic independence in a slave-dependent economy.⁵⁰ The number of sheep the Jacksons raised reveals one aspect of their entrepreneurial efforts. In 1842, Jackson nearly died from a severe blow to his head, but the cause of it reveals something about his material resources. According to newspaper articles at the time, Jackson was working with an ax in his cabin, when, in full swing to cut a log, his ax snagged looped wool yarn spun by his wife hanging from the rafters in their home. The ax head loosened and crashed down causing a near-fatal head wound. Sheering, spinning,

⁴⁸ See Dorchester County Court, *Chattel Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives), 1844. For Jackson's deeds, see Todd & Harrington, FJH 5 folio 483-484; Jackson & Camper, WJ 1 folio 217-218; Jackson & Browhan FJH 5 folio 385; Brown & Brown FJH 5 folio 385-386; Jackson & Stewart FJH 3 folio 372-373; Stewart & Coursey WJ 4 folio 122-123; Stewart & Lockerman ER 3 Folio 126-128; Stewart & Jackson FJH 3 folio 372; Slater, et al. & Harrington FJH 3 Folio 373; Jackson & Stewart FJH 4 Folio 169. Jackson was first assessed taxes on real estate in 1843.

⁴⁹ Dorchester County "Land Records," Liber WJ 1 folio 217-218.

⁵⁰ "Assessment Record," in Dorchester County Board of County Commissioners (Cambridge, MD: MDSA, 1852); "Field Book 1852"; Dorchester County Board of Commissioners, "Dorchester County Levy Book," in *Dorchester County Board of Commissioners* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1859-1900). See also the Jacob Jackson Network to Freedom nomination for more detail about Jackson's property.

and dying wool for sale would have provided income for the Jacksons in addition to their other agricultural pursuits. Interestingly, in a testament to evolving medical treatments, one of the leading white doctors on the Eastern Shore and a resident of Madison, Dr. Benjamin Harrison, helped save Jackson's life, and within a year he recovered.⁵¹

Jackson's black neighbors were successful professionals, working as sawyers, ship carpenters, house builders, caulkers, sailors, and farmers. By the 1850s, more than two dozen free families owned land or rented land in this district.⁵² Some owned their own homes and farms, like Gabriel Saunders, Vincent Green, Jerry Malone, and William Slater. Others owned horses and oxen, cows, pigs, and sheep for use on farms they rented.⁵³ Once enslaved by Thomas Jones along with Jackson, Malone gained his freedom in 1836. Many of Malone's relatives, however, remained enslaved by the Jones family.⁵⁴

By the mid-1840s, Dr. Anthony Thompson had successfully sold all his father's property in Peter's Neck. He used the profits from those transactions to purchase more than 2,000 acres of forest and fields at Poplar Neck, outside of Preston in Caroline County (outside the National Monument boundaries but within the acquisition area.) Situated along the Choptank River between the village of Choptank and Marsh Creek to the east and Skillington Creek to the north, Thompson launched a decade long timbering operation. The forest was rich in oak and pine, suitable for shipbuilding and construction.

⁵¹ *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, August 23, 1843.

⁵² One of these freemen, Jeremiah Malone, lived here with his first wife Priscilla, and then his second wife, Rose Ann, and his children, Hester, Lucinda, Jane, and Sylvester. In July 1864 he deeded a portion of his property to a group of local black trustees—David Linthicum, James Keene, Vince Green, Drew Otho, and Murray Keene—to build a church and school. By 1866 a church building stood on this property, which the community used as a school, community center and church.

⁵³ Court, *Chattel Records*. District 4, 1852. And see Bureau of the Census, "United States Federal Census," (1850). And "United States Federal Census," (1860).

⁵⁴ Several were manumitted as late as the 1850s and early 1860s. See Court, *Chattel Records*. See entries for Jerry Malun [Malone], January 11, 1837; Benjamin [Malone,] August 1, 1854; Stephen [Malone,] March 1, 1856; Minty [Malone], March 1, 1856; Rueben [Malone], March 1, 1857; Jacob [Malone], April 1, 1859.



Figure 6.9. Map of Caroline County with close up of Poplar Neck, where Dr. Anthony Thompson owned 2,200 acres. Thompson required the labor of dozens of free and enslaved workers, including Tubman and her father Ben Ross.
Library of Congress.

Donald McKay, a famous shipbuilder in East Boston, Massachusetts, who built the record holding schooner *Flying Cloud*, “secured many thousands of sturdy white oak trees in lower Caroline County, ‘digging them up by the roots’, splitting and hewing them near complete ship timbers, taking advantage of the offset roots and limbs, loading them on ships at Gilpin’s Point on Choptank.”⁵⁵ Thompson needed skilled men, so Ross moved to Caroline County where he managed Thompson’s venture, bringing Rit with him. By 1850, Thompson employed dozens of black sawyers, loggers, laborers, and mariners, including twenty-one enslaved men.⁵⁶ Harriet Tubman moved to Caroline County in 1847 to work for Thompson and live with her parents. Thompson hired her brothers, Robert, Ben Jr., and Henry, too. John Tubman may have joined them, though in 1850 he was living between Cambridge and Town Point, thirty miles away.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Caroline County Historical Society.

⁵⁶ Census, "United States Federal Census." See record for Thompson's son, Edward D. Thompson.

⁵⁷ "U.S. Census, 1850."



Figure 6.10. The Flying Cloud Clipper Ship built in East Boston, possibly using timbers cut and hauled by Ben Ross and the enslaved men on Dr. Thompson's Poplar Neck plantation in Caroline County. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Throughout the 1840s and early 1850s, Thompson maintained a residence at “Bellefield,” his fourteen and half acre property near Boundary Road in Cambridge. He was an early supporter of the American and Maryland Colonization movements and was also a member of the local Sons of Temperance and acted as School Commissioner for Cambridge.⁵⁸ With his sons, Edward and John overseeing his operations in Caroline County, Thompson traveled back and forth between Cambridge and Poplar Neck. The Poplar Neck plantation included a brick home, fields for corn and other grain, a fruit orchard, and slave quarters.⁵⁹ The 1850 census lists Ben and Rit Ross as free blacks living on

⁵⁸ See *Cambridge Chronicle*, June 8, 1844.

⁵⁹ The location on the Choptank River was ideally suited to Thompson’s plans; he could ship out timber from the mouth of Marshy Creek, where there appears to have been a wharf, providing Thompson with the ability to export his timber once it had been felled and cut into boards, staves, and shingles. Living with Thompson’s son Edward, in the “big house,” were six white sailors, one black laborer, three female slaves and three male children, also slaves. Edward also controlled more than 21 enslaved men who were then timbering Thompson’s land. These men probably lived and worked in the interior of the Thompson property, in small tents and cabins, in the area of Haverford Camp Road in the Marshy Creek area.

Thompson's property, close to Thompson's son, Edward who lived in the brick house while he oversaw his father's timbering and farming operations.⁶⁰



Figure 6.11. Driveway leading to the former Dr. Anthony Thompson plantation in Poplar Neck, Caroline County, MD. Author Photo.

During the winter of 1848–49, while working for Thompson, Tubman became sick. Brodessa, again under financial duress, wanted to sell her. “From Christmas till March,” Tubman later told an interviewer, “I worked as I could, and I prayed through all the long nights—I groaned and prayed for ole master: ‘Oh Lord, convert master! ‘Oh Lord, change dat man’s heart?’”⁶¹ Brodessa had already sold her sisters and Tubman knew it could happen to her, too. “Appears like I prayed all the time,” she said, “about my work, everywhere, I prayed and I groaned to the Lord. When I went to the horse-trough to wash my face, I took up the water in my hand and I said, ‘Oh Lord, wash me, make me clean!’ Then I take up something to wipe my face, and I say, ‘Oh Lord, wipe away all my sin!’ When I took the

⁶⁰ Jonathan Mills, “Negro for Sale [Kessiah],” *Cambridge Democrat*, September 5, 1849.

⁶¹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 14.

broom and began to sweep, I groaned, ‘Oh Lord, what so ever sin there be in my heart, sweep it out, Lord, clear and clean!’”⁶²

In March, she sensed a crisis. “Then I changed my prayer,” she said, “First of March I began to pray, ‘Oh Lord, if you ain’t never going to change that man’s heart, kill him, Lord, and take him out of the way.’”⁶³ By then, Brodessa lay sick in Bucktown, forty miles away. On March 7, 1849, he died at the age of forty-nine. His widow Eliza, and six of his eight children depended on his income, and now he was dead. Creditors clamored for immediate payment, but Eliza had no money to pay them. She petitioned Dorchester County’s Orphans Court to let her sell several of her dead husband’s enslaved people to pay his estate’s debts.⁶⁴ They agreed.

A day or two before he died, Edward Brodessa instructed his lawyer, Thomas J.H. Eccleston, to write out his will, leaving his estate to his wife, Eliza, including “the use and hire” of his enslaved people during her lifetime “for the purpose of raising his children, and after her death, all his estate was to go to his children.”⁶⁵ Tubman’s family had hoped he would free them.⁶⁶ Harriet’s brother, William Henry, later said, “he promised us, that if we would only be faithful, he would leave us all to be free, . . . but he left us all slaves.”⁶⁷

Tubman learned from her mother and other relatives that Atthow Pattison, Brodessa’s great grandfather had directed his heirs to manumit his enslaved women and their children when they reached the age of forty-five.⁶⁸ Tubman hired a lawyer to check Pattison’s probate records.⁶⁹ Paying him with money she earned by hiring herself out, she learned that Rit, then about sixty years old, had been entitled to her freedom in 1830 or earlier.⁷⁰ Edward Brodessa did not abide by the terms of his great grandfather’s will when he sold Rit’s daughters and kept her enslaved.⁷¹ As an enslaved person, Tubman was limited in

⁶² Ibid., 14

⁶³ Ibid. 14–15.

⁶⁴ Dorchester County Orphans Court, Orphans Court Records, vol. T.H.H. 1 (Cambridge, MD), 150.

⁶⁵ Edward Brodessa, “Estate Papers of Edward Brodessa, #0-482,” (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester County Register of Wills, 1849). For a detailed analysis of slaveholding women, particularly widows, see Kirsten E. Wood, *Masterful Women: Slaveholding Widows from the American Revolution through the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South*.

⁶⁶ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 415–16. Sarah Bradford wrote that they only believed that they were not to be sold out of the State of Maryland. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Blassingame, Slave Testimony. See also, Sarah H. Bradford, *Harriet. The Moses of Her People*. (New York: Geo. R. Lockwood & Sons, 1886). “The word passed through the cabins that another owner was coming in, and that none of the slaves were to be sold out of the State. This assurance satisfied the others, but it did not satisfy Harriet.” 25.

⁶⁸ Pattison, “Will of Atthow Pattison, Est. #0-35-E.”

⁶⁹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 107–8. Pattison, “Will of Atthow Pattison, Est. #0-35-E.”

⁷⁰ Dr. Anthony C. Thompson speculated that Rit probably gave birth to her last child, Moses, after she had turned forty-five, making Moses freeborn. See Thompson, “Thompson Deposition.”

⁷¹ See “Edward Brodessa to Dempsey P. Kane,” Liber 9 ER 624 p. 625. See also, Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 61. In 1796, Maryland passed a law making it illegal for “anyone who might transport, knowingly, from the State, and sell as a slave for life, any black entitled to freedom at any age,” 60.

her options—lawyers were expensive, and the court system was slow and prejudiced and unlikely to support a freedom claim.

In the meantime, Eliza Brodess was trying to keep her home and farm. Her neighbor, John Mills, helped her manage the probate process. Over the next few months Mills and Eliza sold several of Tubman's relatives and others. The first person sold was Tubman's niece Harriet and her daughter Mary Jane, Linah's daughter and granddaughter.

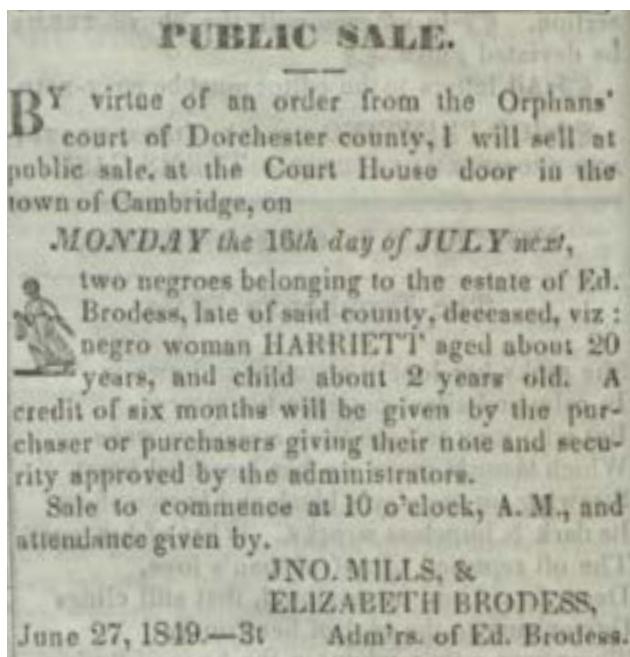


Figure 6.12. Notice for the sale of Tubman's niece, Harriet Jolly and two-year-old daughter Mary Jane. Maryland State Archives.

In August, Eliza petitioned the court to sell Kessiah Jolly Bowley and her children, six-year-old James Alfred and baby Araminta.⁷² She advertised Kessiah as a “slave for life,” a clear violation of the Pattison will.⁷³ Alerted to the illegal nature of the sale, Brodess and Mills postponed the auction, but on September 17th they returned to court with a revised request allowing them to sell “Keziah [Kessiah] and her children until they arrive at the age of 45 years.”⁷⁴ The sale was canceled, again, giving Kessiah’s free husband, John Bowley time to find a way to purchase his wife and children. Bowley and his brothers were ship-builders and blacksmiths in Cambridge, co-owners of a schooner that they built at the Steam Mill Wharf in Cambridge with John T. Stewart, James A. Stewart’s brother.⁷⁵ Between his own labors and that of his brothers, Bowley may have been able to raise the

⁷² Mills, “Kessiah Sale.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Court, *Orphans Court Records*, T.H.H. 1. 172. September 17, 1849.

⁷⁵ Court, “Dorchester Chattel Records.”

funds to purchase his wife and children. Eliza later sold Dawes Keene, a man she likely inherited from her father, John Keene, instead.⁷⁶

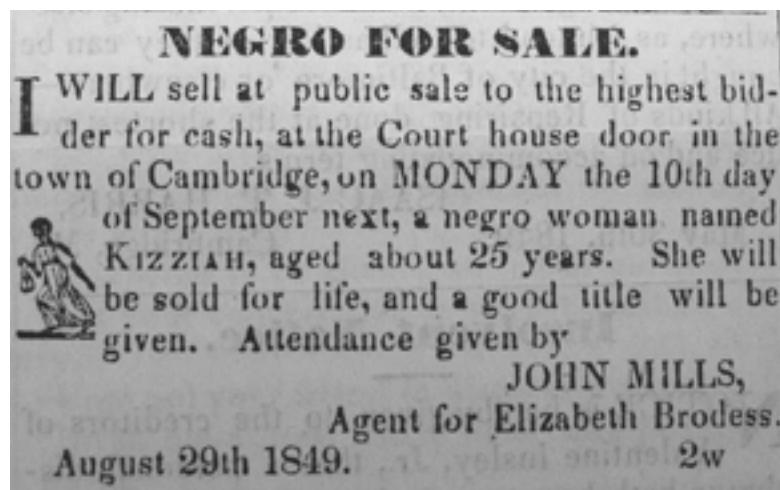


Figure 6.13. Notice for an auction to sell Tubman's niece Kessiah Jolly Bowley. The auction was postponed, giving her husband John Bowley time to find a way to save her. Maryland State Archives.

These sales in 1849 marked a turning point for the transformation of Tubman into a self-liberator. On September 17, 1849, the very same day the Eliza Brodless petitioned the court to sell Kessiah, Tubman and her two brothers, Ben and Henry, escaped from Thompson's plantation at Poplar Neck.⁷⁷ An advertisement for a reward for their capture did not appear in the local paper for over two weeks. Eliza may not have heard that the three siblings had fled, since they were forty miles away in Caroline County. Even if she had heard from the Thompsons that the siblings were missing, short term desertion was common enough that Brodless could have assumed they were visiting their loved ones near Madison, where both men had wives.

⁷⁶ 1847–1851 Dorchester County Chattel Records, “William O. Cooper and Samuel Dunnock from Eliza Brodless,” in *Liber WJ*, No. 3, p. 286 (Annapolis, MD: MDSA). Keene was most likely one of the men Eliza inherited from her father, John Keene.

⁷⁷ Brodless, “Minty Reward.” Interestingly, the advertisement was placed 16 days after Tubman and her brothers ran away.



Figure 6.14. Reward advertisement for “Minty” and her two brothers Ben, Jr., and Harry [Henry]. Courtesy Bucktown Village Foundation.

Brodess offered a typical reward for their capture and return: fifty dollars per person if caught within the state of Maryland, one-hundred dollars each if caught outside of Maryland. Instructions to the *Delaware Gazette* ensured that slave catchers in and near Wilmington would be on the lookout for the three siblings.⁷⁸

It is doubtful they made it beyond the Maryland border. Tubman’s brothers “disagreed with her about directions,” and succumbed to the fear of arrest.⁷⁹ Captured freedom seekers often faced almost certain sale into the Deep South, severe whipping, or worse. They convinced Tubman to turn back. Perhaps they hoped they could negotiate with Brodess and find a local buyer, rather than sale to a trader from Mississippi or Georgia. Slave traders, boarding at the hotel across the street from the Dorchester courthouse, were a constant reminder of this threat. Perched on the hotel’s veranda, traders haggled with private sellers or bid on people placed at auction on the courthouse steps.

Sometime after October 3, when she and her brothers had come back after their failed escape, Tubman stole away, again, alone. “I had reasoned this out in my mind,” Tubman later told a reporter, “there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty, or death;

⁷⁸ “Minty Reward.”

⁷⁹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 16. Earl Conrad, “Interview with Helen W. Tatlock [Mrs. William Tatlock],” in *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, 1939). Bradford wrote that Harriet left first with three of her brothers; Tatlock told Conrad that she recalled Tubman telling her she fled first with two of her brothers. The runaway advertisement confirms Tatlock’s version of the story.

if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive; I should fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted.”⁸⁰ Using “her strength and her craft, which was great,” Tubman traveled by night, using the North Star and instructions from white and black helpers to make her way to Philadelphia.⁸¹ Tubman knew how to navigate by the stars. Her father and other members of the community had taught her when she was younger and living near Madison. Tubman later told a friend, Helen Tatlock, the North Star “was one thing she insisted that she was always sure of.”⁸²

According to Tatlock, Tubman was helped first by a white woman, a Quaker to whom she had confided her plans.⁸³ Tubman gave this unidentified woman a favorite bed quilt; in return, she gave Tubman two names, and directed her to the first person on the way who would then help her on to the second.⁸⁴ The exact route and the identities of those who helped her remain unidentified. Poplar Neck, though, was ideally located on an invisible path to freedom in the North. A small Quaker settlement, the Marshy Creek Friends of the Northwest Fork Meeting, had been established there for over 150 years. Several of the area’s most active Quaker abolitionists, including the Levertons and the Kelleys, lived within a mile of Thompson’s plantation. Quakers deeded a parcel of its Mt. Pleasant Church property just beyond Thompson’s property to the local black community in 1849 for a church and cemetery of its own. Hannah Leverton or Esther Kelley could have been the unidentified woman who helped Tubman begin her journey to freedom.⁸⁵

Tubman could tell no one of her plans to escape, particularly her mother; “her cries and groans would have disclosed the secret,” she later told a friend.⁸⁶ But she could not leave without giving her mother some sort of message about her decision to flee. On the evening of her escape, Tubman offered to do her mother’s chores so that she would not see Tubman leave the farm. She sought out Mary, an enslaved woman living and working on the Thompson plantation and in whom Tubman could confide her plans. Pulling her outside and away from eavesdropping in the kitchen, Tubman began to tell Mary what she was about to do when Dr. Thompson rode up on horseback and surprised them. Flustered, Mary ran back to the kitchen, but Tubman stood there. She was desperate to let someone in

⁸⁰ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 21.

⁸¹ Sanborn, “The Late Araminta Davis: Better Known as ‘Moses’ or ‘Harriet Tubman’.”

⁸² Conrad, “Tatlock Interview.”

⁸³ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].” See also, as printed in Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 76; and “Statement of Mrs. William Tatlock,” Conrad, *Conrad/Tubman*.

⁸⁴ “Statement of Mrs. William Tatlock,” *Conrad/Tubman*.

⁸⁵ Debra Smith Moxey, Newspaper Abstracts from the American Eagle and *Cambridge Chronicle 1846–1857* (Cambridge, MD 1995). See page 47 for Jacob Leverton’s death. See also Patricia C. Guida, “Arthur W. Leverton, Underground Railraod Agent, and His Family: The Levertons, Whiteleys and Wrights,” (Denton, MD: Caroline County HIstoric Society, Inc., 2007) ; William T. Kelley, “Underground R. R. Reminiscences [April 19, 1898],” *Friends’ Intelligencer*; April 19, 1898. 265; and Carroll, Quakerism, 142. On Jonah Kelley and Arthur Leverton, see <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/013400/013488/html/13488bio.html>. and <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/024600/024684/html/024684bio.html>.

⁸⁶ “Statement of Mrs. William Tatlock,” Conrad, *Conrad/Tubman*.

her family know she was leaving, so she stepped forward to let Dr. Thompson through the gate and began to sing:

I'm sorry I'm going to leave you,
Farewell, oh farewell;
But I'll meet you in the morning,
Farewell, oh farewell.

I'll meet you in the morning,
I'm bound for the promised land,
On the other side of Jordan,
Bound for the promised land.⁸⁷

Thompson rode through the gate, watching her, but after a few moments, he trotted on his way. Tubman hoped Mary and her mother would recognize the coded subtext—that she was escaping and heading to freedom in the promised land of the North—in the song.⁸⁸ Once Thompson was out-of-sight, Tubman took her first steps toward her own liberation.

When Tubman reached the first “safe house,” the woman of the house asked her to sweep the yard—a deceptive tactic that helped mask Tubman’s purpose while she waited for the woman’s husband to return from the fields. When darkness fell, the man loaded his wagon, covering Tubman carefully, and took her to the next safe home.⁸⁹ Two Quaker families, the Levertons and Kelleys, both involved in Underground Railroad activity, lived within a mile or two of the Thompson plantation. Either of them could have helped Tubman that night.⁹⁰

Traveling mostly at night, following the North Star and resting at each safe place helpers directed her to, Tubman finally crossed the Pennsylvania border and into freedom. “When I found I had crossed that line,” Tubman later recalled, “I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven.”⁹¹

⁸⁷ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 17–19. The song is known by various names and derived from a popular Methodist hymn, “Bound for the Promised Land,” often sung at camp meeting, by Scottish minister Samuel Stennett. Various versions also include derivations from Isaac Watts “There Is a Land of Pure Delight.” It was also known at the time as “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand,” and “Promised.”

⁸⁸ Cheney, “Moses,” 35

⁸⁹ Conrad, *Conrad/Tubman*. “Statement of Mrs. William Tatlock.” The identities of these people remain unknown. Tatlock told Earl Conrad that Tubman told her the name of the first woman who helped her, but that she had, unfortunately, forgotten it. Hannah Leverton and Esther Kelley are two possibilities.

⁹⁰ Kelley, “Reminiscences, April 19, 1898,” 265. Jacob Leverton was sued for aiding a young slave woman who had run from her master after he beat her. See also, Carroll, *Quakerism*. Tubman may also have been helped by Jonah Kelley and his family, who were then living in Preston, Talbot County. William T. Kelley, “Underground R. R. Reminiscences [April 2, 1898],” *Friends’ Intelligencer*, April 2, 1898, 238.

⁹¹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 19

Summary

The familial, social, and economic interactions Tubman engaged with during her teen and young adult years shaped the woman she would become. The skills she developed and the education she acquired on the docks, fields, and woods fortified her and helped her survive, setting the stage for her own liberation. Though Tubman's first escape with her brothers met with failure, her own successful flight to freedom in the late fall of 1849 set in motion a decade of Underground Railroad missions. Though executed from Poplar Neck in Caroline County, Tubman's escape was rooted in and connected to people and places within the Monument boundaries. Those binding ties would draw her back repeatedly in desperate attempts to rescue her loved ones during the 1850s.

CHAPTER 7

1850–1861

Introduction

Tubman spent the next eleven years working to free her family and friends. Living in Philadelphia, she immersed herself in the rapidly growing anti-slavery movement. Mounting resentment over the power held by congresspeople and senators from slave states, partially stoked with the passing of the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act and increasing resistance from enslaved people pushed the country toward Civil War. Ongoing conflicts throughout the 1850s marked by dramatic physical, social, spiritual, political, and economic confrontations over slavery—including the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Dred Scott case, and John Brown’s Raid—drive the nation toward an unavoidable sectional crisis. The personal networks and individual strategies employed by Tubman and others through the region’s Underground Railroad, and slaveholders’ reactions to threats to the dismantling of slavery fuel her personal war on slavery. Her participation in robust secret networks to freedom thwart efforts to restrain and capture freedom seekers contribute to her remarkable success rescue rate, but it comes with great risk and deep costs.

When Tubman took the risk to claim her liberty in the fall of 1849, she joined a long tradition of resistance through flight. Her escape was not unusual for the Eastern Shore. Scores of people fled from enslavers in Talbot, Dorchester and Caroline, and Maryland led the nation in the number of escapes—a recorded 279—during that year.¹ An ongoing study at the Maryland State Archives mining newspapers for “runaway” advertisements reveals dozens fleeing Eastern Shore slaveholders during the prior three years. The editor of a popular Eastern Shore newspaper in Talbot County reflected the frustration of the region’s slave power during the summer of 1849 when he note: “Almost every week we hear of one or more slaves making their escape and if something is not speedily done to put a stop to it, that kind of property will hardly be worth owning. There seems to be some system about this business, and we strongly suspect they are assisted in their escape by an organized band of abolitionists.” He appealed for construction of a telegraph system for the shore, and more police action. Slave patrols had

become common since Nat Turner’s Rebellion in 1831, but they failed to halt escapes entirely.²

In October, more than two dozen freedom seekers fled from their enslavers in Talbot County. High rewards attracted many pursuers. Slave catchers apprehended a few of the self-liberators, but some, local whites suspected, made their way “south east, across Caroline county to the Delaware Bay shore, and thence to New Jersey.”³ Authorities arrested two men; they were quickly tried and convicted in December.⁴

While local Quakers were important members of an increasingly organized network to freedom—and slaveholders had long suspected them of colluding with freedom seekers—black communities were the bricks and mortar of this underground movement on the Eastern Shore. Whether organized or working independently, the people who populated the Underground Railroad were already operating a successful system throughout the region by the time Tubman took her liberty.

Not all Quakers or African Americans were willing participants in this network. Living in a society that supported slavery made participating in clandestine networks to freedom risky, both financially and physically. Free blacks, once convicted of “aiding and abetting” freedom seekers, found themselves on the auction block and sold into slavery or imprisoned for years. Though some whites on the Eastern Shore harbored abolitionist and anti-slavery feelings, very few were vocal.⁵

The Leverton family were active abolitionists and UGRR operatives.⁶ Jacob Leverton helped a young enslaved woman flee her master during the early 1840s. Deceased by the time Tubman fled in 1849, his widow Hannah still lived in the family homestead near Linchester Mill with her son, Arthur W. Leverton, in Caroline County.⁷ Another local Quaker family, the Kelleys, were also Underground Railroad agents and they lived nearby, too. It is likely that these people helped Tubman on her first steps to freedom.

² “Runaways,” *Easton Star*, August 14, 1849.

³ “A Stampede,” *Easton Star*, October 24, 1849.

⁴ “Cost of Trial,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 7, 1849.

⁵ Kelley, “Reminiscences, April 2, 1898,” 238.

⁶ Ibid., 265. See also Carroll, *Quakerism*. Kelley, “Reminiscences, April 2, 1898.” 238. Guida, “Arthur W. Leverton, Underground Railraod Agent, and His Family: The Levertons, Whiteleys and Wrights.”

⁷ Moxey, *Abstracts*. See page 47 for Jacob Leverton’s death. See also Kelley, “Reminiscences, April 19, 1898,” 265; and, Carroll, *Quakerism*, 142. Dr. Thompson’s son, Anthony C. Thompson Jr., married Mary Elizabeth Leverton, Jacob and Hannah Leverton’s daughter, in November of 1849. After assisting a group of freedom seekers in the late 1850s, Arthur and his free black neighbor, Daniel Hubbard, barely avoided a lynching by seeking protection in Philadelphia.



Figure 7.1. The Leverton family home, Preston, MD. Quakers, the Levertons sheltered freedom seekers in their home, a major stop on the path to freedom. Caroline County Museum of Rural Life and Historical Society.

Once Tubman finally crossed the border and into freedom in Pennsylvania, she quickly blended into a large community of free blacks and freedom seekers in Philadelphia, where she lived precariously as a fugitive from the law. Her fragile freedom did not ensure happiness. “There was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom,” she told an early biographer, “I was a stranger in a strange land; and my home, after all, was down in Maryland; because my father, my mother, my brothers, and sisters, and friends were there.” Tubman experienced the deep, emotionally painful consequences of escape; leaving loved ones behind was the high cost of freedom. Tubman found life without her husband, her parents, siblings, and friends almost too much to bear. “But I was free, and they should be free.”⁸

⁸ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 20.



Figure 7.2. When Tubman arrived in Philadelphia in 1849 she had never seen a city before.
Lithograph, Library of Congress.

She worked as a cook and domestic in various hotels and private homes in Philadelphia, and later, during the summer months, at Cape May, New Jersey.⁹ She saved her money, and kept in touch with events back home by communicating with the extensive network of informants among the free black, fugitive black, and liberal white communities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wilmington, Delaware, Poplar Neck, Cambridge, Madison, and other places on the Eastern Shore.

When Tubman and her brothers first escaped in September 1849, their niece, Kessiah Jolly Bowley, narrowly escaped the auction block. In December 1850, Tubman received word that Eliza Brodess was going to sell Kessiah at the courthouse in Cambridge. She rushed to Baltimore, lodging with friends and relatives then living along Baltimore's busy and diverse waterfront. Harriet's brother-in-law, Tom Tubman, concealed her until the appointed time.¹⁰ Tom was probably working as a stevedore on Baltimore's docks, or in a shipyard as a day laborer; in fact, there were many former Dorchester County free blacks living and working in Baltimore.¹¹ Evans Tubman, a seaman and Harriet's other brother-in-law, also lived there, as did several Bowleys, Manokeys, and others from Dorchester's black community. Tom Tubman lived with his wife and children a few households away from

⁹ Ibid., 20–22. See also Cheney, "Moses."

¹⁰ Wilbur Seibert, "The Underground Railroad: Manuscript Materials Collected by Professor Seibert, Ohio University," in Vol. 40 (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, n.d.).

¹¹ Louis Diggs, Baltimore City Directories, 1835–1860.

Jacob Jackson In Dorchester County when he was not working in Baltimore.¹² Kinship and friendship fashioned on landscapes in Dorchester and bound in a universal belief in freedom made Baltimore's waterfront an ideal location from which Tubman could operate.



Figure 7.3. Baltimore Harbor scene, ca. 1850. Some Dorchester County free and enslaved people worked on the docks in the harbor, secretly aiding Tubman and other freedom seekers. Library of Congress.

With the help of Kessiah's free husband, John Bowley, Tubman turned to the maritime networks she and her family knew so well to help arrange for Kessiah's liberation. In a daring escape sequence, John secretly stole Kessiah and their children from the auction block in Cambridge and sailed them in a small boat up the Chesapeake to

¹² Census, "United States Federal Census, 1850."

Baltimore, where Tubman was waiting to hide them among friends and relatives.¹³ Within a few months she returned to Baltimore and helped her youngest brother Moses, and two other unidentified men, to freedom. Moses spent months hiding in “the woods,” and “tho’ badly frost-bitten,” he waited for his sister, who “entered into communication with him & brot. him off.”¹⁴

Emboldened by her success, Tubman returned to the Eastern Shore in the fall of 1851. She had not seen her husband John for nearly two years, and she hoped to convince him to come to Philadelphia. She bought him a new suit of clothes. When Tubman arrived in Dorchester County, she learned that John had taken another wife, a free woman named Caroline.¹⁵ He refused to leave. As a free man, he had much to lose if caught with her. He lived near his free family, had a job and now a new wife. Harriet determined to “go right in and make all the trouble she could,” not caring if caught. She then realized “how foolish it was just for temper to make mischief,” and that if her husband “could do without her, she could do without him,” so she “dropped [him] out of her heart.” She later told an audience, “I had his clothes, but no husband.”¹⁶ With freedom on her mind, she gathered a group of people eager and able to escape, brought them to Philadelphia.¹⁷

The prospects for permanent freedom for self-liberators in the North diminished after 1850. Frustrated by the rising numbers of escapes, particularly in border states like Maryland, southern slaveholders and the elected officials who represented them felt powerless. Free-soil Democrats and northern Whigs had gained control of Congress when President Zachary Taylor took office in 1849. They advocated the admission of California and New Mexico as free states, hoping to arrest the expansion of slavery beyond the existing southern slave states. These new free state additions to the union tipped the balance of power in Congress, from slaveholding southern interests to non-slaveholding northern interests. Southerners threatened secession. After months of debate Congress enacted the Compromise of 1850, forestalling sectional conflict. Congress included a new and updated Fugitive Slave Act, replacing the 1793 act that had become ineffective. Far-reaching in its power, the enhanced Fugitive Slave Act required federal judges, marshals, and commissioners to convene special commissions, or courts, to assess the free status of a captive freedom seeker. The act empowered slave catchers and slaveholders to force

¹³ For a full description of this rescue mission, see Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 89–90. See also, Mills, “Mills Deposition”; James Alfred Bowley, “Letter, James A. Bowley to ‘Aunt’ [Harriet Tubman],” in *Harriet Tubman Collection* (Auburn, N.Y.: Harriet Tubman Home Museum); and Sydney Howard Gay, “Record of Fugitives 1855–1856,” in *Sydney Howard Gay Papers, 1743–1931*, (Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1).

¹⁴ “Record of Fugitives 1855–1856.”

¹⁵ Her name may have been Caroline Jones, but the record remains unclear. In 1850, John lived between Church Creek and Christ Rock, outside the NM boundaries. In 1860, he lived with Caroline, her daughter from a prior relationship, and their two children, Thomas and Ann near Aireys, north of Bucktown, also outside the National Monument boundaries.

¹⁶ Lucy Osgood, “Letter, Lucy Osgood to Lydia Maria Child, June 2, 1859,” in *Lydia Maria Child Papers* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Libraries, 1859); Cheney, “Moses.”

¹⁷ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].” Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 77.

cooperation from northern authorities and citizens in the capture and rendition of their enslaved property.¹⁸ Northern abolitionists actively encouraged resistance to this new law, despite heavy fines and prison. Several high-profile and widely publicized arrests of freedom seekers galvanized Northern resentment toward powerful southern interests.

¹⁸ C. Peter Ripley, ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Vols. 1–5* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Vol. IV. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*.

Armed conflict between abolitionists, the authorities and slave catchers erupted in several cities. In some cases, participants were severely wounded and killed. In Christiana, Pennsylvania, an angry group of whites and blacks killed Maryland slaveholder Edward Gorsuch as he attempted to re-enslave his four bondsmen then living as fugitives there.¹⁹ A small hamlet, Christiana was home to freedom seekers and free blacks who were always on the watch for slave hunters. After the arrests of dozens of people, no convictions followed, enraging southerners.²⁰



Figure 7.5. “Effects of the Fugitive Slave Law.” Freedom seekers and their helpers ambushed by armed whites.
Library of Congress.

Tubman and her family and friends were no longer safe in Philadelphia or any other northern city. The stakes were higher, and threats more self-evident as slaveholders pursued their property aggressively and with the force of the federal government. Many

¹⁹ In 1851, in Christiana, Pennsylvania, a slave owner and his son from Maryland, attempted to retrieve one of their runaway slaves. Black and white neighbors rose up and rioted, killing the father and wounding the son. Though some forty individuals were indicted for obstruction of federal law under the fugitive Slave Act’s terms, they were all acquitted. See also Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers*. Vol. IV, for information on various fugitive slave cases and rescues, including the Christiana Riot.

²⁰ Sinha, *The Slave’s Cause: A History of Abolition*, Vol. II, 9–10

freedom seekers began a second journey from their homes in northern cities and towns to a more secure freedom in Canada where the Fugitive Slave Act had no power.²¹ John and Kessiah Bowley, and their daughter Araminta, moved to Chatham, Ontario, Canada in late 1851. At great risk to herself, Tubman stayed in Philadelphia where she worked long days to support herself and her nephew, six-year-old James Bowley, whom she enrolled in a local black boarding school. Earning money to conduct more missions fueled her efforts to rescue other friends and family still enslaved on the Eastern Shore.



Figure 7.6. General Routes of various Networks to Freedom via the Underground Railroad. National Park Service.

After Tubman's aborted attempt to bring her husband North in the fall of 1851, she reportedly returned to Dorchester again, in December, bringing out a group of eleven people, including another "brother" and his wife in the New Year.²² The route she took remains speculative, but she did seek protection and help from Frederick Douglass in Rochester, New York.²³ According to Douglass, the route he helped manage "had its main stations in Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and St. Catharines (Canada)."²⁴ The stations were manned by some of the same

²¹ Ripley, *Black Abolitionist Papers*.

²² Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]." It is not clear who this is, but it could be a fictive kin brother rather than blood brother. See Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, "Deposition," in *Chancery Papers*, 249. (Cambridge, MD: Dorchester County Court, Dorchester County Court House, 1853).

²³ Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Scituate, MA: Digital Scanning, Inc., 2001), 329–30.

²⁴ Ibid., 330.

abolitionists with whom Tubman would also become so intimately involved: Thomas Garrett, of Wilmington, Delaware; J. Miller McKim, William Still, Robert Purvis, Lucretia and James Mott, and many others in Philadelphia; Sydney H. Gay, Lewis Napoleon, Oliver Johnson, and others in New York City; the Mott sisters, Stephen Myers, John H. Hooper and others in Albany; and the Reverends Samuel J. May and J. W. Loguen of Syracuse. In Rochester, J. P. Morris and Douglass, Amy and Isaac Post, were among supporters who greeted exhausted and frightened refugees and sent them along to Niagara Falls and Canada.²⁵



Figure 7.7. Thomas Garrett operated a successful Underground Railroad station in Wilmington, Delaware, for decades.
Chester County Historical Society.

²⁵ Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*.



Figure 7.8. As Secretary of the Vigilance Committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, William Still managed one of the busiest Underground Railroad stations in Philadelphia. He documented nearly 2,000 freedom seekers who sought help on their journey north and later published his records in 1872. New York Public Library.



Figure 7.9. Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society, 1851. (rear, left to right): Mary Grew, E.M. Davis, Haworth Wetherfield, Abby Kimber, J. Miller McKim, Sarah Pugh, and (front, left to right): Oliver Johnson, Mrs. Margaret Jones Burleigh, Benjamin C. Bacon, Robert Purvis, Lucretia Mott, James Mott. Library of Congress.

1850–1861

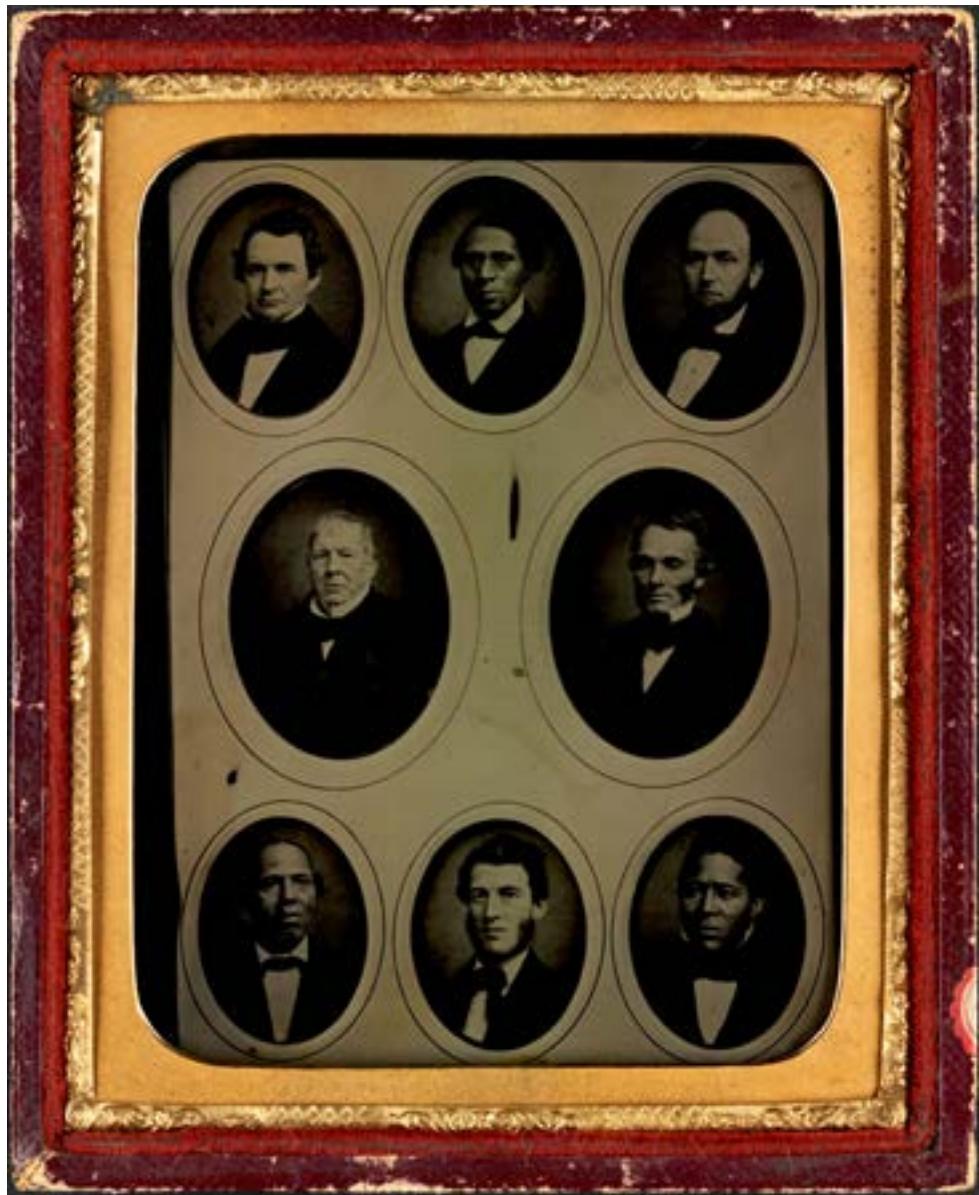


Figure 7.10. Philadelphia Vigilance Committee Members. Abolitionists Thomas Garrett, 1789–1871; Robert Purvis, 1810–1898; William Still, 1821–1902; Passmore Williamson; Nathaniel W. Depee; James Miller M'Kim; Jacob White; Charles Wise. Boston Public Library.



Figure 7.11. Sydney Howard Gay maintained an active Underground Railroad operation in New York City during the 1840s and 1850s with his associate Louis Napoleon, an African American agent whose career liberating people spanned decades. Massachusetts Historical Society.

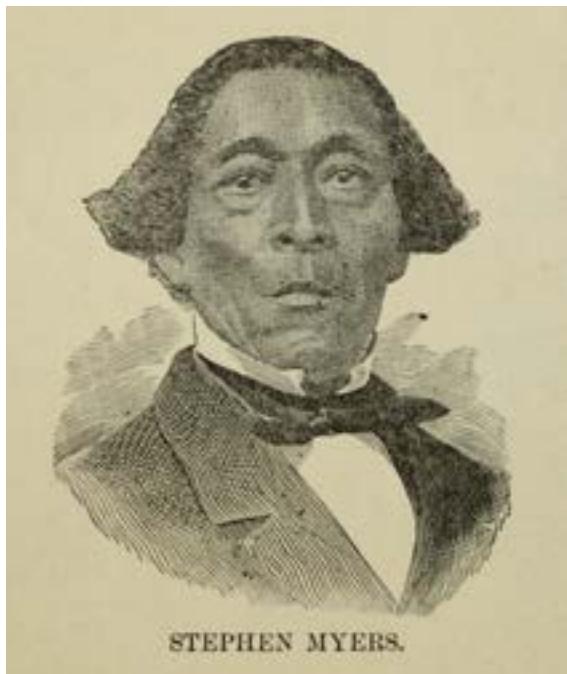


Figure 7.12. Stephen Myers, with his wife Harriet, operated a busy safe house in Albany, New York. Boston Library Consortium and Wellesley College.

1850–1861



Figure 7.13. Stephen and Harriet Myers residence, Albany, New York. Their residence is an historic site opened to visitors. Underground Railroad History Project.

Tubman later told historian Wilber Siebert that when she left Philadelphia with a party of freedom seekers she “proceeded by steam railroad to New York,” and from there took a train to Albany, “where Stephen Myers looked after her and her charges.”²⁶ From there she rode a train bound for Rochester, “where the fugitive slave, Frederick Douglass, would see that she got on the train for the Suspension Bridge and St. Catherine’s in Canada.”²⁷



Figure 7.14. Frederick Douglass fled enslavement in Maryland in 1838. Self-educated, Douglass became one of the most popular speakers on the anti-slavery lecture circuit and published several abolition newspapers. Chester County Historical Society, Albert Cook Myers Collection.

²⁶ Wilbur Siebert, “The Underground Railroad: Manuscript Materials Collected by Professor Siebert, Ohio University,” in Vol. 40 (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University, n.d.).

²⁷ Ibid. Tubman’s full testimony to Siebert: “Harriet Tubman, Abductor.” Harriet Tubman told W. H. Siebert in Cambridge, Mass. in August 1897, that her general route in conducting freedom seekers north was 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. If she reached the Maryland line she put up with Sam Green. At Sand Town, in Delaware she found refuge with Will Grove [at Willow Grove]. At Camden her helpers were William and Nat Brinkley (colored) and Abraham Gibbs. Here she felt ‘safe and comfortable.’ She passed on by way of Wilmington, Dover, New Castle, Blackbird, and reached Philadelphia, where she was befriended by William Still, colored agent of the Vigilance Committee. From Philadelphia she proceeded by steam railroad to New York, where David Ruggles gave her assistance. From there she went by train to Albany, where Stephen Myers looked after her and her charges, t[h]ence again by train to Syracuse [where UGRR agent Rev. Jermain Loguen and Samuel May lived], where the fugitive slave, Frederick Douglass [Rochester], would see that she got on the train for the Suspension Bridge and St. Catherine’s in Canada. On one occasion Harriet took eleven fugitives to Douglass’s house, whence they were sent through to St. Catharine’s.” the famous abolitionist David Ruggles was dead by the time Tubman escaped to freedom. It is unknown whether this is another David Ruggles or a mistake on Siebert’s part.



Figure 7.15. Born free in Caroline County, Maryland, Anna Murray Douglass helped Frederick escape from Baltimore. Harriet Tubman sought shelter for herself and her refugees in their home in Rochester, NY. National Park Service.

The risks to free African Americans multiplied after the passage of the act. Without photography or other forms of definitive identification to document their identity and free status, slave catchers, slaveholders, and kidnappers were empowered to seize black people from streets and homes, claim they were “fugitive slaves,” and bring them back south where they could be sold into slavery.²⁸ Kidnapping created a crisis for not only northern communities but southern too. The notorious Dorchester County kidnapper, Patty Cannon, and her criminal family operated an illegal slave trading business selling kidnapped free and enslaved people in the 1820s and 1830s. Their reign of terror throughout the Chesapeake may have been ghastlier in organization and numbers kidnapped (and murdered), but the kidnapping of African Americans had a long history in the eighteenth century.²⁹ Kidnappings escalated during the nineteenth century when the interstate trade to the Deep South and southwestern territories drove demand and provided anonymity to lawless buyers and sellers. George F. Alberti ran a ruthless team of slave catchers who tracked people fleeing slavery and kidnapped those already free. They worked throughout

²⁸ Kidnapping of free people and some enslaved people had been a problem in both northern and southern communities for a long time. See Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780-1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). Milt Diggins, *Stealing Freedom Along the Mason-Dixon Line: Thomas McCreary, the Notorious Slave Catcher from Maryland* (2015). Carol Marks, *Moses and the Monster and Miss Anne* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

²⁹ *Moses and the Monster and Miss Anne*. Cannon died in prison in 1829, but her sons and others carried on the business for several more years. See also, Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780-1865*.

southern New Jersey and northern Maryland and Delaware, and into Philadelphia.³⁰ Through legal and extra-legal methods, Thomas McCrae, another notorious slave hunter, operated for two decades before the Civil War along the Pennsylvania and Maryland border capturing scores of freedom seekers and kidnapping free people of color with impunity.³¹

In contrast to these immoral and criminal acts, the African American and white residents joined together in the streets of Denton, in Caroline County, in 1853 to celebrate the rescue and return of Richard John Potter, a free black youth who had been kidnapped from Greensboro and sold into slavery in Delaware. Twelve-year-old Richard was indentured in 1848 by his mother, Sydney Potter, to Batchelder C. Skinner, a farmer living near Greensboro. Four years later, when Skinner no longer needed the teenager's labor, he leased Potter illegally to Edward Taylor, a nearby farmer. Taylor was cruel and abusive, so Potter's parents sued in court to cancel their son's indenture. Instead of giving the boy up, Taylor sold young Potter secretly to a man in Concord, Delaware, who hoped to resell Potter to a Deep South slave trader. Search parties from Caroline County, including the sheriff, relentlessly pursued the trail, finally rescuing Potter and bringing him home to Denton.³²

³⁰ *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780–1865*, 50–53.

³¹ Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853*, ed. David Wilson. (Auburn, NY: Derby and Miller, 1853).; Diggins, *Stealing Freedom Along the Mason-Dixon Line: Thomas McCrae, the Notorious Slave Catcher from Maryland*.

³² See NPS Network to Freedom nomination for *Richard Potter Rescue Celebration Site*. The research for this nomination comes from Richard Potter's own narrative, first published in 1866, called *The Narrative, Adventures, and Escape of Richard Potter, an Indentured Apprentice, who was Kidnapped Near Greensborough, Caroline County, Maryland in the Year 1853*. Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 705 Jayne Street and additional editions. There are four editions of this narrative, but only three are extant: the first edition in 1866, a third edition printed in Baltimore by Hanzsche & Co. in 1875, and a fourth edition also printed in Baltimore by Hoffman & Co. in 1877. The first edition (1866) is the least detailed; the third and fourth editions reveal more detailed information, including names of individuals left out of the first edition. All editions featured the same title, though the third and fourth extant editions contain an "Introduction" that was supposedly added to an unknown second edition published in 1869 by the *American Union* newspaper in Denton, Maryland. No copies of the 1869 edition have been found. Copies of the first, third and fourth editions can be found at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. This narrative has been augmented by extensive research conducted by Pat Guida, Sandpoint, Idaho, Kate Clifford Larson, Winchester, MA, Diana Westacott Lapsley, Jane Wilson McWilliams, Kathleen Butler Mackel, Christine Spicher Blades and J.O.K. Walsh of Caroline County, Maryland. Much of this research has been compiled by Pat Guida into a research packet, *Documenting the Life of Richard John Potter (1838–1878)*, which can be found at the Caroline County [MD] Historical Society, Denton, Maryland.

. WE HAVE JUST ISSUED from this office, for Richard J. Potter, a thousand copies of the account of his kidnapping and escape when a boy. This little book is one of great interest and we advise all who desire to learn anything concerning the method of kidnapping in days that are past and gone to secure a copy for themselves. The facts as stated *are true*, and can be vouched for by many of our citizens. It is sold at fifteen cts. per copy, contains thirty-nine pages, and legibly printed. Being the first book we ever printed in Caroline county, every citizen should procure a copy and file it away as a specimen of the “art preservation of arts” as prosecuted in this county at this time.

Figure 7.16. Announcement for the publication of the narrative of Richard Potter “An Indentured Apprentice, who was kidnapped near Greensborough, Caroline County, Maryland, in the Year 1853.” Though rejected by most white people, the trade in kidnapped free blacks for sale to the Deep South was a constant threat to families on the Eastern Shore. Maryland State Archives.

Except for the Bowley family liberation, little is known about Tubman’s rescue missions during the early 1850s. After her covert operation rescuing eleven people in December 1851 and survival during the bleak winter of 1852 in Canada, she returned to Philadelphia with plans to help more family and friends. While Tubman was making her way from Canada that spring, an unknown arsonist set fire to Dorchester County’s courthouse. The fire destroyed many of the county’s court records, wiping out two hundred years of probate, land, tax, criminal and civil court proceedings. The arsonist was never discovered despite a \$1000 reward for information leading to an arrest.³³ Two crucial volumes of documents did survive the fire: the “rough & the recorded minutes” of the county Court, which had been removed from the courthouse by the court clerk to transcribe the week’s proceedings over the weekend.³⁴ Covering the years 1846 through 1852, these volumes provide some of the few records of the political, economic, social and

³³ Announcements were made weekly in the Dorchester County newspapers for months for individuals to come forward with copies of their legal documents so they could be re-inscribed into courthouse files. “\$1000 Reward,” *Cambridge Democrat*, May 22, 1852.

³⁴ Dorchester County Orphans Court Records, “T.H.H. 1,” (Cambridge, MD: Register of Wills, 1852).

familial dramas occurring in the county. The volumes also contain some of the only surviving records available regarding the disposition of Harriet Tubman's family as part of Brodess's estate, and the lawsuit over ownership filed by the Pattison family.

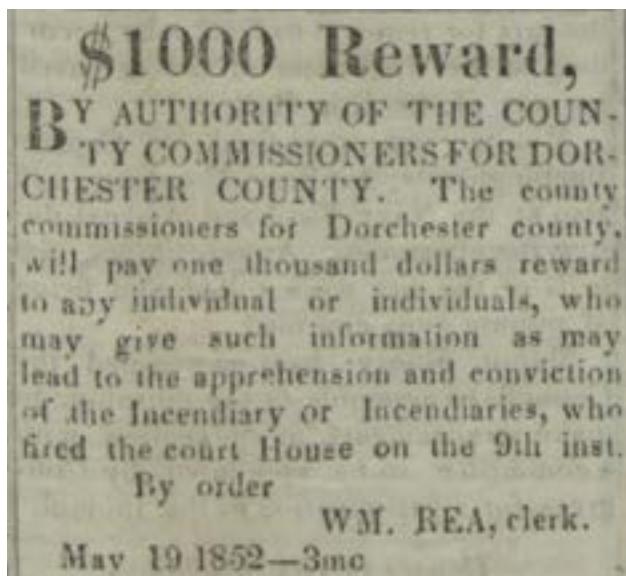


Figure 7.17. Reward for arrest of the arsonist who set the Dorchester County Courthouse on fire in May 1852. Some records were saved from the fire, but many were destroyed and leaving a gap in the historical record. Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

After making her way to Philadelphia, Tubman moved on to Cape May, New Jersey, to begin seasonal work as a cook, earning enough money to fund an expedition to Maryland to free more loved ones.³⁵ After working at hotels all summer, Tubman tried to rescue her three brothers, Robert, Ben and Henry, who had failed to escape with her in 1849 and had been struggling to make another escape since. Each effort to liberate family and friends could cost as much as \$100 for transportation, lodging, information, and bribes, and her earnings funded her missions. Tubman likely sailed on a boat from Cape May to Dover, Delaware, or some other nearby coastal hamlet, where, she later said, she found a “convenient landing.” From there, she followed known Underground networks through Delaware to the Eastern Shore to complete her rescue mission. This time, however, the brothers were unable to meet her at the designated time and place. Tubman, who said she never wasted a trip, gathered another group—a party of nine unidentified people—for the journey north to freedom.³⁶

³⁵ Siebert, “Tubman Interview [Seibert].”

³⁶ Sanborn, “Harriet Tubman [July 17].”

Their flight north was fraught with incredible danger. While slaveholders sometimes posted reward advertisements for the capture of freedom seekers in regional newspapers, others posted cheaply printed handbills for distribution in town squares and train depots. Sometimes black and white abolitionists tore them down. Other slaveholders privately contracted with professional slave catchers whose sole job was to capture freedom seekers. The human hunters who infested the borders of Maryland were well known for their cruel tactics and brutality.³⁷

Determining the identities of those freedom seekers who fled with Tubman that fall has proved elusive. An intensive search in Eastern Shore and Baltimore newspapers, from January 1852 through December 1852 has revealed little. Henry “Buck” Jolly, a sixteen-year-old enslaved teenager, fled Thomas G. Holland of Cambridge in late August 1852.³⁸ Jolly was likely related to Tubman through her brother-in-law, Harkless Jolly. Buck may have secluded himself nearby until the right moment for permanent escape with Tubman later that fall. Another possibility is thirty-year old Frank “Duckett,” a man enslaved by Kent Hall of Baltimore. Hall presumed that Duckett had escaped with his wife and two children, ages five and eight, who lived on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Duckett’s real name was probably “Dockings,” a far more common name in the black community of the Eastern Shore.³⁹ Mispronunciations and misspellings of African American names was common, particularly the names of enslaved people. Regardless of their identities, Tubman was successful in bringing her refugees to Canada.

³⁷ See Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780–1865*; and Diggins, *Stealing Freedom Along the Mason-Dixon Line: Thomas McCrea, the Notorious Slave Catcher from Maryland*.

³⁸ “\$50 Reward,” *Easton Gazette*, September 11, 1852.

³⁹ *Baltimore Sun*, October 4, 1852.

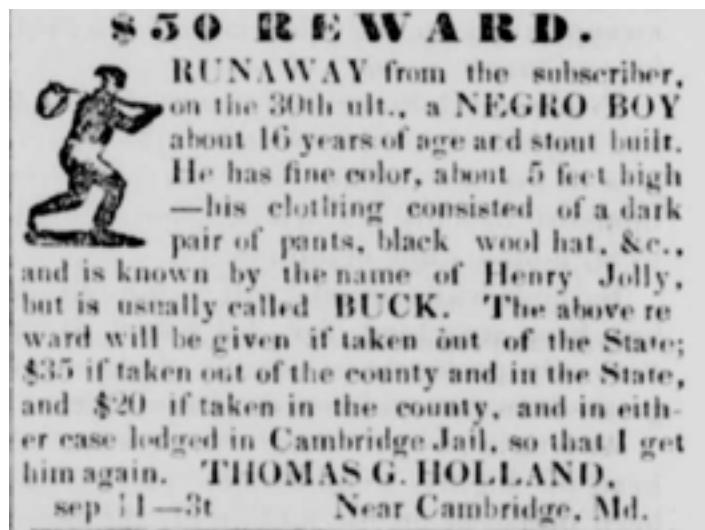


Figure 7.18. Reward advertisement for Henry Jolly.
Maryland State Archives, Easton Gazette Collection.

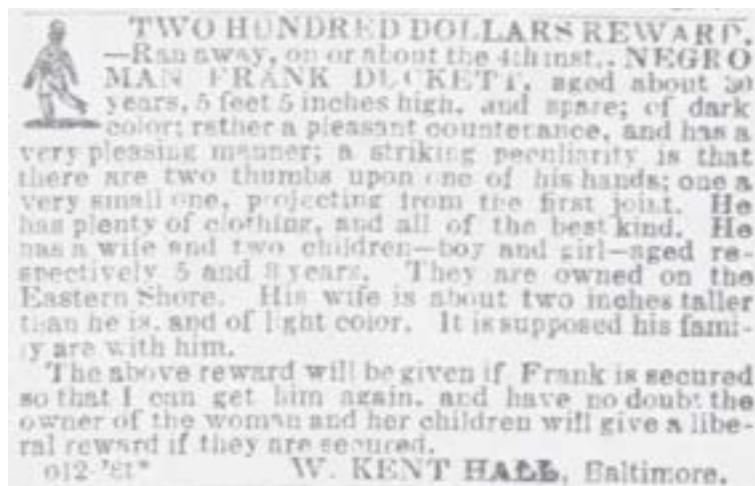


Figure 7.19. Reward advertisement for Frank Duckett (Dockings.)
Baltimore Sun, October 4, 1852.

Tubman's relationships with many of Philadelphia's far-reaching underground of elite black and white abolitionists flourished. William Still, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and agent of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, was one of the most famous black Underground Railroad stationmasters in the region. Still, and his Underground Railroad associates Jacob White and Nathaniel Depee, kept a record of self-liberators who sought shelter and aid through Still's office in Philadelphia. Still noted each person's name, age, height, skin color, name of their enslaver, where they had lived, and sometimes the runaway's personal family information. He recorded aliases the freedom seekers chose, ensuring that friends and family could find them in the future. He took their testimony when time allowed, recording their experiences under slavery, their

reasons for taking flight, and their opinions of their masters. Still also maintained detailed accounts of funds spent on each freedom seeker who came through the Committee's office.⁴⁰

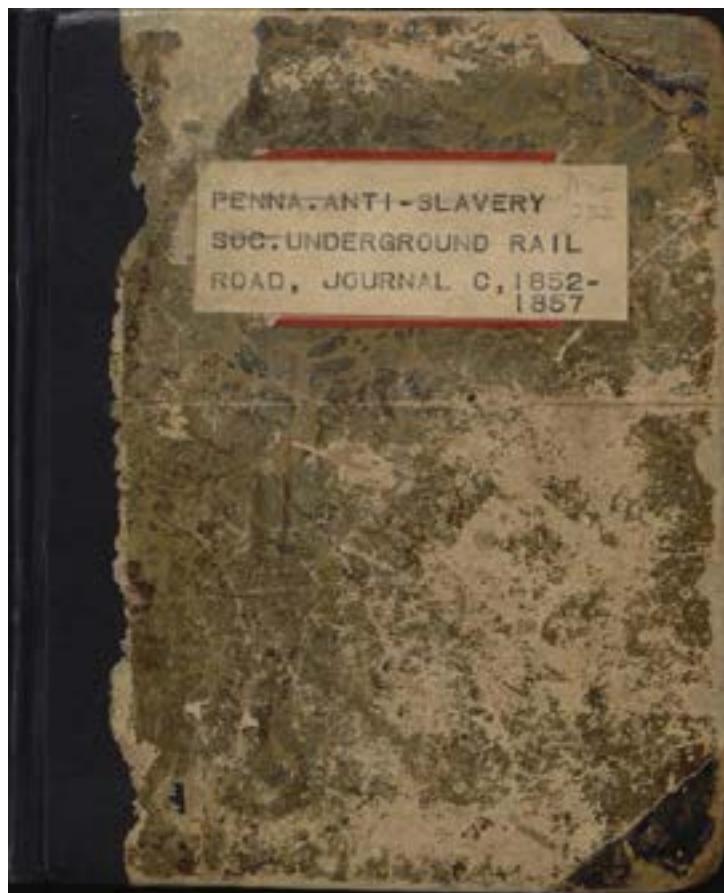


Figure 7.20. Cover of Journal C of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia kept by William Still: containing notices of arrivals of fugitive slaves in Philadelphia with descriptions of their flight, 1852–1857.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Treasures Collection.

⁴⁰ William Still, “Vigilance Committee of Philadelphia, Accounts,” in *Pennsylvania Abolition Society* (Philadelphia, PA: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1854–1857); “Journal C of Station 2 of the Underground Railroad (Philadelphia, Agent William Still),” in *Pennsylvania Abolition Society* (Philadelphia, PA: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1852–1857).

1852 Philadelphia	1857 Philadelphia
arrived Mr. Allen Miss Parrot, from Pennsylvania Nov. — by Long Island Express for New York 2.11	arrived — from Boston 2 Lord from Pennsylvania Nov. Dusty, directed to Elmira & from that to N.Y. 10.04
Arrived Mrs. Wilson of No. Baltimore left her arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. 1852 1.00	Arrived — Mrs. Wilson arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. from Boston (by C. Howard) transferred to New York Albany (via Albany & Erie and Oswego 9/18) Dusty, directed to N.Y. 16 Jan.
Arrived Mr. Wm. from New England via New York arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. by J. W. Williams, before 22 forwarded to N.Y. 16 Jan. 1.00	Arrived — Mr. Wm. from New England via New York arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. by J. W. Williams, before 22 forwarded to N.Y. 16 Jan.
Arrived Mr. Wm. from New England via New York arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. forwarded to N.Y. 16 Jan. 1.00	Arrived — Mr. Wm. from New England via New York arrived 1/16/9. 16 Jan. forwarded to N.Y. 16 Jan.

Figure 7.21. William Still's "Underground Railroad Journal C. 1852–1857." Still recorded detailed information about some of the freedom seekers he helped through Philadelphia during the 1850s.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Treasures Collection.

William Still was responsible for securing passage from Philadelphia to a variety of other "stations" along the Underground Railroad route North. He depended upon a large network of white and black abolitionists throughout the area, predominantly in Philadelphia and neighboring Chester and Lancaster counties and across the Delaware River in New Jersey. He forwarded many of his charges directly to New York City, where Sydney Howard Gay, editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, and his Underground Railroad agent African American partner Louis Napoleon directed them north to New Haven, New Bedford, Boston, and beyond, or to central New York cities and towns like Albany, Syracuse, and Rochester, where refugees were then directed to Niagara Falls or some other convenient place for safe passage across the Niagara River or Lake Ontario.⁴¹ Still sent some to Elmira, where John W. Jones, a longtime black Underground Railroad operator, funneled hundreds of fugitives making their way through eastern and central Pennsylvania, to Syracuse, Rochester, and Niagara Falls for transfer to the Suspension Bridge to Canada.⁴²

⁴¹ Don Papson and Tom Calarco, *Secret Lives of the Underground Railroad in New York City: Sydney Howard Gay, Louis Napoleon and the Record of Fugitives* (2015). Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of America's Fugitive Slaves* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). Gay, "Record of Fugitives 1855 [-1856]."

⁴² Wilbur Siebert, "Pennsylvania," in *The Underground Railroad: Manuscript materials collected by Professor Siebert* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Library, Harvard University); Wilbur Henry Siebert, "New York," *ibid.*



Figure 7.22. Suspension Bridge over Niagara River near the Falls, 1856.

The bridge was completed in late 1854. Library of Congress.

Relying heavily on trustworthy free and enslaved African Americans and sympathetic whites, Tubman’s liberation success rate was remarkably high. In sum, she conducted approximately thirteen missions, spiriting away roughly seventy people, in addition to perhaps sixty to seventy more to whom she gave detailed instructions. Nearly all of them were from Dorchester and Caroline Counties in Maryland. Tubman “would never allow more to join her than she could properly care for though she often gave other people directions by which they succeeded in escaping.”⁴³

Maryland self-liberators had several advantages, including proximity to a free state and a strong free black population. Freedom seekers could travel by road, boat, train, or canals, where black laborers often worked and in areas where they lived and congregated. Eastern Shore slaveholders were accustomed to periodic and short-term desertion from plantations to accommodate visits with relatives, to worship and socialize at camp meetings, or to trade, hunt, or fish. James Stewart posted a runaway advertisement for Richard “Dick” Bowley, who Stewart believed may have gone to visit his free wife living near the border with Caroline County. Dick had gained the confidence of Stewart over the years and was entrusted to make purchases for his enslaver at the market with money given to him for that purpose. Bowley had one more year to serve before he would be set free. Bowley did return and Stewart manumitted him, as promised, the following year.⁴⁴

⁴³ Scott, “Currents,” 24–25. See also, John Hope Franklin, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*.

⁴⁴ *Cambridge Democrat*, January 20, 1847. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

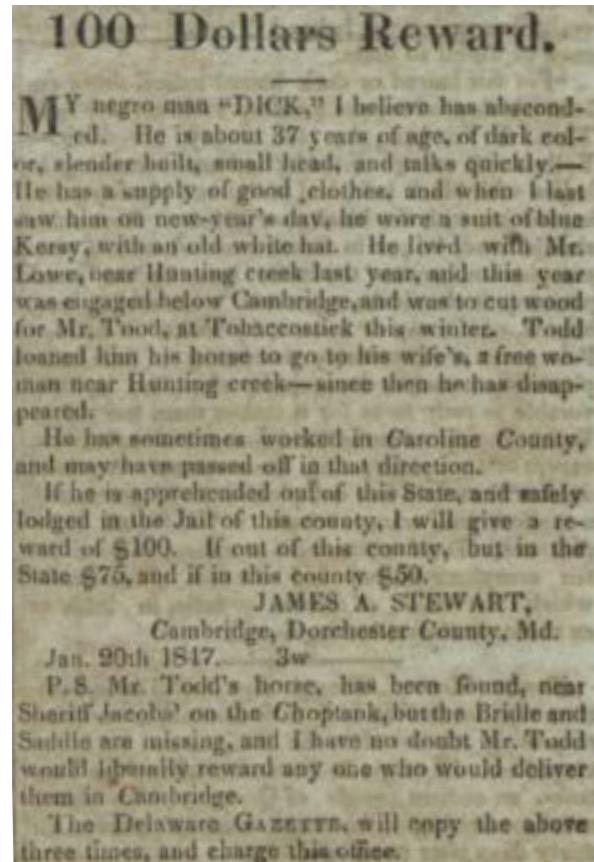


Figure 7.23. James Stewart posted this reward for his enslaved man, Dick Bowley, on January 20, 1847. Dick returned soon after this advertisement ran in the newspaper and was set free shortly afterwards. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

This practice certainly worked in Tubman's favor, giving her time to leave the Eastern Shore with her charges before their enslavers took note. She planned her escapes for Saturday evenings because newspapers were not printed on Sundays and no runaway advertisements could be posted until Monday. She avoided appearing on the plantations of those fleeing; she arranged for a particular meeting place at an appointed time at a distance—sometimes eight or ten miles away, protecting her from discovery should any of the freedom seekers get caught as they attempted to flee their neighborhoods.⁴⁵ One self-liberator recalled Tubman selecting a cemetery as a meeting place, a clever choice.⁴⁶ A group of enslaved people gathering there might not arouse the same attention as a group gathering in a home, or in the woods, which was specifically forbidden by law.

Tubman preferred the winter, when the nights were long, although she did lead parties away in the spring and fall. Like most runaways, she usually traveled at night, hiding

⁴⁵ Cheney, "Moses," 36

⁴⁶ Joseph D. Thomas and Marsha McCabe, ed. *Spinner: People and Culture in Southeastern Massachusetts. Vol. IV* (New Bedford, MA: Spinner Publications, Inc., 1988), 66–67.

and sleeping during the day. Tubman was sometimes confident enough to move about during the day in pursuit of food and information, as she had friends whom she trusted to help her while her companions stayed safely hidden.

Tubman also guided her refugees by singing spirituals and other songs with coded messages. If danger lurked nearby, Tubman would sing an appropriate spiritual to warn her parties of an impending threat to their safety. When the road was clear, she would change her words or the tempo of the song and guided them on to the next safe place.⁴⁷ She paid free blacks to follow white slaveholders and slave catchers as they posted reward notices, and then tear the posters down. Tubman carried a pistol, mostly for protection from pursuers, but also as added encouragement to weary and frightened runaways who wanted to turn back. The consequences of betrayal were too great. Elizabeth Brooks of New Bedford, Massachusetts, recalled that when Henry Carroll escaped with Tubman, he wanted to stop for a rest, even though slave catchers were closing in quickly. She told him, “go on or die,” and he quickly moved along.⁴⁸ There was constant danger: armed slave catchers, accompanied by attack dogs, roamed the roads and woods. Tubman frequently had to disguise herself, and the survival skills she learned from her father, like reading the stars and other natural navigational tools found in the fields and forests, were vital as guides during her dangerous missions.⁴⁹

Tubman failed in two trips between 1852 and early 1854, to bring the rest of her family North. But her success rate would improve. At “Camp Meeting time”—spring and summer time—in 1854, Tubman “again went back, & went, as before, into concealment. She had interviews with the three brothers, but they all refused to leave the man who had been so kind to them, & at his own risk of loss by hiring their time put off the day,” when Eliza Brodess would sell them. “To leave him then would have been a loss to him of the wages of their unexpired service,” Tubman later explained her brother’s hesitancy to flee then. The brothers must have been working for landowners in Peter’s Neck, because when her brothers decided to stay for a few more months, she rescued Winnebar Johnson of Madison, who “proposed to escape with her” in June.⁵⁰ Enslaved by Samuel Harrington, Johnson left behind a free wife and children, as well as three sisters still held by Harrington.

⁴⁷ “Hail, oh Hail, Ye Happy Spirits.” Bradford noted that Tubman sang her “Hail, oh Hail Ye Happy Spirits” to a “sweet and simple Methodist air.” Tubman used to sing this song to indicate to people that it was safe to come out of hiding. (Bradford, 1868, 26–27; and Bradford, 1886, 36–38.) Emma Telford recorded another version in her interview with Tubman in 1905. This is also similar to “Moses Go Down.” Tubman sang this version, too, to signal freedom seekers. “Moses Go Down” has words that reflect spirituals with the theme of Moses and the Israelites escaping from Egypt. One version of this (with the words “Moses Go Down to Egypt Land”) is found in Allen, Ware, and Garrison (“Let God’s Saints Come In,” song 99). The rest of this song, as printed in this source, does not seem to carry Tubman’s meaning.

⁴⁸ Cheney, “Moses,” 36. Carroll’s full identity remains obscure, though he may be Henry Hooper.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁰ Gay, “Record of Fugitives 1855 [–1856].”

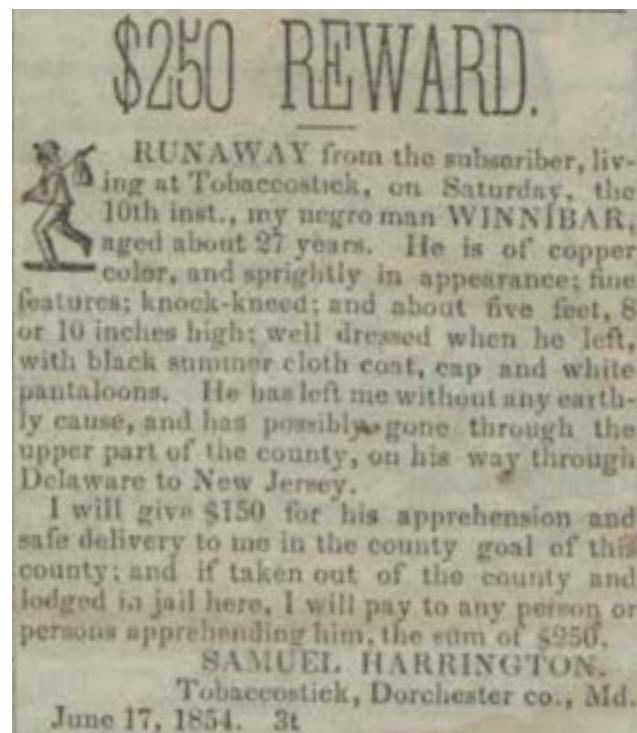


Figure 7.24. Reward for the capture of Winnebar Johnson in June 1854. Johnson settled in New Bedford, MA, and later his family joined him. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

Johnson fled on the heels of Jane Pennington, also of Madison, who escaped from Mary Jones in May. Jones allowed Pennington to visit friends in Baltimore, but Pennington never came back.⁵¹ Edward Pennington, Jane's father, and mother Sarah, lived in New Bedford, Massachusetts, which is where Jane arrived a short time later. The Penningtons lived in a neighborhood with John and Fountain Ellis, who had been born free in Dorchester County during the early 1820s, and other former Eastern Shore free and fugitive African Americans.

⁵¹ "Reward," *Baltimore Sun*, May 25, 1854.

\$150 REWARD.—Ran away from the subscriber, living in Dorchester county, Eastern Shore of Maryland, about the 1st of May, a NEGRO GIRL, called JANE PENNINGTON, aged about twenty years, of medium height, of a bright chesnut color, and is a neat, delicate looking girl; talks sharp and has a fine voice. She left Tobaccostick the first of May to visit Baltimore, and has not since been heard of. The probability is she has gone towards New Bedford, as she has a father living there. The above reward will be paid for the return of said girl to me, or in Baltimore jail, so I get her again. MARY JONES,
Tobaccostick, Dorchester county.
M25-3t*! —

Figure 7.25. Mary Jones's advertisement for the capture and return of Jane Pennington.

Jane successfully fled to New Bedford, where her parents had made a home.

Baltimore Sun, May 1, 1854.

The maritime and familial connections to New Bedford were not random, but rather indicative of the long reach of kinship and friendship supported by maritime networks. Protection, work opportunities, travel, and paths for communication sustained this free and fugitive population that had deep roots in Dorchester County and other Chesapeake communities. In fact, a full 30 percent of all black Marylanders living in Massachusetts in 1855 resided in New Bedford.⁵²

⁵² Massachusetts State Census, “People of Color Census” (1855).



Figure 7.26. Busy wharves in New Bedford. The seaport was a popular safe haven for freedom seekers from Maryland. New Bedford Free Public Library, Joseph G. Tirrell Photograph Collection.

Johnson passed through Underground Railroad agent William Still's office in Philadelphia on June 29, where Still noted that Johnson had been "brought away by his sister Harriet two weeks ago."⁵³ Johnson settled in the same New Bedford neighborhood with the Penningtons and Ellises, and his free family soon followed. Unfortunately, Harrington sold Johnson's sisters, two of them to traders beyond the state.⁵⁴

Before Tubman left the Eastern Shore with Johnson, she helped Sam Green Jr., the son of Rev. Samuel Green, flee Dr. James Muse, who Green described as cruel and violent, "the worst man" in Maryland.⁵⁵ Trained as a blacksmith, and literate, Green waited months before he could affect his escape; on August 28, he arrived in William Still's office in

⁵³ Still, "Journal C," August 28, 1854. See also, Samuel Harrington, "\$250 Reward," *Cambridge Democrat*, June 17, 1854.

⁵⁴ In 1866 Johnson posted a notice in the Christian Recorder seeking information "of Charlotte and Ellen Johnson, who formerly belonged to one Samuel Harrington in a town called Tobacco Stick, Maryland. They were sold out of the State in 1854. Any information of their whereabouts will be gratefully received by their brother, Winory Johnson, No. 14 Cedar Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts." See, Winory Johnson, "Information Wanted," *Christian Recorder*, July 7, 1866. Harrington sold Johnson's sister Ann to William Rhoades in Ceil County. She fled from him two years later, finally reaching New Bedford in 1857.

⁵⁵ Rev. Sam Green, Sr. had been free for more than twenty years, and he purchased Kitty's freedom on February 4, 1842 from Ezekiel Richardson. Both of their children, Sam, Jr. and his sister Sarah, remained enslaved, however. Sarah was later sold to Missouri. See McGill, *Certificates of Freedom*.

Philadelphia. Still sent him on to the home of Charles Bustill, one of the most important black Underground Railroad agents in the region, who then passed him through to Canada.⁵⁶ A few months later Green wrote to his father, reassuring him that he had found safe passage to Canada but that he had seen “Harriet” in Philadelphia.⁵⁷

Between 1851 and 1854, Tubman’s brothers, Ben, Robert, and Henry Ross, attempted several times to flee.⁵⁸ In December 1854, Tubman learned that Eliza Brodess planned to sell them over the Christmas holiday. With the help of a friend in Philadelphia, Tubman sent a letter to Jacob Jackson. A literate free black, Jackson proved to be a vital resource for communicating with loved ones. Tubman and Jackson must have established a specific code at some point during the years prior to 1854, a code which she employed through the letter. Caution on their part proved necessary because the suspicious Madison postmaster read Jackson’s mail. In the letter Tubman asked Jackson to “read my letter to the old folks, and give my love to them, and tell my brothers to be always watching unto prayer, and when the good old ship of Zion comes along, to be ready to step aboard.”⁵⁹ Signed “William Henry Jackson,” the name of an adopted son who had left Dorchester County some years before, kept Tubman’s identity camouflaged. When questioned by the authorities, Jackson denied knowing what the letter meant and threw it away, but he quickly contacted Tubman’s brothers who were working for landowners in Peter’s Neck, informing them she was coming for them.

⁵⁶ Still, “Journal C,” August 28, 1854. See also, Charles L. Blockson, *The Underground Railroad: Dramatic Firsthand Accounts of Daring Escapes to Freedom* (New York: Berkley Books, 1987), 212–13 for information on the Bustill’s large and successful family. For more information on Samuel Green Jr., see Richard Albert Blondo, “In Search of Samuel Green,” *The Archivist’s Bulldog*, April 30, 1990.; and Sam Green Sr., see “Samuel Green: A Black Life in Antebellum Maryland” (Masters thesis, University of Maryland, 1988).

⁵⁷ “Sam Green.” 21.

⁵⁸ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*; ibid., 415

⁵⁹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 57 Interestingly, the black spiritual, “The Old Ship of Zion” has its roots in Anne Arundel Co., Maryland, circa 1830–1840. See Lucy McKim Garrison, *Slave Songs of the South*, ed. William Francis Allen and Charles Pickard Ware (New York: A. Simpson & Company, 1867), 102–3; and, A. S. Jenks, *The Chorus* (Philadelphia: A.S. Jenks, 1860), 167–70.

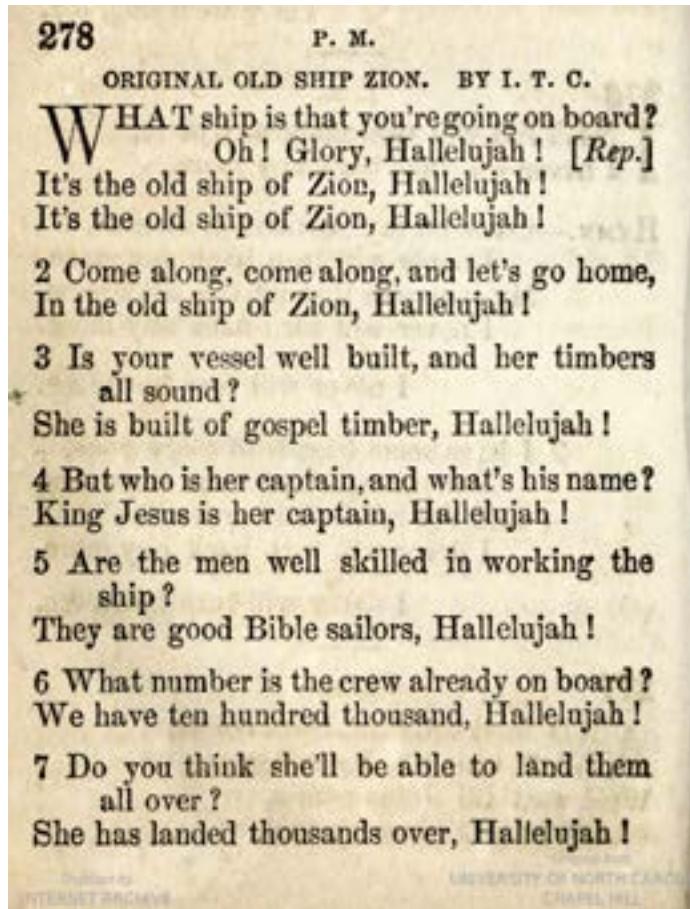


Figure 7.27. A version of “Old Ship of Zion,” a Methodist spiritual with origins in 1830s–1840s Chesapeake Bay region. Tubman invoked these words when she sent the coded letter to Jacob Jackson in December 1854. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Tubman arrived Christmas Eve day, a Sunday. Slaveholders usually allowed enslaved people to visit relatives and friends during the holidays. The Ross brothers’ parents expected them for Christmas dinner forty miles away at Poplar Neck in Caroline County. Robert and Henry were married with children, and Ben was engaged. Robert and his wife Mary Manokey, the enslaved daughter of Jerry and Polly Manokey, had two young boys: three-year-old John Henry and one-year-old Moses and was pregnant with their third child. Henry’s wife, Harriet Ann Parker was a free woman who lived near Smithville with her parents Julia and Isaac Parker and her two free born sons, three-year-old William Henry and two-year-old John [aka James] Isaac. Ben Ross’s enslaved fiancé, Jane Kane lived nearby on Buttons Creek laboring for Horatio Jones, “the worst man in the country.”⁶⁰ With little time to prepare, the brothers agreed to meet that night, Christmas Eve, and head straight to Poplar Neck. Jane disguised herself in a suit of men’s clothing that Ben had hidden in one of Jones’s gardens. The disguise worked so well that other people on the

⁶⁰ Still, “Journal C”, *The Underground Railroad* (repr., Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1970).

plantation who saw her leaving had no idea Jane was the “man” walking “as if from the river.”⁶¹

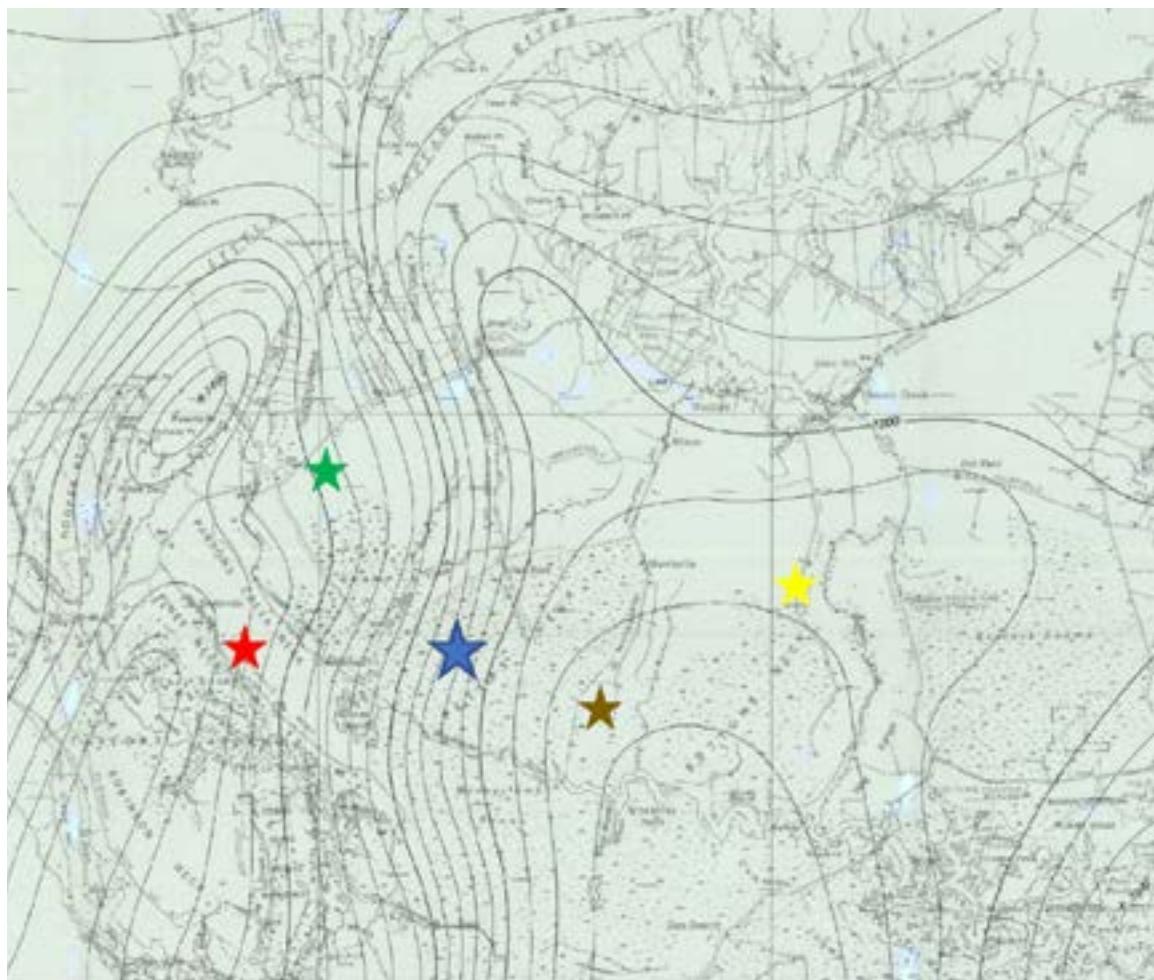


Figure 7.28: From left to right: Harriet Parker residence near Smithville; Jacob Jackson site; Peter’s Neck; former Thompson homesite; Jane Kane residence at Buttons Neck near the Creek. Aeromagnetic map of western Dorchester County, Maryland, and parts of adjacent counties. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

Henry and Robert faced a terrible decision. Traveling with small children and a pregnant woman was risky. They had to leave them behind. Adding to their anguish, Mary Manokey suddenly went into labor. Henry made the decision to leave his family, and in company with Ben and Jane headed to Caroline County. Robert stayed with his wife, and around midnight she gave birth to a little girl, naming her Harriet. By then Robert knew his chance at freedom was slipping away. He needed to leave, because according to Tubman’s

⁶¹ Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*, ed. Tilden G. Edelstein (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), 29. See also, Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 63. Jones’s farm sat along Buttons Creek and the Blackwater River, not too far from Anthony Thompson’s former plantation.

rules, she “never waited for no one.”⁶² Robert agonized over leaving his family, but he knew staying behind meant certain sale to the Deep South.⁶³ Bidding goodbye to Mary and the children, he raced to Poplar Neck. By Christmas morning he reached Dr. Thompson’s property, where he found his sister, two brothers, Jane and two others, twenty-year-old John Chase and Peter Jackson, in the fodder house not far from his parent’s cabin. Chase and Jackson fled enslavers from Cambridge, John Campbell Henry and George Winthrop, respectively.⁶⁴

Waiting for her sons to visit for Christmas dinner, Rit sat “by her fire with a pipe in her mouth, her head on her hand, rocking back and forth as she did when she was in trouble, and wondering what new evil had come to her children.” Tubman had not seen her mother more than five years, but the Ross children could not reveal themselves to her, fearing she might cause an “uproar in her efforts to detain them with her, that the whole plantation would have been alarmed.” Their father secretly slipped food to them, “taking care not to see his children” so if slave catchers came looking, he could say he did not “see” them.⁶⁵ Heavy rain kept them in place all day, but that evening, they fled north.⁶⁶

Tubman guided her group ninety miles to Wilmington, Delaware, where Underground Railroad agent Thomas Garrett provided them with food and clothing. Tubman and one of the men “had worn their shoes off their feet,” so Garrett gave them money to buy new shoes. Garrett, a hardware and iron merchant with a broad network of associates, supported the escapes of an estimated 2,700 freedom seekers over a forty-year career of anti-slavery and Underground Railroad activism.⁶⁷

Garrett secured a carriage for Tubman and her party, directing them on to Allen Agnew’s house in Kennett, Chester County, Pennsylvania, where Agnew forwarded them to William Still’s office in Philadelphia.⁶⁸ At Still’s, the group felt relieved to have “eluded pursuit.” It was December 29, and they had spent four days traveling over one hundred miles to freedom. By the time Tubman arrived, her party had grown to nine, including two additional men who had joined along the way. Still recorded their arrival with Tubman in his journal, noting the new names the brothers took for their lives in freedom. Robert changed his name to John Stewart, Ben became James Stewart, and Henry chose the William Henry Stewart.⁶⁹ While some freedom seekers chose aliases to shield themselves

⁶² Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 59.

⁶³ Ibid., 57–59.

⁶⁴ Still, “Journal C.”

⁶⁵ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 60–62.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁶⁷ James McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad* (Moylan, PA: The Whimsie Press, 1977), 48–69.

⁶⁸ Thomas Garrett, “Letter, Thomas Garrett to J. Miller Mckim, December 29, 1854,” (Wilmington, DE, 1854). in Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 305.

⁶⁹ Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*, 29. No reward advertisement has been found for Robert, Ben and Henry. See, “Field Book 1852”; and Still, “Journal C.”

from slave catchers, or to shed names given to them by slaveholders, others may have declared names they believed to be their familial right. Why the Ross brothers chose Stewart is unknown, though a connection to the powerful white Stewart family is a possibility. Tubman stayed with her brothers in St. Catharines, Canada for the winter, but returned to Philadelphia in the spring to earn more money to continue her personal campaign of liberation. Tubman's sister Rachel, and Rachel's two young children, Ben and Angerine, remained enslaved by Eliza Brodess, and Robert's wife, Mary, and their three young children remained enslaved by Dr. Thompson. But Henry's free wife and children could travel, so Tubman retrieved them from Smithville in early 1855 and brought them to Canada, reuniting them with Henry in St. Catharines.

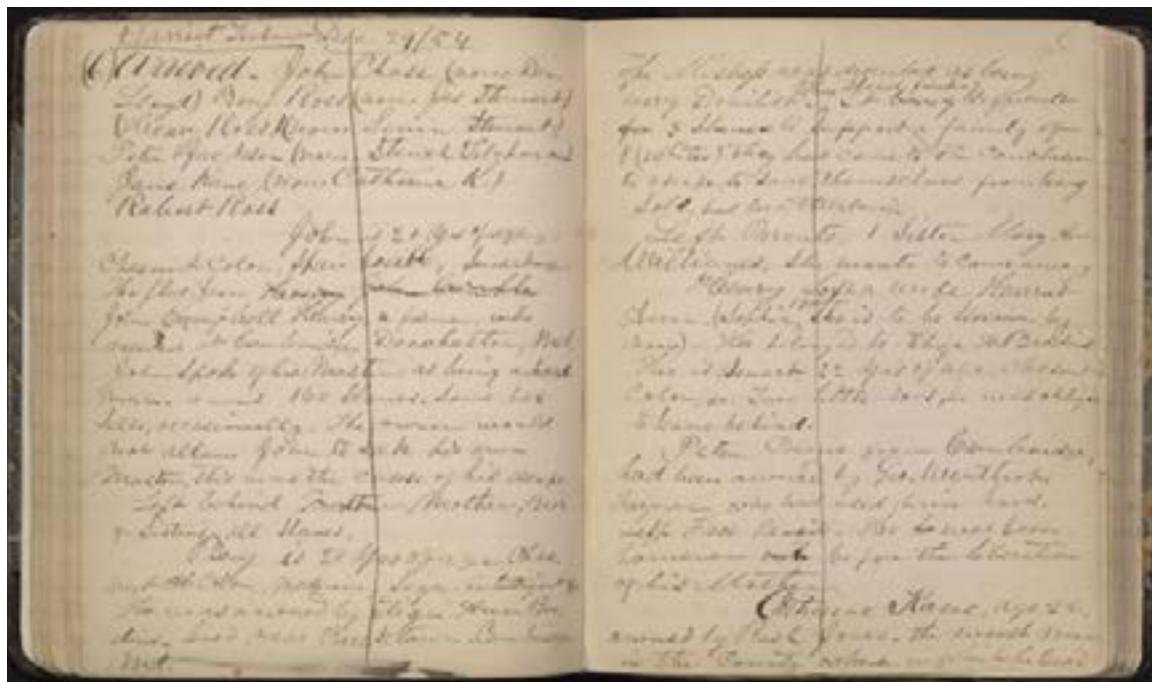


Figure 7.29. William's Still's "Journal C," notebook with page documenting the arrival of Harriet Tubman, her brothers, and friends, December 29, 1854. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Treasures Collection.

The New Year had brought more tension to the area, and frustrated Eastern Shore slaveholders grew angrier because of the increasing numbers of escapes, urged on, they imagined, by unknown abolitionist forces that lurked in free black homes, sowing notions of freedom and liberty among the enslaved. By Easter, 1855, rumors stoked fears of an impending insurrection by unidentified free and enslaved blacks in Dorchester and Talbot counties. Meetings of white citizens formulated plans to suppress gatherings of local African Americans.⁷⁰ The authorities searched black homes, where they seized guns and

⁷⁰ "The Terrors of Slavery!," *National Era*, April 12, 1855.

other weapons. Enslavers were advised to keep their bonds people at home during the Easter holiday. The editor of the *Cambridge Chronicle* denounced the rumor that white abolitionists were in their midst, readying the black community to strike out. He was in the minority. Swift condemnation of his call for reason followed from fellow citizens of Dorchester County, and shortly thereafter the newspaper folded. One irate resident called for the expulsion of all free blacks from the State of Maryland. Many others agreed.⁷¹

Tubman remained in Canada for some months with her family members during the winter of 1855. That spring or early summer, Tubman, her brothers John and James Stewart (née Robert and Ben Ross), and James's wife, Catherine Stewart (née Jane Kane), were interviewed by Benjamin Drew, a Boston abolitionist, school principal and journalist, who had traveled to Canada to meet freedom seekers who had fled further north to escape the Fugitive Slave Law. Drew wanted to record testimony of life under slavery from the formerly enslaved and to document the living conditions of the freeman in Canada. His efforts were in direct response to events that had dealt a heavy blow to the antislavery movement. The Kansas–Nebraska Bill of 1854 provided for two new territories carved out of the remains of the former Louisiana Purchase, the northernmost part called Nebraska, and the southern portion, Kansas. The settlers of each new territory then had the right to decide whether to allow slavery. Northern opponents of the extension of slavery into the new territories balked at this repeal of the Missouri Compromise agreement to keep slavery out of the territories. This strengthening of southern slave power repudiated abolitionists' efforts to end slavery in all states.

Two books were published during this period that defended the institution of slavery as a benevolent and caring institution that provided for the protection of black people. George Fitzhugh's *Sociology for the South; or, the Failure of Free Society*, and Reverend Nehemiah Adams's *A Southside View of Slavery* both argued that slavery was far more beneficial and less oppressive than abolitionists had led the public to believe and that the northern wage labor system was in fact worse. They both claimed that slaves were happy in the South. Directly challenging Harriet Beecher Stowe's description of slavery in her runaway bestseller *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), Fitzhugh and Adams claimed authority through first hand observations of the slave system at work, challenging Northern abolitionists claims about the injustices and horrors of slavery.

Benjamin Drew sought to counter southern arguments by publishing his interviews with the Canadian freedom seekers in *The Refugee: or the North-side View of Slavery*. Drew's interview with Tubman was the first of its kind to be published. Though brief, it does draw attention to the fact that she chose to be known by her real name, Harriet Tubman. Her brothers, John and James, preferred the surname Seward, a variation on the

⁷¹ "Fears of Insurrection," *National Era*, April 26, 1855. See "The Wrath of the Fearful," *National Era*, April 26, 1855.

name Stewart.⁷² Fresh from slavery, they minced no words about its horrors. John told Drew he had been waiting twenty years to escape. He had been suspicious of abolitionists at first; he was “afraid of a trick.”⁷³ James grieved the sale of his niece before they could get away.⁷⁴ His wife Catherine told Drew that her owner was physically violent.⁷⁵ Tubman told Drew that they longed to return to Maryland to be with family and friends, only “if we could be as free there as we are here.”⁷⁶

Tubman became politically active while living in Philadelphia, participating in meetings and rallies in support of abolition and civil rights and providing an outlet for her expanding notions of liberty and freedom beyond her work on the Underground Railroad. Through Still and his associates, Tubman was earning recognition and notoriety among a small group of radical anti-slavery activists committed to the end of slavery. They deeply admired her drive to liberate her family and friends, her unquestioning belief in God’s protection, and her confidence in the vast underground network she had come to know so well.

As early as October 1855, she felt safe enough, even as a fugitive from the law, to attend the National Colored Convention held at Franklin Hall in Philadelphia. Frederick Douglass, Jacob Gibbs, and Stephen Myers of New York; William Cooper Nell, Charles Lenox Remond, and John S. Rock from Massachusetts, and William Still, Robert Purvis, and many others from Philadelphia, along with sixty other delegates from New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut gathered to network and strategize. Tubman’s friends from Dorchester County, Rev. Samuel Green and his wife Catherine “Kitty” Green were among the forty delegates plus their spouses from the “cotton states.”⁷⁷ The Convention gave Tubman, and people like the Greens, the opportunity to meet with powerful black abolitionists from New York and New England. Men controlled the convention, but Mary Ann Shadd, publisher of the *Provincial Freeman*, an influential black Canadian newspaper, attend as the only female delegate. Tubman and other women like her, however, were active participants.⁷⁸

⁷² Drew, *The Refugee: A North-Side View of Slavery*, 20, 27–29. Ironically this is the same surname of William Henry Seward, the Governor of New York who would later become so instrumental in helping Tubman secure a home for herself and her family in Auburn, New York.

⁷³ “John Seward,” *ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁴ “James Seward. Brother of the Foregoing [John Seward],” *ibid.*, 27–28.

⁷⁵ “Mrs. James Seward,” *ibid.*, 28–29

⁷⁶ “Harriet Tubman,” *ibid.*, 20.

⁷⁷ Kitty Green applied for freedom papers on September 29, 1855, probably for the express purpose of traveling out of the state. The delegates from the “cotton states” were not identified in the proceedings of the convention, possibly for their own protection from reprisals back home. Franklin Turner, “Proceedings of the Colored National Convention” (paper presented at the National Convention of the Colored People of the United States, Franklin Hall, Philadelphia, PA, October 16–18, 1855). McGill, *Certificates of Freedom*.

⁷⁸ Colored Conventions brought together blacks—free, newly manumitted, and self-liberators—from Northern and Southern States. By the 1850s, leaders had been holding meetings for more than two decades. For detailed documentation, examination, and interpretation of decades of Colored Conventions, see the excellent resources available at *Colored Conventions: Bringing Nineteenth-Century Black Organizing to Digital Life*, <http://coloredconventions.org/conventions>

Many attendees took time to visit Passmore Williamson in Philadelphia's Moyamensing Prison, where he was held in contempt of court for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of a fugitive enslaved woman named Jane Johnson and her two young sons. Williamson, a member of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and closely associated with William Still, helped Jane and her children escape when her enslaver stopped in Philadelphia to transact some business. His incarceration made him a celebrity, much to the chagrin of southern slaveholders. On October 20th, two days after the closing of the Convention, Tubman and Kitty Green visited him in his cell.⁷⁹ Williamson was one of many influential white abolitionists who venerated Tubman. And in turn, she respected their firm principles, gambling their freedom and livelihoods in a shared battle to end slavery.

Sam and Kitty Green were becoming increasingly political, a precarious decision considering the powerful slaveholder interests on the Eastern Shore. Reverend Green's stature had grown significantly during the 1840s; despite severe restrictions on African American ministers during the antebellum period, particularly after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, Green preached to both free and enslaved African Americans in Dorchester, though white observers probably monitored him like they did all black ministers. A trustee of the Colored Peoples United Methodist Episcopal Church in East New Market, Green rose in stature and leadership in the African American community. In 1852, Green traveled to Baltimore as a delegate representing Dorchester blacks at the Convention of the Free Colored People of Maryland. The delegates discussed the present condition of civil rights and prospects for free African Americans living in the state. Green opposed proposals in support of emigration to Liberia; in disgust he left the convention early and returned home.⁸⁰ Improving conditions for free and enslaved families continued to drive Green and others like him, contributing to rising frustrations and distrust throughout the region.

⁷⁹ William Kashatus, Just over the Line: *Chester County and the Underground Railroad* (West Chester, PA: Chester County Historical Society with Penn State University Press, 2002), 55. See also, Passmore Williamson, "Passmore Williamson's Visitor's Book," (West Chester, PA: Chester County Historical Society, 1855).

⁸⁰ See *Baltimore Sun*, "The Free Colored People's Convention," July 27, 28, 29, 1852.



Figure 7.30. Reverend Samuel Green purchased his freedom in 1832 and became an Underground Railroad agent. He frequently assisted Tubman and her charges, and at least a dozen others.

Documentation of Tubman's hiding places in Maryland remains thin. She may have varied her secret hideouts. She stayed with the Samuel and Kitty Green at Indian Creek near East New Market (outside the NM boundaries), and she probably stayed with other black families in the area, or secreted in swamps and other hideouts.⁸¹ During one attempted rescue mission she spent three months in Dorchester County, waiting for the opportunity to bring away family members, indicating she had trustworthy confidants willing to keep her hidden for long periods of time.⁸² It is remarkable that she was not betrayed, and is a testament to the support and strength of networks to freedom on the Eastern Shore.

In early December 1855, Harriet Tubman brought away one man, Henry Cooper. They arrived in William Still's office in Philadelphia on December 6th. Tubman immediately returned to Dorchester county, hoping to rescue her sister, niece and nephew, sister-in-law Mary with her three children, and "one male friend."⁸³ While waiting for them, she likely directed Joseph Cornish's escape from Captain Samuel W. LeCompte, a wealthy naval officer in Cambridge. Cornish, who believed LeCompte wanted to sell him after the holidays, had deep ties to the community, and the decision to escape must have been

⁸¹ Siebert, "Tubman Interview [Seibert]."

⁸² McGowan, *Station Master*, 123–26. Thomas Garrett, "Letter, Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, December 16, 1855," (Wilmington, DE, 1855).

⁸³ "Garrett to Wigham, Dec. 16, 1855"; McGowan, *Station Master*; Conrad, *Conrad/Tubman.*, 125. Gay, "Record of Fugitives 1855 [–1856]."

painful.⁸⁴ A blacksmith and a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and married to a free woman and the father of five children, Cornish fled on December 8th. Racing to Gilpin's Point in Caroline County, "where he had heard there was a vessel about to sail, on which he could get a passage," Cornish passed by Ben and Rit's home at the Thompson plantation, just downriver from Gilpin's Point. One of the busiest wharves along the Choptank River in Caroline County, Gilpin's served as a landing for both steam-boats and sailing vessels engaged in the transport of people, timber, agriculture, seafood, and other products. Ship captains were always eager for crew members, so Cornish "worked his passage" to Baltimore, then made his way to William Still in Philadelphia, who forwarded him to Sydney H. Gay in New York City and finally Canada.⁸⁵

Tubman's sister remained enslaved on the Brodess farm. Her efforts to liberate Rachel at Christmas failed. Eliza Brodess leased Rachel's children away from her, making their rescue impossible and Rachel would not leave them behind. In April 1856, Tubman tried again, but Rachel refused to leave her children who remained inaccessible.⁸⁶ She decided to bring another party of self-liberators north, instead. It was a dangerous time to conduct a rescue mission; slave patrols, slave catchers, and informants posed a constant threat. While Tubman was planning this liberation, Dorchester County authorities arrested and convicted two free black men, Charles Hubbard and William Creighton for aiding and abetting a freedom seeker.⁸⁷

The mother of another freedom seeker who had fled at an earlier date with Tubman notified Benjamin Jackson, James Coleman, William Andrew Conoway (aka Cook), and Henry Hopkins that she was back in the area.⁸⁸ Working together in the fields and peach orchards between East New Market and Cabin Creek (outside the NM boundaries), the men decided to take the risk and go with Tubman. The heirs of Isaac Henry Wright, whose plantation ran along the creek, enslaved Jackson and Coleman. Hopkins, a farm hand enslaved by John T. Houston, lived at "Rose Hill" on Academy Street, west of East New Market on the way to Secretary, within 1.5 miles of Isaac H. Wright's family

⁸⁴ According to the 1860 U.S. Census, LeCompte enslaved 24 people and had 3 "Slave houses" on his property.

⁸⁵ Sydney H. Gay, "Sydney Howard Gay Papers, 1743–1931. Record of Fugitives 1855 [–1856]." Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, MS #0475

⁸⁶ See Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 126–29; "Interview with Harriet Tubman," *Sydney Howard Gay Papers*, Journal 1855–1856, Columbia University, 54–59.

⁸⁷ Charles Hubbard and William Creighton were tried in Dorchester County Circuit Court, April 1856, for "aiding and assisting" Levin Creighton, the slave of Pere North, to run away. See, Moxie, *Dorchester County Genealogical Magazine*, March 1996, Vol. XV, No. 6, p. 21.

⁸⁸ "Interview with Harriet Tubman," *Sydney Howard Gay Papers*, Journal 1855–1856, pp. 54, 58. The identity of this woman remains a mystery, though there are several possibilities. One possibility is Kitty Green, the free wife of freeman Rev Sam Green of East New Market. Sam Green was an UGRR agent, and their enslaved son, Sam Green, Jr., had fled his master in the summer of 1854 with Tubman's help. Another possibility is the mother of Peter Jackson, enslaved by George Winthrop of Cambridge, MD, who had fled with Tubman and her brothers in December 1854. Peter and James Jackson may be related.

farms near Cabin Creek.⁸⁹ Dr. Levin Hodson, who lived south of East New Market in what was then known as “Big Mills” (now Salem), nine miles south of Wright’s lands, enslaved Conoway (aka Cook). Hodson leased many of his enslaved people, and it is likely that Conoway worked for the Wrights heirs or Houston, making it convenient for the men to flee together.⁹⁰



Figure 7.31. Reward advertisement for the capture of William Andrew Cook, noting that Cook escaped with others. Cook and his companions made their way from Cabin Creek to freedom with Tubman’s help. Maryland State Archives, Dorchester County Newspaper Collection.

Tubman guided the men through Delaware, with slave catchers close behind. “Along the Railway, at all the stations, & at railside taverns bills were posted, describing the four men, & offering a reward of \$1200 for their capture.” Underground Railroad agent

⁸⁹ See January 12, 1835, Chattel Records ER Vol. 2, p. 88, John T. Houston bringing in from Delaware several slaves, including 12-year-old “Henry”. Isaac Henry Wright, Jr. was appointed executor of the estate of John Houston and guardian of his heirs in December 1861 (EWL1 378). This attests to the close relationship between these slaveholders.

⁹⁰ Isaac H. Wright, John T. Houston, and William T. Vickers were among a small group of slaveholders who petitioned the Governor of Maryland, T. Watkins Ligon, in October 1859 to prevent the early release of convicted UGRR agent Rev. Samuel Green from East New Market, who had been convicted in November 1857, six months after his arrest for aiding and abetting the escape of the “Dover Eight” from Dorchester County, MD. Having suffered the loss of some of their enslaved people, these slaveholders were furious that a petition was circulating pleading for Green’s pardon. See Collection of Maryland State Archives, MdHR 6636-246; 1-7-5-39 and transcribed at Frank Collins’s website on East New Market’s history, <http://www.collinsfactor.com/letters/1859oct15.htm>

Sydney H. Gay wrote in his journal two weeks later.⁹¹ At New Castle, Tubman brought them to the home of an unidentified black woman, where they lay concealed in a “pota-toe-hole.”⁹² Slave hunters searching in the area prevented Tubman from moving her group from their hiding place for more than a week.

Eventually, Thomas Garrett secured their transportation through Wilmington and on to Philadelphia, where William Still relayed them to Sydney Gay’s office in New York City. Safe for a moment, Gay took the opportunity to interrogate Tubman about her liberation efforts. He transcribed his five-page interview—the longest he ever recorded of any freedom seeker—in his Underground Railroad journal, calling her “Captain Harriet Tubman” in tribute to her remarkable success leading freedom seekers out of slavery.⁹³

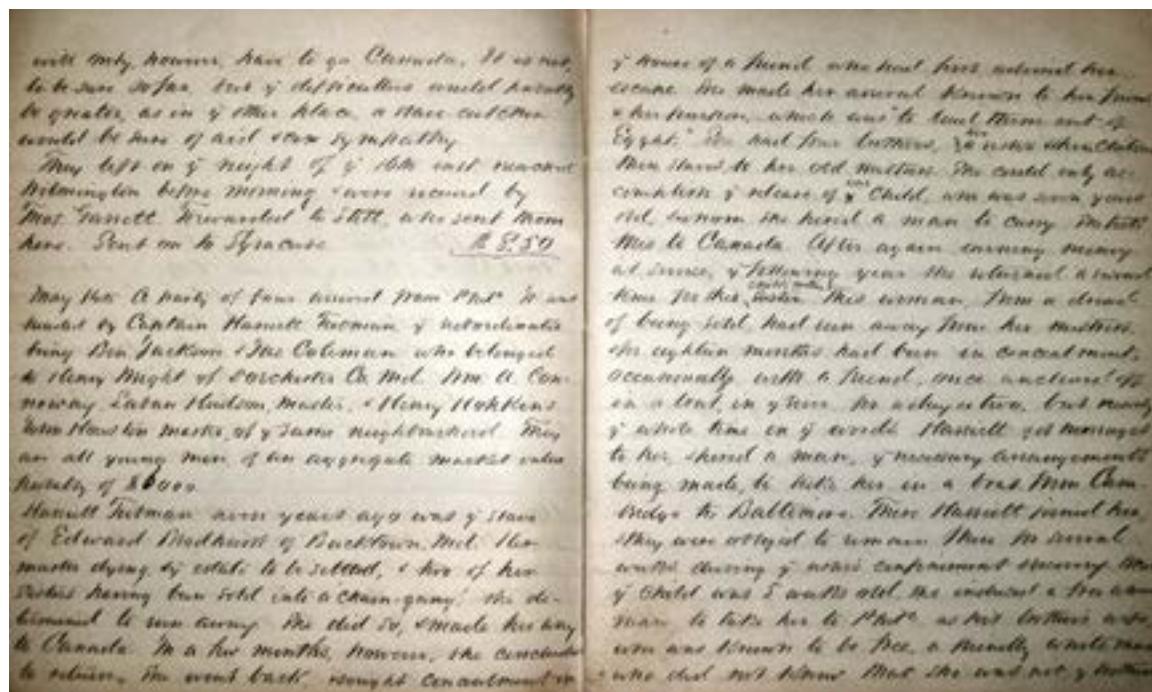


Figure 7.32. Pages from Sydney H. Gay’s Underground Railroad account book, noting the arrival of “Captain Harriet Tubman” with the four men from Cabin Creek, May 1856. Columbia University.

Once safely in Canada, Tubman became sick, preventing her travel for months.⁹⁴ When she was finally able to return to Wilmington in September 1856, Thomas Garrett provided for her, giving her money and any assistance he could muster.⁹⁵ On October 21

⁹¹ “Interview with Harriet Tubman,” *Sydney Howard Gay Papers*, Journal 1855–1856; Columbia University Special Collections, pp. 54–58

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. For more details on this rescue mission, please see NPS Network to Freedom site nomination for “Isaac Henry Wright, Sr., Farm Site/Escape of 4 men with Harriet Tubman.”

⁹⁴ McGowan, Station Master, 127. “Garrett to Eliza Wigham, September 12, 1856.”

⁹⁵ Ibid., 126–27. “Garrett to Eliza Wigham, September 12, 1856.”

Tubman rescued Tilly, an enslaved woman whose fiancé had previously escaped to Canada.⁹⁶ While we are unsure of Tilly's true identity, there is one tantalizing clue. Mary Thompson Bayly, the daughter of Dr. Anthony C. Thompson, placed a reward advertisement in the *Baltimore Sun* for the capture of her enslaved woman "Laura" who fled the same day Tubman rescued Tilly from Baltimore's waterfront. Laura and Mary knew the Ross family and all the other enslaved people held by Dr. Thompson. The 1839 probate list of Anthony Thompson's enslaved people includes young girls named Laura and Matilda (possibly Tilly).⁹⁷ Perhaps just a coincidence, the connection seems plausible.

Regardless, Tubman cleverly navigated their escape via steamboat south to Seaford, Delaware on the Nanticoke River and then rail travel north to Wilmington, where Garrett moved them on to Philadelphia.⁹⁸ Freedom seekers took advantage of steamboat travel, helped, in some cases, by ship captains or crew, or they blended in with the traveling public if they could forge a pass or freedom certificates.⁹⁹ Tubman and Tilly boarded the steamer *Kent*, which made regular round trip excursions to Seaford, Delaware each week.

⁹⁶ Tilly may be "Laura" whose enslaver, Mary Thompson Bayly, was Dr. Anthony Thompson's daughter. See runaway advertisement for "Laura" posted by Mary Thompson Bayly in *Baltimore Sun*, October 31, 1856.

⁹⁷ Thompson, "List."

⁹⁸ See Network to Freedom site nomination *Dugan's Wharf Site: Tilly's Escape*.

⁹⁹ There is great speculation that the first steamboat captain may have been Underground Railroad agent Captain Alfred Fountain, who sailed between Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and other ports around the Chesapeake.



Figure 7.33. Travel schedule for the steamer Kent. Harriet Tubman and “Tilly” boarded the vessel on October 21, 1856 and headed south to Seaford, Delaware. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

Several steamboat captains, like Alfred Fountain and William Bayliss, were arrested and jailed for transporting self-liberators.¹⁰⁰ Other captains were more diligent. John Wesley Hughes and George Hackett fled from enslavers Pritchett Meredith and Polish Mills of Bucktown (within the NM boundaries).¹⁰¹ The two men acquired forged passes provided by William Hill, a literate free African American who lived next door to Meredith, allowing the men to travel freely during the Christmas holiday. Hackett and Hughes were not as lucky as Tubman: a suspicious captain aboard the steamer *Kent* detained them after they boarded at Cambridge, foiling their bid for freedom.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Still, *Underground Railroad*. McGowan, Station Master.

¹⁰¹ “Assessment Record.” The assessor listed “negroes George 11 years [\$]75—Bill 13 years of age [\$250]”. Cambridge, District 7, 95.

¹⁰² “Court Papers. 1861–1863, Criminal Judgements,” ed. Dorchester County Circuit Court (MDSA). April term 1862, “William Hill, Free Negro” Presentments Nos. 2 and 8. See NTF site nomination *Pritchett Meredith Farm: Escapes of Thomas Elliot, Denard Hughes, and John Wesley Hughes*.

With Tilly sent off to Canada, Tubman returned to Wilmington in need of \$20 to “go for her sister and children,” still waiting on the Eastern Shore.¹⁰³ Tubman assured Garrett that she had great confidence that God would protect her “in all her perilous journeys,” for she never went “on a mission of mercy without his consent.”¹⁰⁴ But again, after meeting with Rachel, the sisters postponed the rescue until Christmas time. Never wasting an opportunity, Tubman gathered another group and headed for freedom.

Josiah “Joe” Bailey and his brother Bill, Eliza Manokey, and Peter Pennington struck out with Tubman in mid-November. Laboring together in William Hughlett’s timbering operations—which included a mill and shipyard in Talbot County - Joe and Bill had both been eager to escape.¹⁰⁵ A prominent planter who owned thousands of acres of farmland and timber along both sides of the Choptank River at Jamaica Point and Cabin Creek, and the owner of some forty enslaved people, Hughlett was a harsh master, and when he whipped the Bailey brothers, they decided to run away.¹⁰⁶ As a timber foreman who managed the harvesting and hauling of wood products, Joe Bailey was well connected to the black maritime and shipbuilding networks in that region. Joe knew Tubman’s father, Ben Ross, and he apparently knew of Tubman’s liberation efforts. Rowing six miles up the river to Poplar Neck one night, Bailey told Ross to alert his daughter that he and his brother were ready to escape.¹⁰⁷ Peter Pennington, who labored for Turpin Wright at Wright’s farm at Oyster Shell Point near Indian Creek in Dorchester County, about 2 miles across the Choptank River from Hughlett’s plantation, would have known the Bailey brothers and probably Tubman, too, through his neighbor, Rev. Sam Green.

Eliza Manokey, enslaved by Ann Martin Staplefort Grieves of Church Creek, joined the party when they reached Delaware. Manokey and Grieves’s enslaved people were well known to Tubman and her family. Manokey’s husband, Bill Banks, had been enslaved by Anthony Thompson, but manumitted during the early 1840s and free when Eliza ran away.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, Ann Grieves inherited Harkless Jolly, who was married to Tubman’s sister Linah and the father of Kessiah Jolly Bowley and her sister Harriet.¹⁰⁹ Leasing her far from her daughter, four grandchildren and husband, Grieves subjected Manokey to severe neglect and mistreatment. Grieves had also given Manokey’s son to a nephew who moved to Missouri. Eliza later recalled tragically how the “boy clung frantically” to her, “begging

¹⁰³ McGowan, Station Master, 134–35. “Garrett to Wigham, December 27, 1856.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 134–38. “Garrett to Wigham, Dec. 27, 1856.”

¹⁰⁵ William Hughlett owned Joe, but Bill was enslaved by John C. Henry of Cambridge. Bill had been hired out to Hughlett.

¹⁰⁶ “Journal C.”

¹⁰⁷ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 29

¹⁰⁸ Ann Martin married two Staplefort brothers—John first, then, after he died, she married John’s brother George. He then died and she married Dr. Horatio Grieves of Church Creek. In December 1828, Ann’s husband John Staplefort and her mother-in-law Dorothy Staplefort advertised for runaway Bob Manoca [Manokey], who may have been related to Eliza. “\$150 Reward.” William Staplefort, Baltimore Gazette, January 1, 1829. See also *Baltimore Gazette*, January 2, 1830. For Bill Banks, see Thompson, “List.”

¹⁰⁹ See Last Will and Testament of Daniel Martin Liber THH1, folio 78. July 28, 1845.

her to save him, but in vain.” She never saw him again. Manokey escaped in January 1856, remaining hidden by black families in Maryland and Delaware.¹¹⁰

Tubman and the men spent the first night with Rev. Green, and from there made their way into Delaware. After laying “out in the woods till wheat harvest” and hiding “at the house of a friend” somewhere along Tubman’s route, Manokey was able to join them.¹¹¹

William Hughlett posted runaway advertisements, offering an extraordinary reward of \$1,500 for twenty-eight-year-old Joe. A large scar on Joe’s face made him easy prey. John Campbell Henry, who owned Bill Bailey but leased him to Hughlett, offered a \$300 reward, while Turpin Wright offered \$800 for the capture and return of thirty-year-old Pennington.¹¹² Such high rewards increased substantially the danger of capture for the runaways. Slave catchers’ persistent tracking of the group forced them to proceed slowly and remain hidden for a longer period than Tubman wanted. They hid in root cellars and were “passed along by friends in various disguises,” where they were “scattered and separated” and led “roundabout” to a variety of safe meeting places while pursued relentlessly.¹¹³

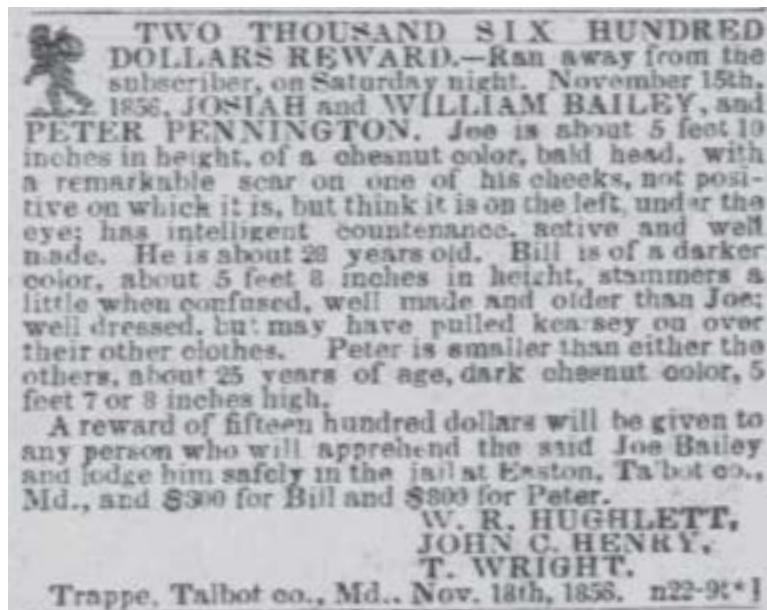


Figure 7.34. Enslavers Hughlett, Henry, and Wright posted hefty rewards to capture the three men. This made the escape more dangerous, especially because of Joe Bailey’s distinctive facial scar. Maryland State Archives Legacy of Slavery in Maryland.

¹¹⁰ “Statement of Eliza Manoga {Manokey}” Miscellaneous Manuscript note, *Sydney Howard Gay Papers*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Collections, Columbia University. See also, Dorchester County Court, Bill of Sale, Ann H. Grieves and H. G. Grieves to Capt. Travers Spicer, “a Negro boy named Adam,” July 6, 1855. MD State Archives.

¹¹¹ “Statement of Eliza Manoga [Manokey],” and “Statement of William Bailey,” Miscellaneous Manuscript notes, *Sydney Howard Gay Papers*, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Collections, Columbia University. I am indebted to Dr. Eric Foner for bringing these notes to my attention.

¹¹² Still, Underground Railroad, 279–81. See also “Journal C.”

¹¹³ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 30–31.

1850–1861



Figure 7.35. Harriet Tubman and freedom seekers hiding in a root cellar. Actors in a scene from the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center orientation film, “Soldier of Freedom.” Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

When they finally reached the outskirts of Wilmington, the reward notices had attracted vigilant slave catchers who watched the roads into the city. Thomas Garrett engaged the services of some black bricklayers, who loaded their wagon with bricks and journeyed across the bridge “singing and shouting,” greeting police and others along the route. The bricklayers located Tubman and her refugees and concealed them in a secret compartment strategically installed in the wagon beneath the bricks. Returning to Wilmington, they passed undetected.¹¹⁴ One day later, on November 26, the party arrived in Philadelphia at Still’s office, where he recorded their names.¹¹⁵ Within a day they met Gay in New York City, who sent them on to Canada.¹¹⁶



Figure 7.36. Harriet Tubman leading freedom seekers north. Actors in a scene from the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center orientation film, “Soldier of Freedom.” Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Tubman spent the winter in St. Catharines, returning to Philadelphia in March 1857.¹¹⁷ William Still and Garrett had been concerned about Tubman’s safety: a recent escape attempt had exposed her Underground Railroad network and risked the lives of several freedom seekers fleeing Dorchester County early in the month. Henry Predeaux, Thomas Elliott, Denard Hughes, James and Lavinia Woolford, Bill and Emily Kiah, and an unidentified eighth man had followed instructions with names of helpers and places to

¹¹⁴ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 31.

¹¹⁵ “Journal C.”

¹¹⁶ McGowan, *Station Master*, 149. “Garrett to Joseph Dugdale, November 29, 1856.” Gay, “Record of Fugitives 1855 [-1856]”.

¹¹⁷ McGowan, *Station Master*, 139–43

hide given them by Tubman.¹¹⁸ The groups stayed with Sam Green near East New Market, then Ben Ross at Poplar Neck, before traveling to Delaware, where they met Thomas Otwell, a highly trusted free black agent operating an Underground Railroad network in the Camden and Dover region.¹¹⁹ Otwell betrayed the group, conspiring with a local white man named James Hollis to catch them and claim the reward money estimated at nearly \$3000.¹²⁰ Lured into the Dover jail by Otwell, the group successfully broke out, running to Wilmington ahead of pursuing authorities.¹²¹



Figure 7.37. Reward for three of the “Dover Eight” freedom seekers. One of the rare escapes from the Bucktown area. Cambridge Democrat, March 18, 1857. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

Thomas Garrett was waiting in Wilmington, and so were the enslavers of the three men. Pritchett Meredith of Bucktown enslaved Thomas Elliott and Denard Hughes.¹²² Meredith, Hughes later reported, was “the hardest man around,” and his mistress, at

¹¹⁸ William Still identifies Henry Predeaux as “Predo,” Denard Hughes as “Daniel” Hughes. See Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 57–60. Denard Hughes was also known as Denwood. Bill and Emily Kiah are identified in a runaway advertisement, see Moxey, Abstracts. American Eagle, March 18, 1857.

¹¹⁹ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 60. “William Brinkly to William Still, March 23, 1857.”

¹²⁰ “Unsuccessful Attempt to Capture Fugitive Slaves,” *New York Tribune*, March 20, 1857.

¹²¹ For more details of this escape, please see Network to Freedom site nomination *Pritchett Meredith Farm: Escapes of Thomas Elliot, Denard Hughes, and John Wesley Hughes*.

¹²² Pritchett Meredith posted a reward notice for \$600 for the return of “Denard Hughes and Tom Elliot,” on March 11, which was published on March 18 in the Cambridge Democrat. See also, “\$600 Reward,” Baltimore Sun, 13 March 1857. William Still recorded their owner as “Richard” Meredith. Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 58–59. See also runaway advertisement for Henry Predeaux, Bill and Emily Kiah, “One Thousand Dollars,” *American Eagle*, March 18, 1857.

eighty-three years of age, “drank hard,” and was “very stormy.”¹²³ Meredith purchased Thomas from Benjamin and Margaret Keys Elliott in April 1841. Margaret had inherited Thomas and several other enslaved Hughes family members, whom she also sold to Meredith.¹²⁴ Meredith’s “Poplar Farm” was situated about a mile from the Bucktown crossroads and less than two miles from the Brodess farm where Tubman spent portions of her childhood.¹²⁵ Elliott and Hughes knew Tubman and her family, and William “Bill” and Emily Kiah did, too. Benjamin G. Tubman enslaved Bill, and Emily belonged to Ann Craig’s family.¹²⁶ Ara Spence, a prominent jurist sitting on Dorchester County’s district court, enslaved twenty-seven-year-old Henry Predeaux, described by William Still as a “giant.” Spence may have leased Predeaux to the Bucktown area, possibly to Pritchett Meredith.¹²⁷

Garrett watched the roads for several nights and eventually found Hughes and Elliott near Wilmington, and brought them safely to his residence.¹²⁸ The two men may have been trying to reach the home of Moses Pinkett, Elliott’s free uncle who lived in Wilmington.¹²⁹ Garrett’s associates met four more of the group outside of the city, directing them to another stop on the Underground Railroad ten miles from the city.¹³⁰ Eventually, five of the eight made it to William Still’s office in Philadelphia, and they were directed on to Canada and freedom. Bill and Emily Kiah remained either in Delaware, Maryland, or

¹²³ McGowan, *Station Master*, 59.

¹²⁴ See Land Records, Maryland State Archives, Liber ER 18 folio 310. 1841.

¹²⁵ See Land Records, Maryland State Archives, Liber ER 19 & EPL 1 folio 83. In 1850, Pritchett Meredith owned \$5000 in assets and 6 enslaved people, but by 1860, his assets were valued at \$15000 including 16 enslaved men, women and children. Between 1852 and 1860 the Dorchester County Tax Assessment record shows Meredith enslaving 14 people, 9 males and 5 females, including twenty-two-year-old Thomas Elliot and twenty-seven year old “Denwood” [Denard] Hughes. Hughes and Elliott, classified as “absconded,” were deducted from Meredith’s tax assessment in 1860.

¹²⁶ William and Emily Kiah would later settle in Auburn, New York, under the surname “Williams,” with their daughter Mary. They worked as house servants in the home of George Underwood, a friend of Tubman’s and a prominent figure in Auburn’s social, political and economic life. William Still recorded that Emily, or Emma, was enslaved by “Bushong Blake,” who was actually James Bushrod Lake. Ann Craig was Lake’s mother-in-law. Craig died in 1862, and in her will, written in 1849, she bequeathed Emily to her daughter, Louisa H. Lake, James’s wife. The Kiah’s daughter, Mary, went to William A. Lake, Louisa and James’s son. According to Cambridge, Dorchester County tax records, Ann Craig’s assessment record lists Emily, aged 30, and Mary, age 7, is listed in James B. Lake’s assessment record. See “Assessment 1852–1864.” Ann Craig lived with her daughter Louisa and son-in-law James in Cambridge in 1850 and 1860. See Leslie and Neil Keddie, *Dorchester County, Maryland, Wills. Liber Llk No. 1, November 1861–1868, Folios 209–428*. (Salisbury, MD: Family Tree Bookshop, nd.), 6–7. See also, Moxey, Abstracts. American Eagle, March 18, 1857, 72.

¹²⁷ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 57–58. Benjamin G. Tubman inherited Bill Kiah from his grandmother Dorothy Staplefort. Kiah would have known Eliza Manokey, who escaped with Joe and Bill Bailey and Peter Pennington, in November 1856 with Tubman. See Liber THH 1, folio 251.

¹²⁸ McGowan, *Station Master*, 56. See also R.C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*. (Lancaster, PA: John A. Hiestand, 1883); and Kashatus, Just over the Line.

¹²⁹ Pritchett Meridith, “\$600 Reward,” *Cambridge Democrat*, March 18, 1857.

¹³⁰ McGowan, *Station Master*, 139–43. “Garrett to Edmondson, March 29, 1857.”

Pennsylvania, waiting to rescue their daughter Mary, whom they had to leave behind.¹³¹ Lavinia Woolford was somehow separated from her husband; hiding out for several months, she successfully made it to Philadelphia, where she learned from William Still that her husband James was waiting for her in Canada.¹³² The identity of the eighth runaway remains unknown, though he or she apparently found their way to Canada with the rest.

The fallout from this dramatic escape was immense. National media picked up the story of the escape from the Dover jail, dubbing the fleeing group the “Dover Eight.” Authorities in Dorchester arrested Sam Green, and Ben Ross came under suspicion, too.¹³³ Garrett thought the original party of freedom seekers had been “betrayed by one who started with the rest,” who had turned back and informed on the person who piloted them to Ben’s house the first day of their escape.¹³⁴

With suspicions percolating in the region, Dr. Anthony C. Thompson warned Ben and Rit to leave the state.¹³⁵ Tubman raced to Poplar Neck, collected her parents and a few belongings, and brought them to Wilmington. It must have been a difficult journey. Ben had vowed he would not leave Maryland “so long as any of his children remain in bondage,” but they had to leave Rachel, Mary Manokey Ross, and their grandchildren behind.¹³⁶ On June 4th Tubman arrived at Garrett’s house, where he provided them with \$30 and sent them along to William Still.¹³⁷ Ben, Rit and Tubman most likely went on to New York City where Oliver Johnson and Jacob Gibbs tended to their needs. Once in Rochester, Ben and Rit stayed with Maria G. Porter, the Secretary of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society and a close associate of Frederick Douglass’s, for at least two weeks before moving onto St. Catharines, where Ben and Rit’s sons, William Henry and John Stewart, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren were living.¹³⁸

Sam Green, however, did not escape the law. On April 4, Sheriff Robert Bell arrived at Green’s house with a search warrant.¹³⁹ When Bell discovered a map of Canada, letters from self-liberators from the area, including from his son who had fled from Dr. James

¹³¹ William Still records William and Emma “Chion” [Kiah] coming through his office in 1860. See Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 543. They changed their last name to Williams, and they settled in Ontario for a few years before moving to Auburn, New York to live near Harriet Tubman. See Ontario 1861 Census, St. Catharines; and Auburn, NY, 1865 census.

¹³² Ibid., 160–61.

¹³³ McGowan, *Station Master*, 143–45. “Garrett to Mary Edmundson, August 11, 1857.”

¹³⁴ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 48. Sam Green was tried and finally convicted for owning a copy of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. For Green’s story, see Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*.

¹³⁵ McGowan, *Station Master*, 143–45. “Garrett to Mary Edmundson, August 11, 1857.”

¹³⁶ Gay, “Record of Fugitives 1855 [–1856].”

¹³⁷ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 52. See also “Garrett to Bradford, June, 1868.”

¹³⁸ Siebert, “Siebert Papers, N.Y.” “Mrs. C. Bloss Webb to Siebert, Sept. 7, 1896”

¹³⁹ See also, Blondo, “Sam Green,” 24.

Muse years earlier, and a copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's bestselling novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he arrested Green.¹⁴⁰

Sam, Jr.'s letter described his success making his way to Canada, where he had seen Peter Jackson, who had fled in December 1854, and Joe Bailey, who fled in November 1856.¹⁴¹ Though unable to directly link Rev. Green with helping the Dover Eight or any of the other freedom seekers, slaveholders felt confident that he was involved. His acquittal on aiding in their escapes—by an all-white jury - made the authorities more determined to punish him. Citing his possession of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Green faced new charges of violating Maryland's Act of 1841, Chapter 272 which stated that if any free black "knowingly receive or have in his possession any abolition handbill, pamphlet, newspaper, pictorial representation or other paper of an inflammatory character," which could "create discontent amongst or to stir up to insurrection the people of color of this State." This time he was convicted and sentenced to ten years in the Maryland State Penitentiary.¹⁴² Fifty-five-year-old Green represented what had come to fear: a literate, well-respected, free black who secretly encouraged resistance to the slave system.

Early in the fall, Tubman returned to the Eastern Shore to try to retrieve her sister Rachel and her children. Still separated from her children, Rachel again refused to leave. Angerine was ten years old, and Ben was eight, both old enough to be helpful and productive around a farm and leased to another farmer. The Brodresses must have been watching Rachel and her children closely; they had lost five enslaved people to escape already and likely suspected Rachel might try to flee as well.

While Tubman waited for Rachel, she gave information to two large parties of self-liberators seeking to escape that fall.¹⁴³ During a three-week period in October 1857, over forty enslaved people fled from near Cambridge. A few people had already absconded from the Dorchester in September, but slaveholders felt enraged and helpless when a wave of escapes threatened the stability that whites imagined they had created after the high-profile escape of the Dover Eight. Caroline Stanley, her husband Daniel, and their six children fled Cambridge in early October with Nat and Lizzie Amby and several other adults in a group of about fifteen.¹⁴⁴ Samuel W. LeCompte enslaved Caroline and the children—LeCompte was the same man Joseph Cornish ran away from in December 1855. John Muir enslaved Nat Amby, but Alexander Bayly held Lizzie Amby in Cambridge.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ "Sam Green and Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Easton Gazette*, August 28, 1858.

¹⁴¹ Blondo, "Sam Green." 21-22. Transcribed letter, Green, Jr., to Green, Sr., Sept. 10, 1854. The actual quotes are: "plenty of friends plenty to eate plenty to drink," and "tell P. Jackson to come on Joseph Baley com on, Kom more."

¹⁴² "Easton Gazette 8/28/1858."

¹⁴³ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 25

¹⁴⁴ Alexander Bayly enslaved Lizzie Amby. His homesite is now undergoing an archeological assessment to determine the contours of enslaved life on his property in Cambridge.

¹⁴⁵ The Ambys settled in Auburn, New York, while the Stanleys settled in Canada. Caroline and one of the children, possibly an unidentified infant, did not survive long; they were dead by 1861.

Another large group of freedom seekers followed, heightening anxiety in an already tense community.

On the evening of Saturday, October 24th, twenty-eight men, women and children snuck away from the homes of their enslavers, Samuel Pattison, Jane Cator, Richard Keene, Willis Brannock, Rueben E. Phillips, and Rev. Levi D. Travers.¹⁴⁶ Samuel Pattison started the following day with the shocking discovery that nearly all his enslaved people, fifteen in number, had left the night before, leaving him with no labor to operate his farm or tend to his household. Among the fifteen who absconded from Pattison that rainy night were two complete families. Susan Viney and her husband Joe brought away their four young children, Lloyd, Frank, Albert(a), and nine-month-old J.W., in addition to Joe's three older sons, Henry, Joe, and Tom. Kit and Leah Anthony brought with them their three small children, Adam, Mary, and one-year-old Murray. Joseph Hill was able to get away, too, bringing his free wife, Alice, and son, Henry. Joseph Hill's sister, twenty-five-year-old Sarah Jane, had been hired away from Pattison plantation and Pattison did not know for several days she, too, was gone.¹⁴⁷ Pattison posted a \$2,000 reward; the other enslavers posted rewards, too, ratcheting up the pressure to ensure capture of the freedom seekers.

¹⁴⁶ “Negro Stampede,” *Cecil Whig*, October 31, 1857.

¹⁴⁷ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 90–91.



Figure 7.38. Enslaver Samuel Pattison's remarkable \$2,000 reward for the capture of his enslaved people who fled in October 1857. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

How so many runaways successfully eluded capture remains a mystery. Even more remarkable is the demographics of the two groups: twenty children, several of them infants carried by their parents. This makes their escape rare in the annals of the Underground Railroad. Aaron Cornish and his wife Daffney brought six of their eight children, including a two-week-old infant. The Rev. Levi D. Travers enslaved Aaron, but Jane Cator and her stepfather, Rueben Elliot Phillips, held Daffney and her children. Two of the Cornish children had to be left behind; as young teenagers, they had been hired out, making it difficult to get them the night of the escape.¹⁴⁸ Several single men joined the group; Solomon and George Light, Marshall Dutton, and Silas Long increased the number of freedom seekers to an astonishing twenty-eight runaways (excluding free Alice and son

¹⁴⁸ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 88–89.

Henry).¹⁴⁹ They were heavily armed, carrying pistols, revolvers, knives and one paw, a three-pronged weapon for “close combat.”¹⁵⁰ Making their way to St. Catharines, the families rebuilt familial and community lives as neighbors in freedom. Unfortunately, the Cornish’s teenaged sons attempted to flee and reach their parents in Canada the following summer, but were captured with their conductor, Hugh Hazlett, another local Underground Railroad agent.¹⁵¹



Figure 7.39. An artist’s sketch of the escape of the “Cambridge 28,” showing families with children, a rare example in the history of the Underground Railroad. New York Public Library.

On the Eastern Shore, increased slaveholder vigilance made it impossible for Tubman to get her sister and her sister’s children and bring them North. She eventually gave up and returned to Canada. Even without Tubman’s help, and despite active patrolling by whites, people continued to run away. After making their escape on New Year’s Eve, a group of seven freedom seekers from near Cambridge ran into a slave patrol looking for them in Caroline County in early January 1858.¹⁵² Hannah Leverton’s son, Arthur, and his free black neighbor, Daniel Hubbard, were immediately suspected. A lynch mob formed to

¹⁴⁹ Marshall Dutton was probably related to Charles Dutton who had run away the previous fall. A Harriet Tubman Byway marker commemorating these escapes is located at the Stanley Institute at Christ’s Rock outside of Cambridge on Route 16.

¹⁵⁰ Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 87.

¹⁵¹ “Negroes Captured,” *Easton Gazette*, August 7, 1858.

¹⁵² “Capture [January 9, 1858],” *Easton Gazette*, January 9, 1858.

take them, but Arthur and Daniel received word of the mob's plans and made a successful run for Philadelphia.¹⁵³

Up and down the Eastern Shore vigilante groups were meting out their own form of justice on those who they believed harbored and aided self-liberators. In June 1858, local farmers and prominent members of the community dragged James Bowers from his home near Chestertown in nearby Kent County. Beaten, stripped, tarred and feathered, and threatened with hanging, Bowers fled with his life.¹⁵⁴ The mob victimized a free black woman named Harriet Tillison, too, tarring and feathering her and throwing her in jail.¹⁵⁵

In July 1858, another group of self-liberators from Dorchester made an effort to break for freedom, but were betrayed by a free black, Jesse Perry, who in collusion with a group of white men set an ambush for them seven miles north of Greensborough in Caroline County.¹⁵⁶ Late at night on Saturday, July 24, 1858, William Henry Cornish, Mary Light, Charles Anthony Light, Esther Cornish, Solomon Cornish, Thomas Ridout, and John Green, fled their enslavers in the Town Point and Cambridge area in Dorchester.¹⁵⁷ Charles and Mary Light were fleeing from Reuben Phillips; Esther and Solomon Cornish and Thomas Ridout were enslaved by Ann M. Dixon; John Green by Samuel Hooper, and William Cornish by Jane Cator. (Cator and Reuben had already lost several enslaved people during the large escapes in October 1857.)¹⁵⁸ They likely hoped to reunite with family and friends in Canada.¹⁵⁹ Their conductor, Irish immigrant and logger Hugh Hazlett, was arrested and nearly killed by a lynch mob in Cambridge. Tried and convicted, his forty-four-year sentence was unusually harsh for a white man.

While the Eastern Shore devolved into chaos, Tubman became more involved in the relief activities in St. Catharines, aiding newly arrived refugees.¹⁶⁰ She also focused on building and strengthening her network of black and white friends and supporters throughout Central New York and New England, where she gave lectures and raised money

¹⁵³ Carroll, *Quakerism*, 143–44. See also, Kelley, “Reminiscences, April 2, 1898.” and “Underground R. R. Reminiscences [May 28, 1898],” *Friends’ Intelligencer*, May 28, 1898.

¹⁵⁴ “Lynch Law in Maryland,” *Liberator*, July 8, 1858. See also “[Bowers],” *Easton Gazette*, July 3, 1858.

¹⁵⁵ “Suspicious,” *The Public Monitor*, July 8, 1858.

¹⁵⁶ “Capture [August 7, 1858],” *Cecil Whig*, August 7, 1858. See “Garrett to William Still, August 21, 1858.” in McGowan, *Station Master*, 101–2; and Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 497.

¹⁵⁷ “Captured.” “Letter, Thomas Garrett to William Still, August 21, 1858.” See McGowan, *Station Master*, 101–2; and Still, *The Underground Railroad*, 497; “Negroes Captured,” *Easton Gazette*, August 7, 1858. “Excitement at Cambridge,” *New York Tribune*, August 7, 1858. See “Escape and Recapture,” *Easton Gazette*, October 16, 1858 1858; and “Trial of Hugh Hazlett,” *Easton Gazette*, November 20, 1858. See also, “Prisoner # 5324 Hugh Hazlett,” in *Maryland Penitentiary Records - Prisoner Records* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1858). Hazlett was pardoned, Dec. 21, 1864, after Maryland outlawed slavery on Nov. 1, 1864.

¹⁵⁸ See Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 145–48.

¹⁵⁹ It might be possible that Hazlett had helped the earlier escapes as well, but as of now there is no definitive documentation to link him to those escapes in October 1857. See biographical information on Reuben Phillips and Jane Cator at Maryland State Archives: <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/051300/051324/html/51324bio.html>

¹⁶⁰ Cheney, “Moses.”

for her family and anti-slavery efforts. In early January 1858, Tubman spent a few days with Frederick Douglass and his wife Anna Murray at their home in Rochester. Tubman had “been spending a short time with us since the holidays,” Douglass wrote the Ladies’ Irish Anti-Slavery Association. Hoping to solicit more funds to help with the Underground Railroad operations in Rochester, Douglass told them Tubman “escaped from Slavery some eight years ago, has made several returns at great risk, and has brought out, since obtaining her freedom, fifty others from the house of bondage.”¹⁶¹

After the high numbers of escapes in the fall of 1857, Eastern Shore slaveholders felt besieged. “The people of Dorchester, and the adjoining counties, have, for several years past, been greatly annoyed and injured by the free negroes who infest those counties, and who are, undoubtedly, the agents of the ‘negro worshipers’ of the North,” the *Annapolis Gazette* reported in March, 1858. The following September, an exaggerated claim of “Slave Stampedes” pushed white residents to hold meetings to “devise if possible a remedy.” Eastern Shore slaveholders blamed Thomas Garrett, “one of these slave stealers,” who, they claimed, “showed his books to the society which employed him that he had run off to the free states 2,050 slaves. Funds in abundance are furnished by Northern and English fanaticism for this purpose.”¹⁶²

Throughout the fall and into the first half of 1859, a series of “slaveholders’ conventions” drafted resolutions demanding the state legislature enact laws limiting the rights of free blacks. For some slaveholders, only selling free people back into slavery would satisfy them. Free blacks, they argued, were “very efficient agents of abolitionists.” Dorchester County slaveholders claimed they had “suffered more than any other from the influences of Abolitionism and free Negroism in our midst.”¹⁶³

On the national level, tensions between slaveholding interests and abolitionists intensified during the late 1850s, bringing the nation closer to sectional conflict. It reached crisis stage when John Brown, a zealous and militant freedom fighter and anti-slavery activist who hoped to attack southern states and liberate enslaved people. Douglass may have been the initial connection between Tubman and John Brown; their immediate respect and admiration for each other fortified their beliefs in the inevitability of armed conflict to end slavery. She helped Brown plan his failed attack on Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, in 1859. In fact, she had recruited several freedom seekers from Dorchester County,

¹⁶¹ Philip S. Foner, ed. *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999). 600–1.

¹⁶² “Free Negroes,” *Annapolis Gazette*, March 18, 1858.

¹⁶³ See *Annapolis Gazette* issues November 11, 1858; January 6, 1859; June 2, 1859; June 9, 1859.

including Thomas Elliott, Denard Hughes, Peter Pennington, Joe Bailey and his brother Bill, among others.¹⁶⁴

While Brown planned his raid for the fall of 1859, Tubman was busy working, giving lectures, and raising money in central New York and New England to support her family. Her parents found living in St. Catharines too cold, and with Tubman gone so often their care fell to their sons, who had growing families and financial burdens of their own. Tubman needed more help caring for them. In May, William Henry Seward, then a U.S. Senator from New York, sold Tubman a seven-acre farm and farmhouse on the outskirts of Auburn for \$1,200. Tubman put \$25 down and contracted to make quarterly payments of \$10 with interest.¹⁶⁵ Property ownership by women was uncommon. Tubman's "fugitive" status added legal complexity to the transaction. She was not a citizen, either; the Dred Scott decision, handed down by the Supreme Court in 1857 denied African Americans citizenship rights. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 also placed Seward in a legal quagmire; selling the property to a known fugitive could have triggered Seward's arrest for aiding and sheltering Tubman and her family and friends.

¹⁶⁴ "Letter, John Brown [Ingersoll] to William H. Day [St. Catharines], April 16, 1858," in *John Brown/Boyd B. Stutler Collection*, ed. Boyd B. Stutler (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Division of Culture and History/West Virginia Memory Project); and "Letter, William H. Day [St. Catharines] to John Brown, April 17, 1858," in *Speak out in Thunder Tones: Letters and Other Writings of Black Northerners, 1787–1865*, ed. Dorothy Sterling (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973). 274.

¹⁶⁵ William H. Seward, "Microfilm Reels 192–193," in *Seward Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard University). See also Rebecca Green, "History of Harriet Tubman and Her Brick House," (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1998).



Figure 7.40. Revolutionary John Brown circa 1859. Brown deeply admired Tubman. She believed he was one of the greatest white men who ever lived because he was willing to die for her freedom. Library of Congress.

After Brown's raid failed and the authorities arrested him, they discovered papers among his belongings revealing Tubman's participation in his plans. Abolitionists in New York helped hurry Tubman and her family back to Canada for their own protection.¹⁶⁶ Tubman did not follow Brown to Virginia before the raid, even though he expected her. She may have been in Maryland. After the raid newspapers reported that Brown had secretly conducted reconnaissance in southern Talbot County "dressed as a woman," recruiting free and enslaved African Americans for his insurrection. Brown did not recruit on the Eastern Shore, but if the newspapers are correct, someone was stirring up interest in the black community.¹⁶⁷ It could have been Tubman on another rescue mission. Two nephews and a niece, John and Moses Ross, and their sister Harriet, the children of her brother John Stewart (née Robert Ross), were living with their mother Mary Manokey on a plantation in

¹⁶⁶ Franklin B. Sanborn, "Letter, Franklin Sanborn to Friend, December 20, 1859," in *Anti-Slavery Collection* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1859). See also Seward, "Papers"; and Green, "Tubman Home."

¹⁶⁷ Dickson J. Preston, *Talbot County: A History* (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1983), 205.

Trappe in Talbot County belonging to Dr. Anthony Thompson's daughter, Sarah Thompson Haddaway.

Brown's attack lit a spark that burned brighter each day, prompting intense calls by southerners for session, and Tubman and her abolitionist allies prepared for war. Despite intensified danger on the Eastern Shore, Tubman made a final attempt to rescue her sister Rachel and Rachel's two children in November 1860.¹⁶⁸ Sadly, Rachel died during the prior year. Eliza Ann Brodess also died, in March 1859, leaving her estate in disarray and creditors demanding payment for debts still unpaid from Edward Brodess's probated estate. Ordered by the court to liquidate the estate's assets immediately, Brodess's sons, John, Charles, and Benjamin appealed to "except Negroes, staves, and square timber" from the public sale. The Court agreed.¹⁶⁹ When Tubman arrived in Dorchester, she discovered that Rachel was dead, and that she needed thirty dollars to bribe someone to bring Ben and Angerine to her.¹⁷⁰ The Brodess sons may have leased thirteen-year-old Angerine and eleven-year-old Ben to another household at the time or were closely watched on the Brodess farm. Old enough to be valuable labor, the children could hire out for cash, food, and clothing, easing the financially strained Brodess family.¹⁷¹

Stephen and Maria Ennals, and their three children, Harriet, Amanda, and a three-month-old infant were ready to go, however, so Tubman set out with them instead. Stephen was enslaved by either James Craig, from Madison, or John E. Cator, from the Parson's Creek District.¹⁷² Maria and her children were enslaved by Algernon Percy, of Vienna.¹⁷³ Maria "hired her time," living and working eight miles from her husband.¹⁷⁴ Another man, John Wesley Cornish Reed from Church Creek, accompanied the group, too.¹⁷⁵

The Underground network had disintegrated considerably on the Eastern Shore due to increased vigilance on the part of the slaveholders and local authorities since the great numbers of escapes in the fall of 1857. It is unknown if Jacob Jackson continued to aid Tubman's rescue missions. Despite vigilant efforts to rout out Underground Railroad agents in the county, Jacob Jackson survived scrutiny and avoided arrest and incarceration.

¹⁶⁸ Cheney, "Moses"; and Court, *Chattel Records*.

¹⁶⁹ Dorchester County Registrar of Wills. Estate of Edward Brodess, #0-482, and Estate of Eliza A. Brodess, #0-483.

¹⁷⁰ Cheney, "Moses."

¹⁷¹ Dorchester County Registrar of Wills. Estate of Edward Brodess, #0-482, and Estate of Eliza A. Brodess, #0-483.

¹⁷² Still, *Underground Railroad*, 555. Still identified Stephen's enslaver as "John Kaiger," and Maria and the children's as "Algier Pearcey." See also "Assessment 1852–1864." See District 4, for the various Cator families; and see also, Will of Thomas E. Cator, Leslie and Neil Keddie, *Dorchester County, Maryland Wills Liber T.H.H. I: September 1854–February 1857, Folios 340-448* (Salisbury, MD: Family Tree Bookshops, 2002), 26.

¹⁷³ Still, *Underground Railroad*, 555. See also, Elaine McGill, *Robert Bell's Book of Slave Statistics 1864–1868*, ed. transcriber (Privately Printed, 2001).

¹⁷⁴ Bradford, *Harriet*, 1886, 54–55.

¹⁷⁵ There are few details about Reed's escape and life. He settled in Auburn, New York. He died there and his obituary and probate records reveal he fled with Tubman.

But Tubman struggled to secure hiding places and transportation for the Ennalls family. In time, however, other supporters passed them on, with great difficulty, to Wilmington.¹⁷⁶ They arrived in Auburn, New York, just after Christmas, when Martha Coffin Wright and her family helped shelter and care for them all. Sadly, Angerine and Ben remained enslaved in Dorchester County.¹⁷⁷

Marveling at Tubman's continued success, Garrett wrote to William Still that Tubman "seems to have had a special angel to guard her on her journey of mercy."¹⁷⁸ She also had a powerful and resourceful underground network working with her, securing her prominence as one of the most successful Underground Railroad agents of all time.



Figure 7.41. Harriet Tubman, circa 1871. Library of Congress.

¹⁷⁶ Bradford, *Harriet*, 1886, 56.

¹⁷⁷ Martha Coffin Wright, "Letter, Martha Coffin Wright to Ellen Wright Garrison, December 30, 1860," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1860).

¹⁷⁸ Still, *Underground Railroad*, 555. McGowan, *Station Master*, 108.

Summary

Tubman spent eleven years of her freedom risking her life to rescue family and friends from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The effects of growing sectional divisions manifested in changing legal, personal, economic, and social relationships as the slave power tried to control slavery and persistent efforts by self-liberators to escape to freedom. The personal networks and individual strategies employed by Tubman and others through the region's Underground Railroad, and slaveholders' reactions to abolitionist threats to the dismantling of slavery destabilized communities on the Eastern Shore during the 1850s. As the decade wore on, Tubman's trips become more dangerous and riskier. Unable to rescue her sister and children, Tubman ended her decade of liberation with a final rescue—the flight of the Ennalls family from Dorchester County to Central New York in December 1860.

PART THREE

Civil War, Emancipation, and Post Tubman History

CHAPTER 8

1861–1864

Introduction

During the Civil War, Maryland remained in the Union, allowing it to maintain the institution of slavery even after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The efforts and actions of abolitionists, free blacks, and the enslaved during the war, including the recruitment and enlistment of northern free black men, free and enslaved men in Maryland and other border states, and their families challenged the social, political, and economic landscapes on the Eastern Shore. The participation of black soldiers influenced the perceptions of the war as a war on slavery and a battle for freedom. Pro-Confederate sentiments in Maryland tested the strength and resilience of free people, while threatening the livelihoods, social status, and political power of slaveholders. After Maryland declared Emancipation for all enslaved people on October 31, 1864, slaveholders rushed courthouses to indenture the children of their formerly enslaved people. This tactic tied the labor of the children's parents to their former enslavers and frustrated black family efforts to achieve true freedom and autonomy.

.....

When the Civil War began in April 1861, and bullets exchanged at Fort Sumter, the federal garrison located in Charleston, South Carolina's harbor on the 14th, Maryland sat uneasily on the borderline between the newly created Confederate States and the United States of America to the North. President Lincoln was determined to prevent the state from joining the Confederacy, which would have left Washington, DC and the capital of the United States wholly behind enemy lines. Sentiment in Maryland slightly favored secession—especially on the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland, though many white Marylanders hoped to remain neutral. On April 19, angry Baltimoreans attacked the 6th Massachusetts regiment marching along Pratt Street, leaving four soldiers and twelve Marylanders dead.¹ Additional Union troops protecting rail lines and major thoroughfares through the state fueled intensifying pressure from pro-union factions and Lincoln's allies in Washington. Together, they compelled Maryland's legislature to vote in favor of staying in the Union. Union troops, under the

¹ Brugger, *Maryland*, 274–81.

command of General Benjamin Butler, occupied Baltimore for the rest of the summer and into the fall; other cities and towns saw Union rule, too.²



Figure 8.1. Troops from the 6th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment firing into an unruly mob of southern sympathizers blocking Pratt Street and their progress toward the train station nearby. Library of Congress.

Maryland's smaller enslaved population and slaveholding class, and a much larger free black population differentiated it from its Confederate neighbors, especially Virginia. Between 1850 and 1860, Maryland's enslaved population had fallen four percent, the same decline observed in Dorchester County. The free black population spiked twelve percent in the state, but in Dorchester it jumped almost twenty-five percent. Fears of insurrection and collusion between free and enslaved people dominated correspondence between Governor Thomas H. Hicks and Union General Butler that spring and summer.³ Freedom seekers took advantage of the turmoil in communities while white Marylanders weighed their loyalty to the United States or to defenders of slavery and secession to their west and south.

² James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 284–88. See also, Fields, *Slavery*, 92–100.

³ War Department. Records and Pension Office United States, War Records Office, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series 1, Vol. 2.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), 593–95.

Southern Maryland witnessed the highest numbers of escapes. Union encampments around Washington, D.C. offered some protection to escaping bonds people; frustrated Marylanders went to the camps and demanded the return of their enslaved property. Some Union generals opened their camps to “slave hunting” enslavers looking for their fugitive people after they swore allegiance to the Union. While General Hooker facilitated the return of freedom seeking enslaved people, General Sickles protected them and denied enslavers entry to his camps.⁴ But slaveholders’ demands often fell on deaf ears, even among captains and lieutenants under Hooker’s command. Local slaveholders who came into the camps looking for their runaway property repulsed some of these Union officers and soldiers stationed in the region. After witnessing brutal whippings, beatings, and even killings of enslaved people by their angry enslavers many soldiers and their officers made it an unspoken policy to protect and hide self-liberators, creating even more tension with an already resentful white community but offering hope for the enslaved.⁵

⁴ “The Washington Republican says, 97 contrabands arrived.” *The Liberator*, April 11, 1862.

⁵ “Slave-Hunters,” *Christian Advocate and Journal*, December 26, 1861; “Whipped to Death,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Feb. 8, 1862; “Progress,” *The Independent*, April 3, 1862; “Mr. Cox and the Slave Who was Whipped to Death,” *Liberator*, April 4, 1862.

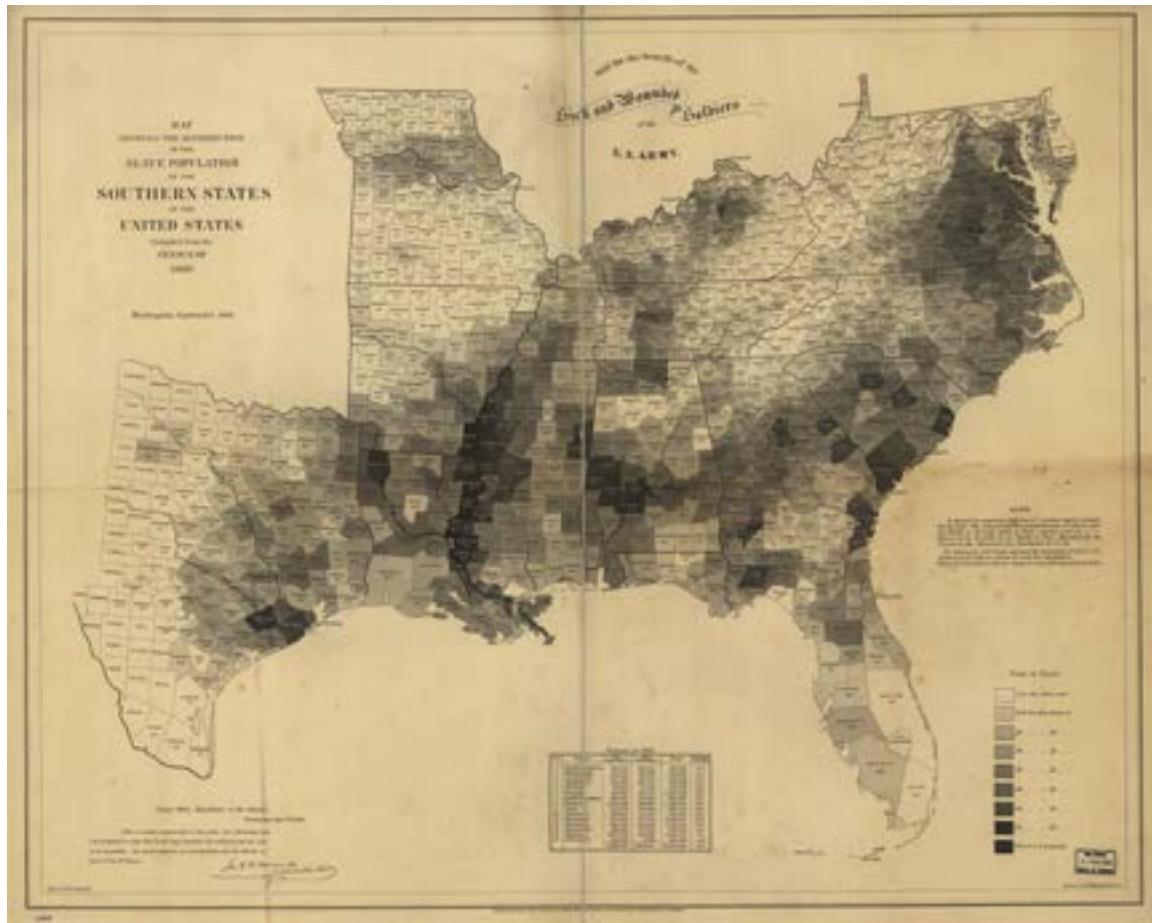


Figure 8.2. Map showing the distribution of 4 million enslaved people in the South in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War.
Library of Congress.

After losing the Battle of Bull Run in Missouri in July 1861, and several skirmishes and battles during the following weeks, John C. Fremont, commander of the Department of the West under Lincoln, unilaterally declared all enslaved people in Missouri free and the confiscation of Confederate property. Lincoln reprimanded Fremont, ordering him to rescind his emancipation proclamation and only act on confiscating rebel property. On August 6, Congress had already passed the First Confiscation Act, which had authorized the capture of Confederate property specifically used in the war effort against the United States.⁶ Meanwhile, during the summer of 1861, General Butler had already determined that enslaved people who sought protection in camps under his control in Maryland and Virginia would be classified as “contrabands of war” in a broad interpretation of the Confiscation Act and other war resolutions allowing for the confiscation of rebel property.⁷ This put Lincoln in a bind. Slavery remained a social, economic and legal fixture of

⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 350–53.

⁷ Ibid. 354–55. See also Ira Berlin, et al., ed. *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation 1861–1867*, vol. Series I, Vol. 1, The Destruction of Slavery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). 70–75.

Maryland's human and political landscape in exchange for the state's support of the Union. Lincoln and his administration were not ready to make the war about emancipation just yet; they wanted Southern states to return to the Union, so abolishing slavery was tabled for a later date.⁸ Butler's directive and Fremont's proclamation were further enhanced by an edit from General David Hunter, who during the winter and spring of 1862 controlled some of the islands and coastal regions in South Carolina and Georgia, declaring the abolition of slavery in areas under his command. Though the confiscation of rebel property remained a policy, emancipation was not. Lincoln reprimanded Hunter, but by the summer of 1862, Congress enacted new guidelines, urged by other Union commanders in Southern occupied territory, under the Second Confiscation Act, which reiterated the policy of "confiscating" property of "traitors," but specified enslaved people as "captives of war and shall be forever free." Union officers like Butler and Hunter could now more eagerly resist the return of captured or self-liberated bonds people.⁹ This new policy encountered particular problems for loyal Maryland slaveholders whose enslaved people ran to Union encampments throughout the state and Washington, DC. But the increased resistance to return freedom seekers from Union officers and their men served to further dismantle a dying institution in the state. Slavery would eventually collapse, but in the meantime, Maryland slaveholders kept their enslaved property.¹⁰

But life in the camps could be dangerous, Union soldiers and officers exploited the labor of self-emancipated and newly freed contraband. Black men and women were routinely overworked and abused, tasked with digging ditches, latrines, waiting on Union officers and soldiers for little pay and much disrespect. Working as domestics brought women and children in close contact with Union officers and soldiers and put them at risk of sexual and physical abuse. As camps became more crowded, lack of shelter, food, clothing, and medical care contributed to starvation, disease, and death. Discrimination and racism defined the fragile freedom they clung to.¹¹

Once Unionists in Maryland secured the state's commitment to Lincoln and staying in the United States, the Union Army quickly formed regiments in every district of the state. On the Eastern Shore, Governor Hicks was particularly concerned about the strong support for the Confederacy surfacing there. He asked the federal government for more assistance, including arms and supplies to raise more regiments and to root out the "secessionists that are now passing in great numbers through to the Eastern Shore of Virginia,"

⁸ McPherson, *Battle Cry*. 496–500.

⁹ Berlin, *Destruction of Slavery*. P. 22–23; see also McPherson, *Battle Cry*. 497–501.

¹⁰ *Battle Cry*. 354–55, and 494–500.

¹¹ For an excellent examination on the life in the contraband camps, see Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018). See also, especially Chapter 2 in Stephanie McCurry, *Women's War; Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019).

where they were joining Confederate regiments.¹² Western and southern Maryland saw a significant number of defections across the Potomac to Virginia, too.¹³ In all, perhaps five thousand Maryland men joined Confederate regiments.¹⁴ Dr. Anthony Thompson's nephew, Absalom C.C. Thompson, joined Co. I of the 3rd Georgia Infantry as a surgeon, for instance.¹⁵ Numerous Dorchester families secretly supported the Confederacy by providing supplies and other contraband, like Thomas R. Stewart, brother of Congressman James A. Stewart of Madison and Cambridge.¹⁶

After the Union Navy captured several forts in the Hilton Head district on the southeastern coast of South Carolina in early November 1861, Union forces established a strategic military zone from which to launch raids throughout the region.¹⁷ Soon, thousands of enslaved people fled surrounding plantations, seeking protection under the United States flag. While able-bodied men worked for the army in supporting roles, loading and unloading vessels, digging trenches, carrying equipment, and more, the War Department felt overwhelmed by the numbers of children and women needing shelter, food, clothing, and education.¹⁸ Appeals to northern churches and antislavery and relief societies brought tons of clothing, books, and thousands of dollars in cash and hundreds of volunteers.¹⁹

Boston, New York, and Philadelphia abolitionists set up educational and relief associations within weeks of each other in the early months of 1862, organizing waves of volunteers shipping off to Washington, DC, and South Carolina to begin relief work.²⁰

¹² War Department. Records and Pension Office United States, War Records Office., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series 3, Vol. 1.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899), 480–82. In September 1861, Thomas R. Stewart, brother of James A. Stewart, was arrested on suspicion of carrying supplies to rebels in Virginia. See Naval War Records Department. Office of Naval Records and Library United States, *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. Series 1, Vol. 4* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 650–52.

¹³ Letter, J. H. Bayne to General McClellan, March 12, 1862, citing a letter from F.A. Medley, January 21, 1862. “Records of Asst. Commissioner for the State of S.C. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1870” p. 1

¹⁴ Brugger, Maryland, 285.

¹⁵ See www.fold3.com.

¹⁶ See United States, Naval War Records, 650–52. See also Jones, *The History of Dorchester County, Maryland*, 258–63.

¹⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 370–71.

¹⁸ Noah Andre Trudeau, *Like Men of War: Black Troops in the Civil War, 1862–1865* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), 12.

¹⁹ For a study of this period of occupation of the Sea Islands and Port Royal, and efforts to educate, feed, and clothe newly liberated slaves, and rebuild the area's farming operations, see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*, rpt. 1964 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999).

²⁰ See *ibid.*, 35–44; Thomas O'Connor, *Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 110–15; James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), 158–64; and Luther P. Jackson, “The Educational Efforts of the Freedmen’s Bureau and Freedmen’s Aid Societies in South Carolina, 1862–1872,” *Journal of Negro History* Vol. 8, no. 1 (1923). Bostonians established the Boston Educational Commission, which soon became the New England Freedmen’s Aid Society; New Yorkers established the New York National Freedmen’s Relief Association; and Philadelphians created the Port Royal Relief Committee, later known as the Pennsylvania Freedmen’s Relief Association. *Ibid.*, 6.

Tubman, irritated by Lincoln's position regarding contrabands and his reluctance to abolish slavery outright, determined she too would go south and continue her battle against slavery.²¹ Massachusetts Governor John Andrew arranged passage for her to sail to Beaufort, South Carolina, headquarters for the Department of the South at Port Royal during the spring of 1862.²²



Figure 8.3. Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts.
He admired Tubman and supported her trip to Beaufort,
South Carolina to help in the relief efforts and offer her
skills to the Union Army. Massachusetts Historical Society.

Sometime before May when she set sail for South Carolina, Tubman brought a young girl named Margaret Stewart to live with Lazette Worden, William H. Seward's sister-in-law, and Frances Miller, Seward's sister, in the Seward home in Auburn, New York. The exact relationship between Margaret and Tubman has long puzzled family and historians. Margaret's daughter, Alice Lucas Brickler, recalled many years later that her mother was "Aunt Harriet's favorite niece," a description that was confirmed by another

²¹ Sanborn, "Harriet Tubman [July 17]." See also Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 85. Ednah Dow Cheney wrote that once the "war broke out, Harriet was very anxious to go to South Carolina to assist the contrabands." Cheney, "Moses," 37–38.

²² Conrad, "Tatlock Interview." Tatlock said: "During the war she had been opposed to some of the things Lincoln did; she had been prejudiced against him at first." See also, Rosa Belle Holt, "A Heroine in Ebony," *The Chautauquan*, July 1896, 462.

close friend of Tubman's, Florence Carter.²³ "My Mother's life," Brickler wrote, "really began with Aunt Harriet kidnapping her from her home on the Eastern Shore of Maryland when she was a little girl about eight or nine years old."²⁴ According to Brickler, Margaret had never been enslaved; her mother and brothers were free, and her father was one of Harriet's brothers, she believed, who had once been enslaved. Margaret's memories of her Maryland home were vague but recalled that the family owned "a slick pair of chestnut horses and a shiny carriage in which they rode to church." Margaret remembered Tubman visiting her family's home sometime before the war and taking her away to Auburn. She recalled sailing on a "steamer," which impressed Margaret "so greatly that she forgot to weep over her separation from her twin brother, her mother & the shiny carriage she liked so much."²⁵ Margaret's daughter, Alice, later believed that Tubman kidnapped Margaret, and had "violated her brother's home & sorrow & anger were there."²⁶

That Tubman would kidnap a child from her loving, free family in Maryland does not fit what we know about her. Margaret Stewart was born Margaret Woolford between 1852 and 1854 at Poplar Neck in Caroline County to Isaac and Mary Woolford. Isaac, born to unknown parents around 1825, was living with Peter Simpson Jr., a free black neighbor of Ben and Rit Ross, when Tubman escaped in 1849.²⁷ Mary may have been the young woman in the Ross household in whom Tubman tried to disclose her escape plans. In 1860, Isaac and Mary were living in Poplar Neck with Margaret, her twin brother James, three-year-old Moses, and one-year-old Sarah.²⁸ Sometime between September 1860 when the census recorded the family, and before May 1862, Tubman took Margaret. More than two decades later, while living in Auburn with her husband Henry Lucas and their children, Margaret posted an advertisement in the *Christian Recorder*, requesting information about her father, "Isaac Woolford...raised in Poplar Neck," and her "youngest brother" Moses whom she believed had been left with an "old lady in Caroline County."²⁹ She suspected that her father had joined the Union Army. She was right. In September 1863, Woolford signed with the 29th United States Colored Infantry, Company I. A member of the

²³ Alice Brickler, "Letter, Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, July 19, 1939," in *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, 1939). For Carter's comments, see Earl Conrad, *General Harriet Tubman*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1990), 230n13. "Mrs. Florence Carter, a close friend of Harriet Tubman in the closing period of Harriet's life, in a statement to the author, has verified the fact that the "kidnapped" child remained throughout life a favorite of Harriet Tubman." Margaret Stewart married Henry Lucas in 1872 at the Central Presbyterian Church in Auburn.

²⁴ Alice Brickler, "Letter, Alice Lucas Brickler to Earl Conrad, August 14, 1939," in *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, 1939).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Census, "United States Federal Census, 1850."

²⁸ "United States Federal Census, 1860."

²⁹ Maggie Lucas, "Information Wanted Ads," in *The Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia, PA: Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery, 1885).

Ambulance Corps, he died in Texas during the summer of 1865, a fact unknown to Margaret in 1885.³⁰ Moses lived with eighty-year-old neighbor Gracie Friend in her son Harrison's household in Poplar Neck.³¹ Mary, Sarah, and James must have died, for no records have been found documenting their existence since 1860.



Figure 8.4. Tubman brought Margaret Stewart Lucas north sometime before 1862. Margaret, then about nine years old, believed Tubman kidnapped her from her free family in Maryland. Here is Margaret as an adult with her daughter Alice circa 1900, Auburn, New York.

After changing Margaret's surname to Stewart and leaving her with the Sewards, Tubman sailed for South Carolina. Tubman struggled, too, though she had many supporters and connections who heeded her requests for assistance. The needs of newly freed people and Union soldiers were so great at the time of her arrival that spring that she immediately set about doing anything and everything she could.³² Much of the early Union military, government and philanthropic efforts in Port Royal and Hilton Head area on the coast of South Carolina targeted the dismantling of the plantation slave labor system by

³⁰ See Civil War United States Colored Troop records, <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/265414388>.

³¹ Bureau of the Census, “United States Federal Census, (1870).”

³² Tubman probably arrived just after Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Sherman was joined by Maj. Gen. David Hunter, placing her there by late March 1862. See Rose, *Rehearsal*, 144–45.

replacing it with a wage-based system, a sometimes complicated and difficult task given the hundreds of years of forced labor that had denied education and economic opportunity to thousands of Sea Island enslaved people. The “Port Royal Experiment” sought to engage them in a new world of a free, capitalist economy.³³

“I first took charge of the Christian Commission house at Beaufort,” Tubman later explained to an interviewer, which had been set up by the YMCA to distribute supplies of clothing, food, books, and other items to freedmen and Union soldiers alike.³⁴ Tubman established a laundry and kitchen with \$200 she received from the government, where she taught newly freed women to do washing, sewing, and baking for the Union soldiers for wages.³⁵ At first, Tubman drew rations like other soldiers, but she gave them up because of the tension it created among the freedmen who perceived her as receiving preferential treatment.³⁶ She purchased supplies in Beaufort and at Hilton Head, which she either re-sold or used to bake pies and make root beer that she then sold to the soldiers and officers. She put away a little money to send to her parents, then settled in Auburn, New York.³⁷

Tubman also provided nursing care. Tubman’s skill curing soldiers stricken by a variety of diseases became legendary.³⁸ In Fernandina, Florida, the Union surgeon sought Tubman’s help treating men with dysentery. “They was dying off like sheep,” she later told a friend. She prepared a medicinal brew “from roots which grew near the water which gave the disease.”³⁹ Recipes concocted from local plant material, likely passed from her mother and others in Maryland, saved lives. Tubman recalled that she “made a tea for the doctor and the disease stopped on him.” He told her to “give it to de soldiers...So I boiled up a great boiler of roots and herbs, and the General told a man to take two cans and go

³³ Ibid., xiv.

³⁴ Emma P. Telford, “Harriet: The Modern Moses of Heroism and Visions” (Auburn, NY: Cayuga County Museum, 1905), 16.

³⁵ Charles P. Wood, “Manuscript History Concerning the Pension Claim of Harriet Tubman,” in *HR 55A-D1 Papers Accompanying the Claim of Harriet Tubman* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1868). See also, Cheney, “Moses.” Suzie King Taylor, a former slave who worked in the Union camps at Hilton Head and the First South Carolina Volunteers, a black regiment led by Thomas W. Higginson, wrote that the black soldiers’ wives, local to the area, “were obliged to support themselves and children by washing for the officers of the gunboats and the soldiers, and making cakes and pies which they sold to the boys in camp.” See Susie King Taylor, *A Black Woman’s Civil War Memoirs: Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops, Late 1st South Carolina Volunteers*, ed. Patricia W. Romero, ed., 1988 rpt. (Princeton, N.J.: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1902), 42.

³⁶ Wood, “Tubman History.”

³⁷ Ibid. See also, Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 37–38. Later, Tubman would lose some of the money she earned when it was stolen from her. See George Garrison, “Letter, George Garrison to William Lloyd Garrison II, February 10, 1864,” in Garrison Family Papers (Northampton, Massachusetts: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1864). See also, Tubman testimony, Benjamin Guterman, “Doing ‘Good Brave Work’: Harriet Tubman’s Testimony at Beaufort, South Carolina,” Prologue 42, no. 3 (2000), 163.

³⁸ See Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*; and Wood, “Tubman History.” See also Gerald Schwartz, ed. *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War: Esther Hill Hawks’ Diary* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 79. Hawks mentions Tubman, as “Moses,” being in the camp at Fernandina at the end of May 1864.

³⁹ Telford, “Harriet,” 16.

round and give it to all in the camp that needed it, and it cured them.”⁴⁰ She also wrapped wounds with cobwebs, and concocted a mixture of moldy bread with whiskey for respiratory ailments.

By the end of July 1862, Lincoln and his cabinet had drafted a resolution to emancipate enslaved people, and by September his administration announced that the Emancipation Proclamation would take effect January 1, 1863. All bondspeople in those states still in rebellion against the United States were to be free.⁴¹ The hope was to punish the Confederates, weakening their control over their enslaved labor and forcing them into submission and capitulation. Union officers already knew the value of black labor they impressed into service as “teamsters, hospital attendants, company cooks, and so forth...” Denying that labor to the Confederate Army ensure its demise, they believed. Some Union leaders disagreed with the proclamation, arguing that it was wrong to confiscate (and liberate) citizens property. But Lincoln had become convinced that abolition of slavery was the only path forward. Border states like Maryland that remained loyal—Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri—and Tennessee (held by Union forces starting in 1862) and occupied areas of Virginia and Louisiana, would see no change in the status of slavery. The loss of border state Union support would have been devastating to the war effort, and Lincoln understood that. Despite the status quo in Maryland and those other border and occupied regions, a clear shift in the Lincoln administration’s views transformed the landscape for freedom everywhere.⁴² The Proclamation also officially authorized the enlistment of African American men into segregated United States Colored Troop [USCT] units.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid. See also “Mrs. Harriet Tubman, the Colored Nurse and Scout - the Bridge Street African M.E. Church Last Evening,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 23, 1865.

⁴¹ Rose, *Rehearsal*, 185. See also, Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 17–19; and

⁴² See also, McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 502–5, 557–58. See also McPherson, *Struggle*, 111, 117–18.

⁴³ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 18–19.

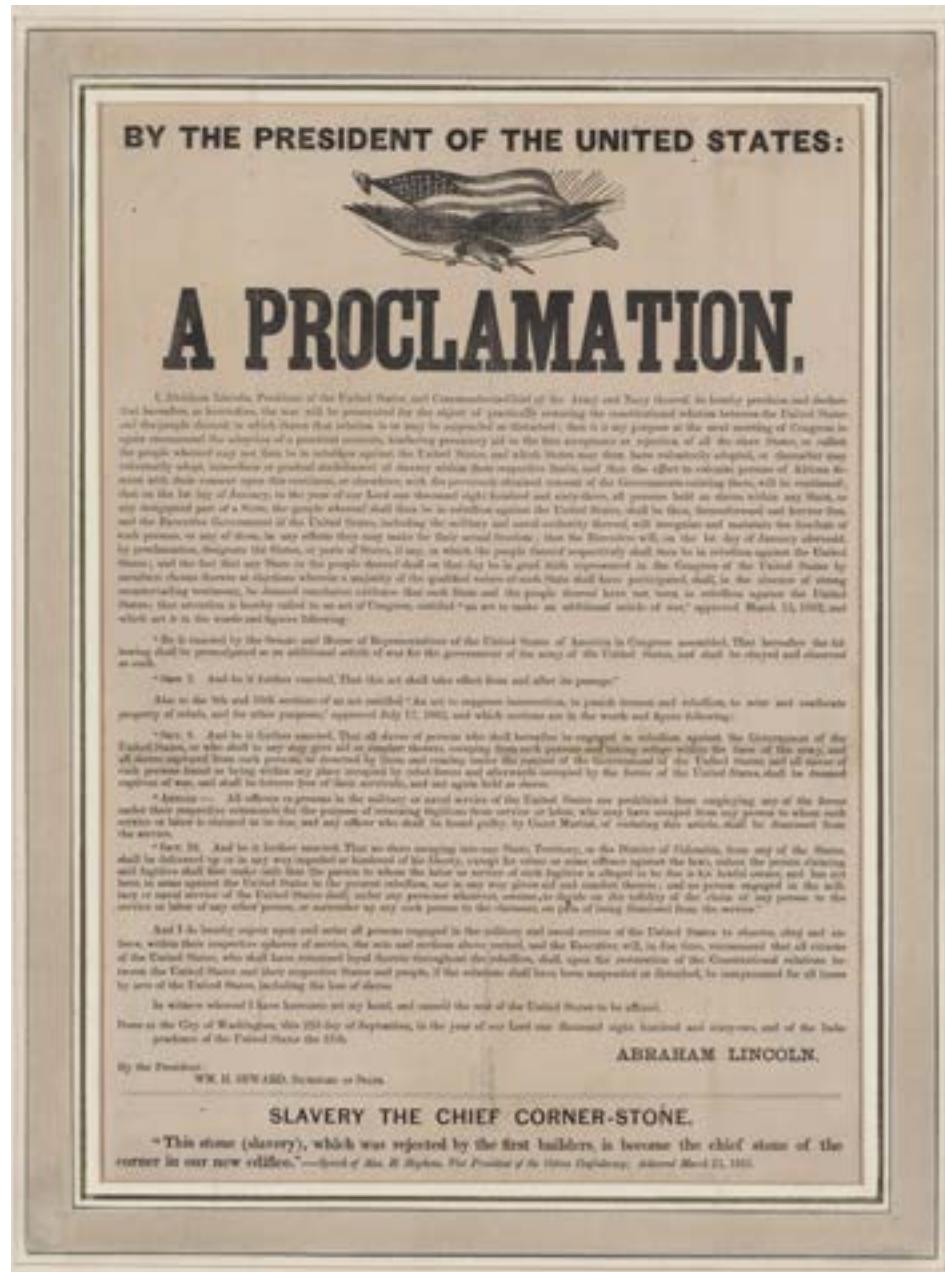


Figure 8.5. The Emancipation Proclamation set enslaved people free in the Confederate States only.
Library of Congress.

Tubman's battles to claim liberty for friends and relatives forged a strategic, political, and military consciousness that prepared her for a role on the battlefields. Those leadership skills, honed on the escape missions and her skillful networking that earned her the name "Moses" secured her reputation as a brilliant strategist, winning her many admirers and securing her unfettered access to Union officers and their camps.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* for a fuller description of Tubman's Civil War exploits.

Deeply admired by Union officers who either knew her from New England or had heard of her skills through allies, Tubman's military service expanded to include spying and scouting behind Confederate lines. She skillfully navigated the landscapes of the region, bringing her in contact with local enslaved people who secretly relayed strategic intelligence about enemy movements and plans.



Figure 8.6. Harriet Tubman in her Civil War uniform—haversack, Union Great Coat, and sniper's rifle. National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian.

In early June 1863, she became the first woman to command an armed military raid when she guided Colonel James Montgomery and his 2nd South Carolina Colored Volunteers regiment up the Combahee River, routing out Confederate outposts, destroying stockpiles of cotton, rice, food and weapons, and liberating over 750 people.⁴⁵ Tubman later followed Montgomery into Georgia and Florida as a spy, nurse, and domestic laborer.

⁴⁵ “Colonel Montgomery’s Raid - the Rescued Black Chattels - a ‘Black She ‘Moses’ - Her Wonderful Daring and Sagacity - the Black Regiments - Col. Higginson’s Mistakes - Arrival of the 54th Massachusetts, &C., &C.,” *The Wisconsin State Journal*, June 20, 1863.

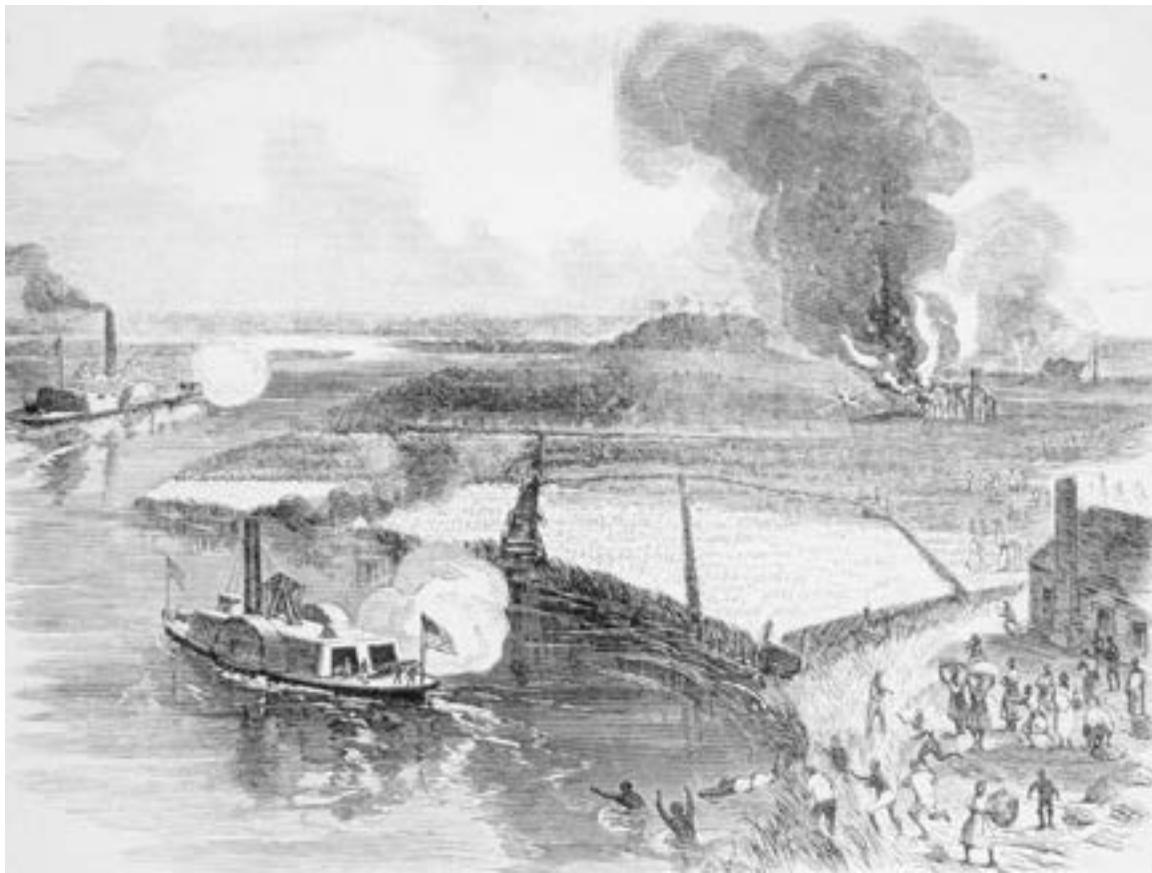


Figure 8.7. Artist rendering of the Combahee River raid, conducted under Harriet Tubman's leadership, June 1863.
National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian.

Tubman claimed she served Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, of the famed Massachusetts 54th, his last meal before the assault on Fort Wagner that claimed his life.⁴⁶ Frederick Douglass's two sons, Lewis and Charles, were members of the 54th, and Tubman knew both young men.⁴⁷ Tubman's description of that fateful day is chilling: "And then we saw the lightning, and that was the guns; and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling, and that was the drops of blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was the dead that we reaped."⁴⁸ Union losses were

⁴⁶ Robert W. Taylor, *Harriet Tubman: The Heroine in Ebony* (Boston: George E. Ellis, Printer, 1901), 13. See also Earl Conrad, "Research Correspondence," in *Earl Conrad/ Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library). Letter, Hildegard Hoyt Swift to Earl Conrad, September 8, 1939. "She always stoutly maintained that she fed Col. Shaw his last meal etc. and that she was present at this time [of the battle]."

⁴⁷ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 72; Russell Duncan, *Where Death and Glory Meet: Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 66. See Lewis Douglass correspondence from the war in Celeste-Marie Bernier, Andrew Taylor, and Frederick Douglass, *If I Survive: Frederick Douglass and Family in the Walter O. Evans Collection: A 200 Year Anniversary* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 129, 134.

⁴⁸ Albert Bushnell Hart, *Slavery and Abolition, 1831–1841*, Vol. 16: *The American Nation: A History* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1906), 209.

horrific: 1,515 dead, wounded, missing or captured, compared to only 174 Confederate casualties. The Massachusetts 54th was particularly hard hit: 256 casualties, many of them missing and presumed dead.⁴⁹



Figure 8.8. Depiction of the Battle of Fort Wagner. Tubman witnessed the combat and nursed the wounded and dying.
Library of Congress.

Charles A. Smith, a member of the 54th Massachusetts, recalled meeting Tubman when she was assigned by Montgomery to provide nursing and comfort to the wounded and dying soldiers felled during the Wagner assault.⁵⁰ Tubman later recounted the dreadful conditions and the difficult environment in which she had to care for the wounded and sick soldiers:

“I’d go to the hospital, I would, early every morning. I’d get a big chunk of ice, I would, and put it in a basin, and fill it with water; then I’d take a sponge and begin. First man I’d come to, I’d thrash away the flies, and they’d rise, they would, like bees round a hive. Then I’d begin to bathe their wounds, and by the time I’d bathed off three or four, the fire and heat would have melted the ice

⁴⁹ Trudeau, *Like Men of War*, 86.

⁵⁰ “At Church of Zion. Body of Harriet Tubman Davis Will Lie in State,” *Auburn Citizen*, March 12, 1913.

and made the water warm, and it would be as red as clear blood. Then I'd go and get more ice, I would, and by the time I got to the next ones, the flies would be round de first ones, black and thick as ever.”⁵¹

⁵¹ Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 37.

54th

54 12-20-64 01

5

54th Regiment Mass Vols

Killed

Name
 Colonel ~~#~~ Robert G. Shaw
 Captain ~~#~~ William Morris Sampson
 Captain ~~#~~ Cabot Jackson Russell
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ David Reid

Date Action
 July 18 1863 Assault on Ft Wagner
 July 18 1863 do
 July 18 1863 do
 November 1864 Honey Hill S.C.

Wounded

Major ~~#~~ Edward N. Gallouillet
 Captain ~~#~~ Samuel Willard
 Captain ~~#~~ John Wm Appleton
 Captain ~~#~~ George Pope
 Captain ~~#~~ Edward L. Jones
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Faeth Williamson James
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Orin E. Smith
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Richard H. Jewett
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ William H. Thomas
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Charles E. Tucker
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ J. Albert Pratt

July 18 1863 ~~Assault on~~ Fort Wagner
 July 18 1863 do
 July 18 1863 do

Captain ~~#~~ Richard H. Jewett
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Henry W. Littlefield
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Egzekiel G. Tomlinson

July 20 1863 Chester Ha.
 July 20 1863 do
 July 20 1863 do

Lieutenant ~~#~~ Edward B. Emerson
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Charles G. Chapman
 Lieutenant ~~#~~ Charles C. Mallet

November 1864 Honey Hill S.C.
 December 1864 do
 January 1865 do

Reported to A.G.O. Dec 30. 1864
 by Major John W. M. Appleton 54th Mass Vol.
 List of Casualties from the formation of the
 Regiment up date. Commanding Officer

Figure 8.9. List of the casualties of Commissioned Officers from the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment reported to the Massachusetts Surgeon General's Office on December 30, 1864 by Major John WM. Appleton. Included in the report is the death record of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, on July 18, 1863 during the assault on Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina. Massachusetts State Archives.

The fighting in Charleston Harbor continued through to the first week of September. The injured and suffering soldiers continued to overwhelm the hospitals at Beaufort. Tubman probably worked day and night caring for the men, while also trying to support herself by baking and cooking in between shifts at the hospital.⁵² Newly freed women and men, wives of soldiers and officers, and teachers in the freedmen's schools, like Charlotte Forten, from all over the Hilton Head district were asked to serve in the hospitals.⁵³ The employment of African American women as nurses was not officially approved until 1864, though they worked without official status in hospitals and on battlefields since the beginning of the war. Nursing—a new profession—changed battlefield and hospital care dramatically. But male medical professionals resented what they perceived as interference from women in an area they had little or no academic training. Nurses in general endured disrespect from male surgeons and medical staff, but black women experienced virulent racism from both doctors, staff and wounded soldiers.⁵⁴ Tubman may have been treated differently. Her relationships with union officers and Northern abolitionists working in the Hilton Head district may have protected her from some of the treatment other black nurses faced. Nevertheless, she worked extra hours earning money to send back to her family, and since there are no records of monthly pay attributed to her, researchers are left to surmise she was not paid as a nurse before at least 1864 (or as a scout and spy.)

Their service was vital to wounded black soldiers. Black regiments suffered from access to qualified medical personnel—the relatively late organization of black regiments made it difficult to find commissioned medical officers not already attached to white regiments. Medical treatment by incompetent and racist doctors added to the inequities. The high rate of wounded casualties in black regiments—often sent in as front-line defense—created further burdens on overworked medical staff, too. White officers assigned black soldiers to more labor-intensive manual activities—building fortifications, digging ditches and wells, building roads, moving supplies and setting up camps (sometimes for white regiments)—and provided them with fewer hours for rest. The disease rate for norther blacks and whites, unaccustomed to southern heat and infectious bacteria and viruses, wreaked havoc in the Union Army stationed in the Deep South and these soldiers succumbed in great numbers. The inferior treatment, overwork, and poorer health of black soldiers made their susceptibility more chronic and the diseases more deadly.⁵⁵

⁵² Trudeau, *Like Men of War*.

⁵³ Charlotte L. Forten, *A Free Negro in the Slave Era: The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten*, ed. Ray Allen Billington (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 214–18.

⁵⁴ George Worthington Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996, 176–84).

⁵⁵ Richard M. Reid, ed. *Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment: The Civil War Diary of Burt G. Wilder, 55th Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 17–39. The 54th and 55th Massachusetts regiments were the exception to this general state of medical care for black soldiers. The state of Massachusetts supplemented U.S. resources by providing funds for additional medical personnel and equipment. See also Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*, 134–36.

Though civil rights and the ideals of freedom remained contested in the North and in slave states like Maryland, the war presented unique opportunities and adjustments to a changing political and social order. Early recruitment of white men had slowed dramatically by the summer of 1862, so Congress instituted a military draft system to boost enlistment: a new law required each state supply thousands of men for the war effort. A cash bounty system lured thousands of volunteers. Still, enrollment lagged as the war lumbered on and deaths climbed. In the summer of 1863, Congress passed the Enrollment Act as part of a national draft program. The new law allowed a man to pay a \$300 “commutation fee,” exempting him from one draft cycle, or they could hire a substitute to stand in their place in the draft.⁵⁶ In Maryland, recruitment of free black men began in earnest during the summer of 1863, and by the fall, the federal government offered slaveholders three hundred dollars for every enslaved person they enlisted. The government required, however, that the enslaver file manumission papers and swear an oath of allegiance to the United States before it delivered payment. Slaveholders had an advantage over their neighbors lacking enslaved property; they could offer a substitute and receive payment. Resentment in communities on the Eastern Shore escalated between the haves and have-nots, nourishing the refrain “rich man’s war and poor man’s fight.”⁵⁷

Over the duration of the war, more than 200,000 African American men enlisted in the United States Army and Navy. An estimated 9,000 free and enslaved men joined Maryland based USCT regiments. Another thousand joined Delaware USCT units, and untold numbers—including Maryland freedom seekers living in Northern cities and towns and Canada - joined units elsewhere. Maryland regiments included the following: the 4th, 7th, 9th, 19th, 30th, and 39th. Delaware units included the 8th, 22nd, 24th, 25th, and 27th.

⁵⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 492–94, 601–10.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 606; Brugger, *Maryland*, 301–2.



Figure 8.10. Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln, District of Columbia. Many free and formerly enslaved men from Maryland joined this regiment, including several from Dorchester County. Library of Congress.

A recent study conducted by Dr. Clara L. Small and Teresa M. Neild of USCT enlistments from Dorchester County found 563 African American soldiers, of which 181, or thirty-two percent, were free when they signed. The rest received their manumission papers and their enslavers collected between one-hundred and three-hundred dollars, depending on length of service.⁵⁸ Dr. Anthony Thompson signed immediate manumission papers for John Cornish, Jerry Young, and Frank Young, who all enlisted in the 19th USCT between December 1863 and January 1864. Because the men had limited terms of servitude left, Thompson received one-hundred dollars per man instead of three hundred.⁵⁹ The great majority of Dorchester soldiers mustered in and out as privates, but fifteen percent reached the rank of Sergeant or Corporal.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, 339. This number may be underestimated, given the diverse and multiple regiments that Dorchester men joined.

⁵⁹ See McGill, *Bell's Book*; and <https://www.fold3.com>. Jerry and Frank are not listed in the Anthony Thompson probate list of 1839. They were born to enslaved women during the mid to late 1840s.

⁶⁰ Neild, *They Wore Blue and Their Hearts Were Loyal: The United States Colored Troops of Dorchester County, Maryland*.

Here is a modest *sampling* of names of men from areas within and near the NM boundaries:⁶¹

- Abraham Woolford, 19th USCT, wife Harriet Molock Woolford, Church Creek, children Levin James and John Francis.
- Charles Camper, 19th USCT, wife Mary Lane Camper—married by Dr. Anthony C. Thompson—no children, Cambridge.
- Isaac Morris, 7th USCT, wife Emily Molock Morris, no children, but she had a son named Caleb Molock (aka Morris), Aireys, near Bucktown.
- Alexander Chase, 7th USCT, wife Margaret Hudson Chase, son Charles Chase, Church Creek.
- Abraham Bishop, 4th USCT, no wife, mother Mary Bishop, father Jeremiah Bishop, Madison.
- Stephen Young, 4th USCT, wife Rosetta Rideout Young (married at Bucktown but she died in Church Creek), child Jane Young (guardian Samuel Todd of Madison), Madison and Church Creek.
- John Rolls, 4th USCT, no wife, mother Mary Rolls of Church Creek
- Henry Jackson, 4th USCT, wife Mahala Blake Jackson Stanley (Eben Stanley 2nd husband), children: Eliza Ettie and John D., married in Bucktown by Samuel Eaves (aka Ease, who used to live near Jacob Jackson near Parson's Creek in Peter's Neck.)
- Alfred Camper, 4th USCT, wife Margaret Hayward Camper, no children, Cambridge, but married at Bucktown by Rev. Samuel Eaves.
- John Montgomery, 4th USCT, wife Hester Manokey Montgomery, children: Eliza, Nancy Jane, Sally Ann, John Wesley, Thomas James, Caroline, Church Creek.
- Jeremiah Marine, 4th USCT, wife Adelia Carr Marine, Children: John Wesley and William Irvin, Church Creek.
- John Marine, 4th USCT, wife Elizabeth Newman Marine, children: Mary Ellen and Josiah, Church Creek.
- Thomas Woolford, 7th USCT, wife Mary Anthony, children: Samuel, Walter, Lilly, and Sarah Catherine, Cambridge. (Married by Rev. Ezekiel Stanley.)
- Martin Lake, 19th USCT, Bucktown.
- Jesse Hayes, 7th USCT, formerly enslaved by Pritchett Meredith, Bucktown.
- Hannibal Hayes, 39th USCT, formerly enslaved by Pritchett Meredith, Bucktown.
- Nathan Baswell (Bassell, Bazel), 19th USCT. Bucktown. (Future minister of Bazel Church within the NM Boundaries.)

⁶¹ Many of the Church Creek listings are people who lived in the Peters Neck and Buttons Creek area. Please refer to research by Small and Neild, as well as records accessible through www.fold3.com. Ibid. See also www.fold3.com.

The following veterans are buried in Malone's Church cemetery, on White Marsh Road near Madison:

- John T. Travis—Private 4th USCT⁶²
- Alfred Wheatley—Private 7th USCT
- George W. Young—Sergeant 7th USCT
- David Kane—Sergeant, 39th USCT
- John I. Linthicum—Private 39th USCT

Racism permeated the military. Pay inequity between black and white soldiers damaged morale and caused much suffering among black families relying on the soldiers' pay to survive. From the beginning, black soldiers received \$10 per month, less \$3.00 for clothing, while white troops earned \$13.00 per month including the allowance for clothing. In a remarkable show of solidarity, many USCT units, including the 54th Massachusetts, refused to accept the lower wages, while their officers harangued their superiors to honor their service equally. They waited until July 1864 when the U.S. government finally passed a statute raising black soldier wages equal to white soldiers pay retroactive to 1862.⁶³

Whether Tubman met any of her friends or family members on the battlefield is not known. Most of the Maryland regiments saw service in the upper South and western theater, not in South Carolina, Georgia or Florida where Tubman operated. She did recruit men on a furlough trip she took to Washington DC in the winter and spring of 1865. In early April, before heading back to South Carolina, Tubman appeared at Camp William Penn, outside Philadelphia, where Union officers were organizing and training fresh USCT regiments. She spoke to the 24th USCT regiment, giving them a "thrilling account of her trials in the South, during the past three years, among the contrabands and the soldiers."⁶⁴ A reporter from the *Christian Recorder* noted that she was "very well known by the community at large, as the great Underground Railroad woman." She "elicited considerable applause" from the crowd.⁶⁵

While on furlough, nurses from the United States Sanitary Commission recruited Tubman, convincing her to help minister to wounded men at a Union hospital at Fortress Monroe at Hampton in Virginia.⁶⁶ She stayed there for several weeks caring for wounded and dying black soldiers. Disturbed by "some dreadful abuses" taking place in the hospital. Tubman had a friend write a letter to the *New York Independent*, claiming that twenty to

⁶² Thomas Tubman, Harriet Tubman's brother-in-law, was Travis's stepfather.

⁶³ White soldiers also received bounties for re-enlisting, whereas black soldiers did not. Rose, *Rehearsal*, 261–62; see also, Duncan, *Where Death*. 105–6; McCaskie, State. 193–203; McPherson, *Struggle*. 212–20; Trudeau, *Like Men of War*. 91–93, 252–55.

⁶⁴ Martha Coffin Wright, "Letter, Martha Coffin Wright to Mariana Pelham, November 7, 1865," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, Massachusetts: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1865).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Hampton Hospital. Harriet Tubman's Statements Contradicted," *New York Independent*, August 3, 1865. The U.S. Sanitary Commission had been established in 1861 to provide humanitarian and nursing services and support to the Union Army during the Civil War. Wood, "Tubman History."

twenty-five black soldiers were dying per day in the facility. H.B. White, Executive Officer in charge of the hospital, denied Tubman's claims in a letter to the *Independent*, stating that the total number of deaths for the month of June was "Whites, twenty-six, (26); Colored, seventy, (70); total, ninety-six, (96)," or three per day. Nevertheless, black soldiers were dying at a rate of 2.5 times greater than white soldiers, revealing the below standards of care offered to them at that hospital.⁶⁷ Frustrated by her inability to facilitate positive changes there, Tubman returned to Washington, D.C., where she reported directly to Dr. Joseph K. Barnes, Surgeon General, informing him of the terrible treatment and fatality rate for African-American soldiers.⁶⁸ Barnes officially appointed Tubman "Nurse or Matron at the colored hospital" at Fort Monroe.⁶⁹ Death rates for African American soldiers hovered between 20 and 25 percent, most from disease. For Dorchester County enlistees, more than twenty-seven percent died of injury or disease. Seven percent arrived home after surviving a disabling injury, including loss of limbs and head trauma. Confederate forces captured thirty-four Dorchester soldiers; fourteen died in captivity.⁷⁰

Before the end of the war and under significant pressure, Maryland rewrote its constitution and banned slavery.⁷¹ Many former slaveholders, reluctant to adjust to a totally free labor system, immediately indentured the formerly enslaved children under their control, virtually perpetuating the slave system under the guise of indenture and apprenticeship.⁷² County court records show a sharp rise in indenture filings, beginning in the few months before emancipation with free black children and then newly freed children beginning just hours before and after the new constitution took effect on November 1, 1864.⁷³ Within days of emancipation, one sympathetic white man told federal authorities in Baltimore that he had witnessed "the binding of Negro Children in Dorchester County. I have seen them carried from different portions of the County in ox carts, wagons, and carriages to the County town (Cambridge) to be carried before the court to be bound out as

⁶⁷ Trudeau, Like Men of War, 349–50. See also Reid, *Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment: The Civil War Diary of Burt G. Wilder, 55th Massachusetts*. 17–39. And, Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*. 134–36.

⁶⁸ Wood, "Tubman History." See, "Hampton." I am indebted to Jay Meredith for finding this article.

⁶⁹ Wood, "Tubman History"; and Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, 70.

⁷⁰ Neild, *They Wore Blue and Their Hearts Were Loyal: The United States Colored Troops of Dorchester County, Maryland*, 345–46.

⁷¹ Brugger, *Maryland*, 302–10. Fields, *Slavery*, 124–32.

⁷² Indenture laws had long been on the books for the binding of whites and free blacks. In 1839, however, Orphan's Courts empowered white people to bind any free black child by claiming their parents were unfit to care for them. For a discussion of the phenomenon of indenturing and apprenticing black children in Maryland, see Richard Paul Fuke, *Imperfect Equality: African Americans and the Confines of White Racial Attitudes in Post-Emancipation Maryland*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 4; Brackett, *Negro in Maryland*, 218–24. Fields, *Slavery*, 137–42; Anita Aida Guy, *Maryland's Persistent Pursuit to End Slavery, 1850–1864* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 442–47.

⁷³ Fields, *Slavery*, 137–42.

apprentices, in some cases boys were bound out that would command wages at sixty dollars per year.”⁷⁴

The indenturing of Maryland’s black children also ensured that the parents would remain tied to or in proximity to their former enslavers, keeping their labor available to whites. Black parents were nearly powerless to prevent indentures of their children. Despite their ability to support them and teach their children trades, many black families found the local courts indifferent to their rights to their own children. Simon Ross, who lived on Harrisville Road near the Thompson plantation, spent years trying to get his children, eight-year-old Benjamin, six-year-old David and three-year-old Charles back from John D. Parker, who had indentured them in May 1857.⁷⁵ Parker owned the former Anthony Thompson home site and hundreds of acres of Thompson’s former lands. The boys were still living in Parker’s household in 1860, along with nine enslaved people.⁷⁶ Seventy-year-old Ross lived with a daughter, Ann, and her four-year-old child, Jane nearby. Ross needed his boys’ help on his small farm, but Parker refused to release the children to him.⁷⁷ Ross’s efforts to reclaim his children lasted ten years.

Tubman’s brother John Stewart (née Robert Ross) had two sons still living on the Eastern Shore, boys whom Tubman had been unable to rescue. Living with Dr. Anthony C. Thompson’s daughter Sarah Thompson Haddaway in Talbot County in 1864, John Henry and Moses Ross were indentured on November 15.⁷⁸ Haddaway had purchased Mary Manokey Ross and the children from Dr. Thompson in March 1857; by 1864, John and

⁷⁴ Charles W. Mitchell, *Maryland Voices of the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 444.

⁷⁵ Court, *Chattel Records*. “John D. Parker from David Ross,” and “John D. Parker from Benjamin Ross,” and “John D. Parker from Charles Ross,” May 25, 1857, pp. 275–78. Parker purchased portions of the Thompson property in 1837, and more of it from interim owners like the Stewarts during the 1840s. In 1853, Dr. Anthony C. Thompson sold two young children, George (9) and Charlotte (7), to John D. Parker, too. It may have been a convenience sale for himself and for the children’s mother, Sophia Brown who may have been living there and working for Parker. Nevertheless, they were children, and Thompson sold them. See Anthony Thompson, “Anthony C. Thompson to John D. Parker,” in *Dorchester County Chattel Records* (Annapolis, MD: MDSA, 1853).

⁷⁶ Research on the full identities of these enslaved people is ongoing. Their names and ages: in 1852—Josiah “Joe” Johnson, aged 9, George Brown, 9, Charlotte Brown, 7, John Brown, 9; in 1855—Pheby, aged 33, Susan Emily, age not noted but probably under 10, Beck, 4, Anthony, age not noted but probably under 10; in 1856—Ann Rebecca, age not noted but probably under 10. Joe Johnson and George Brown joined the 7th USCT in 1863. See “Assessment Record.” And Neild, *They Wore Blue and Their Hearts Were Loyal: The United States Colored Troops of Dorchester County, Maryland*, 71, 198.

⁷⁷ See Ross’s ongoing struggles with Parker in “Maryland and Delaware, Freedmen’s Bureau Field Office Records,” ed. Freedmen The Bureau of Refugees, and Abandoned Lands (Washington, DC: United States Government, 1865–1872). Assistant Commissioner Records.

⁷⁸ Talbot County Indenture Records, Talbot County Orphans Court, November 15, 1864. See also, R. B. Leonard, *Bound to Serve: The Indentured Children of Talbot County, 1794–1920*.

Moses were fourteen and twelve years old, respectively, and they were valuable workers.⁷⁹ For Haddaway, indenturing them was the quickest and easiest means to maintain the status quo on her farm. John had remarried in Auburn, he wanted his children with him. The indenture of the two boys made that impossible.⁸⁰

On April 9, 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House. Five days later, after the United States flag flew once again over Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, President Lincoln lay dying, and Tubman's friend, William H. Seward, lay gravely wounded from an attack by a would-be assassin on the night of Lincoln's assassination. That fall, exhausted by work, Tubman headed home. When boarding a train in Philadelphia, and using a discounted fare ticket for government employees, the conductor ordered her to the smoking car. She refused. "Come, hustle out of here! We don't carry niggers for half-fare," the conductor yelled at her. He grabbed her and tried to throw her off the train, but Tubman's legendary strength outmatched him. Calling him a "a copper-headed scoundrel," she told him not to call her anything but "black or Negro" and that she was as "proud of being a black woman as he was of being white." The conductor became so enraged he choked her. When he failed to get her out of the car, he enlisted the help of two men, who pried her fingers from their firm grasp and wrencheded her arm and broke it. Thrown violently into the smoking cars, Tubman's shoulder and ribs were badly bruised. No one on the train came to her aid; in fact, several passengers shouted epithets and encouraged the conductor to toss her off the train.⁸¹ For African Americans, both in the North and the South, bigotry and injustice lingered. In Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York, and elsewhere, African Americans faced daily indignities and resistance to their claims to equality in transportation, education, entertainment, and employment. Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, for instance, were among many others forcibly removed from trains and streetcars because of the color of their skin. After the war, many

⁷⁹ Court, "Dorchester Chattel Records." "Anthony C. Thompson to Sarah Catherine Haddaway, March 16, 1857." John Henry was 7, Moses was 4, Harriet, or "Ritty" was 3 years old in March 1857. Mary Manokey married another man named Wells after 1857. Mary gave birth to two children with the surname Wells before she was freed: an unidentified child born sometime in 1856, and another, Charles Wells, born in 1861. See Mary and her children listed as security for a promissory note. John Henry, Moses and Harriet are listed with the surname "Ross", and the other two children with "Wells." Talbot County Court, "Chattel Records," in *Talbot County Court Records* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland State Archives). "Thomas S. Haddaway & Sarah C. Haddaway to Alexander H. Seth and Charles W. Haddaway, August 3, 1858."

⁸⁰ Fuke, *Imperfect*. Mary Manokey Ross Wells, the boys' mother, may have objected to their going North, but there is no documentation confirming this.

⁸¹ Martha Coffin Wright, "Letter, Martha Coffin Wright to Mariana Pelham," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, Massachusetts: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College). Martha Coffin Wright wrote about this event and quoted Tubman extensively. The immediacy of Wright's description is far more moving than Bradford's account, written three years later. The powerful commentary by Tubman of her own sense of pride in her identity her impressions of the conductor's political affinity, casts an interesting light on contemporary racial and social politics. During and after the Civil War, Northern sympathizers of the South were called "copper-heads." Originally a term of derision used by Republicans against anti-war Democrats, during and after the Civil War it also came to symbolize the more conservative wings of the Democratic party. See also McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 494. And Bradford, *Scenes*, 47–49.

such incidents occurred throughout the North; though slavery had ended, rampant discrimination against African Americans persisted.

The Civil War was over, but many more hurdles lay ahead before the nation would recover from its wounds and accept African Americans as free and full citizens. The repercussions of the war on the Eastern Shore tested the strength of free people to secure and build familial and community bonds, while many white people, who believed their livelihoods, social status, and political power under assault, sought legal and extra-legal ways to maintain white supremacy. The resistance of white Eastern Shore Marylanders to a world without slavery turned to suppressing and denying the rights of free people of color. The determination of African Americans to recreate their families and communities, build homes, schools, and churches, and fashion economic opportunities despite white resistance defined the new human landscapes of Tubman's former home place for the next one-hundred years.



Figure 8.11. African American soldiers mustering out and returning home to their families. Library of Congress.

Summary

Though Maryland remained in the Union, many of its white citizens supported the Confederacy despite the United States government's negotiating a reprieve from the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 allowing the state to maintain the institution of slavery. The recruitment and enlistment of black men from Maryland impacted both free and enslaved communities in Dorchester County - the participation of black soldiers influenced the perceptions of the war as a war on slavery and a battle for freedom. After Maryland declared Emancipation for all enslaved people on October 31, 1864, slaveholders rushed courthouses to indenture the children of their formerly enslaved people. African American struggles for citizenship and autonomy in the new post was era on the Eastern Shore tested the strength of free people, while former slaveholders and white supporters of the old order felt their livelihoods, social status, and political power threatened.

CHAPTER 9

1865–PRESENT DAY

Introduction

The struggles for independence and real freedom continued well after the war for Jacob Jackson and the free and formerly enslaved communities that Tubman had known so well. African Americans' efforts to reconstitute families and build churches and schools, replicated across the country, generated daily and sometimes deadly responses from former slaveholders and white citizens resentful of the new social, economic, and political order. Federal troops occupied the Eastern Shore to protect African Americans and their newly granted civil rights. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, agricultural decline and recession forced many traditional farm families to abandon their fields in favor of steady employment in the canning factories in Cambridge, or industrial jobs in Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, and New Jersey. The memories and even some of the physical vestiges of those historic communities left with the migration of people. These memories may still exist in scattered families or in transplanted faith communities, complicating historical legacies within the Tubman National Monument. Tubman lived the remainder of her life in Auburn, New York, and her activism transitioned to women's rights, Civil Rights, humanitarian activities, anti-poverty, health care advocacy, and more. Though some oral traditions and folk tales concerning Tubman's life remain firm in the region, fictionalized versions of Tubman's life story created during the twentieth century, long after Tubman died in 1913, have heavily influenced them. The persistence of her memory, legacy, and iconic status attests to the appealing and lasting nature her story—a profoundly important story of the fight for freedom, equality, justice and self-determination - has lived on in communities around this country and the world for generations.

.....

On January 31, 1865, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, the first of three Reconstruction Amendments ratified in the aftermath of the War guaranteeing freedom, citizenship, and civil rights to African Americans.¹ Though Maryland emancipated enslaved people on November 1, 1864, the new constitutional amendment went further. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a

¹ The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868; and the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870.

punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction,” the amendment stated, abolished slavery.² The new amendment outlawing slavery did not guarantee any additional civil, political, legal rights on African Americans, however, rights that Southern whites were determined to abrogate by any means, fighting the transition from a slave-based society to freedom with vigor.³ Some Northern legislatures attempted to obstruct or restrict black male enfranchisement.⁴ The fight for independence, equality, and civil rights continued well after the war. African Americans’ efforts to reconstitute families and build homes, churches and schools, consumed most black families and communities during the 1860s and 1870s. Black Civil War veterans—some wounded and disabled—returned to a political, economic, and social environment weighted against them. Newly liberated families fought to gain possession of their children and reunite with siblings, parents, friends and loved ones.

² The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified by a majority of the states on December 6, 1865. One of the clauses imbedded in the Amendment would have an enormous impact shaping incarceration of African Americans in particular. Section 1 of the Amendment stated: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

³ Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 96–97.

⁴ Ibid., 113, 142–48.

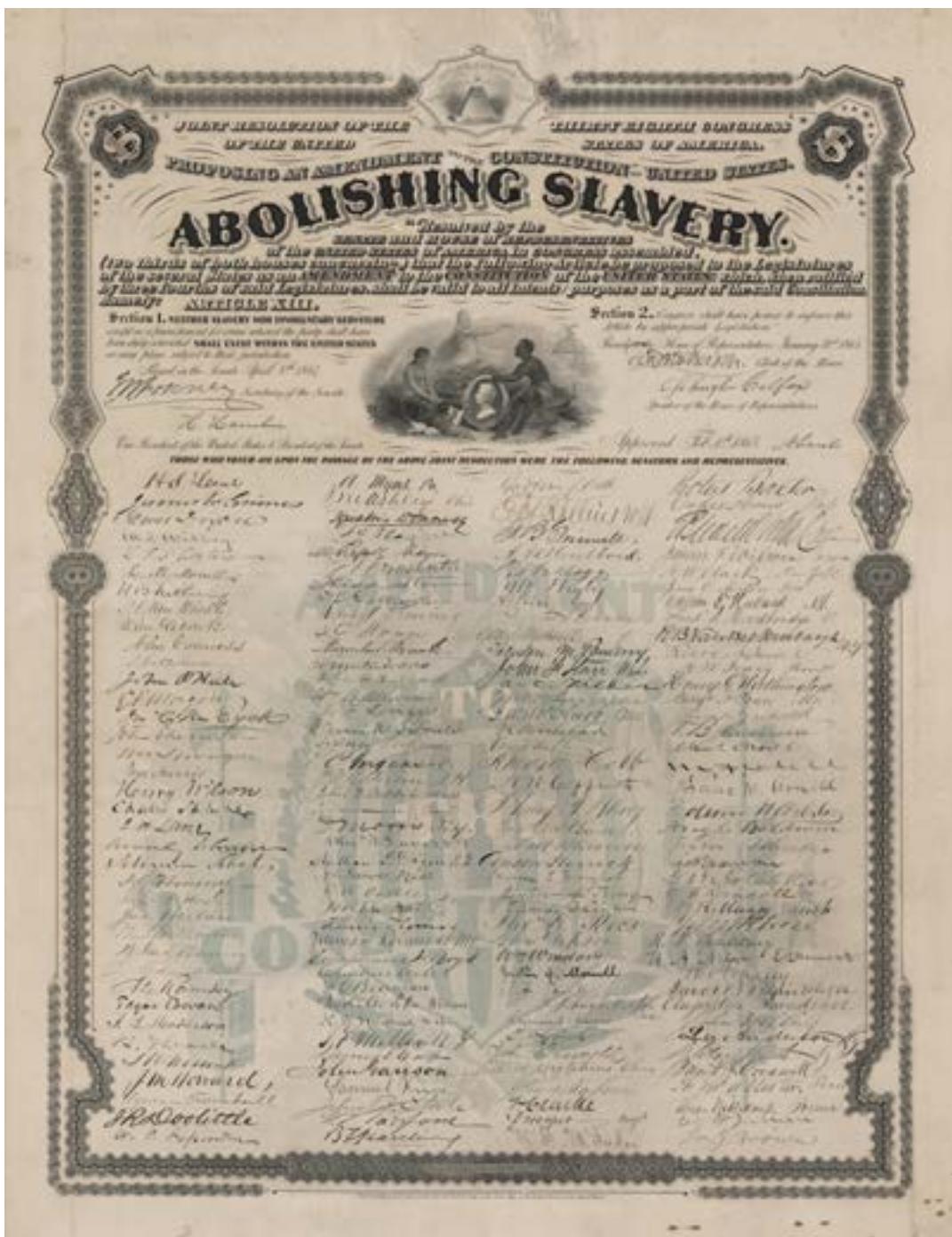


Figure 9.1. Joint resolution of the thirty-eighth Congress of the United States of America, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States abolishing slavery. Library of Congress.

The period between 1865 and 1877, when whites and blacks fought over the terms of a new society based on freedom, is known as “Reconstruction.” For twelve years after the end of the Civil War the United States government sought to reconstruct the South (and North in some ways, too) to ensure equality, jobs, freedom of movement and choice, self-determination, community building, justice, and education for newly freed people.

Toward that end, the federal government established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, or commonly called the Freedmen's Bureau, to oversee and facilitate the transition to a more free and equal society in the South. Charged with establishing schools, providing food, clothing, medical care, and housing for destitute formerly enslaved people who fled the farms, homes, and businesses of their former enslavers to build new lives elsewhere, the Bureau struggled to keep pace with the enormous demands to fulfill those needs. The Bureau provided a temporary legal system to adjudicate disputes between whites and blacks, too, and offered legal services to newly freed people in need of fair and equitable labor contracts, housing and farm leases, and assistance in fighting local courts in extricating their children from illegal or coerced indentures and apprenticeships.⁵

There were white allies. More progressive whites in Baltimore railed against Eastern Shore elites and white yeoman families alike for their opposition to the exercise of rights by newly freed people. “We object to refettering those who have been freed from the chains of Slavery,” the editor of the *Baltimore American* wrote in January 1865.⁶ But even advocates of emancipation harbored racist attitudes that affected progress toward true freedom. “We do not encourage any benevolence toward them,” wrote Judge Hugh L. Bond, a Maryland Unionist. “Whatever can educate his mind and equip his body for self-care is in the right direction. Everything else tends to larger houses, idleness, and vice.”⁷

On the evening of April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln in Ford’s Theater in Washington, DC. The president lingered for several hours, dying the following morning and sending the nation into deep mourning. Reactions to his death on the Eastern Shore varied. With majorities sincerely mourning in Baltimore, and in homes and businesses throughout the Eastern Shore, not everyone was saddened by Lincoln’s death. For instance, some residents of Easton in nearby Talbot County could barely contain their joy. “Rebel sympathizers were delighted . . . and at first impulse appeared to be shown to rejoice, at least by some; but upon reflection, a large majority fell in with the side that was certain to be most popular.”⁸

Resentment and resistance to the new world order by white communities remained strong throughout the region. On the Eastern Shore, the Freedmen’s Bureau became a lifeline for African Americans determined to build schools, churches, work for themselves and keep their families together. One of the first tasks included assistance in the form of funding for building materials, school supplies, and teachers. Maryland’s new constitution did not address the inequities in the state’s public-school system; shutting out black children was common across the state and in rural communities was the norm. To meet the

⁵ Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998). 96–100. Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1–13. And for a more complete examination of post emancipation life in Maryland, see Fuke, *Imperfect*.

⁶ Mitchell, *Maryland Voices of the Civil War*, 453.

⁷ Ibid., 456.

⁸ Samuel Harrington, “Abraham Lincoln is No More,” *Easton Gazette*, April 22, 1865.

needs of black communities, the Freedmen's Bureau in cooperation with private and religious associations raised money for black schools.⁹

Bureau representatives arrived in Cambridge aboard a steamer from Baltimore on July 25, 1865. Between two and three thousand African Americans greeted the boat as it docked at Long Wharf. The excitement overwhelmed "the rebels in the town [who] looked on in wondering astonishment . . . and they looked with malignant contempt" on the cheering crowd and the few white Unionists who welcomed the Bureau agents. In Dorchester County, Bureau supported schools opened in Cambridge, Church Creek, Christ Rock, Old Field, and East New Market.¹⁰ Black and white teachers arrived from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore. Mary Osbourne, a New England teacher sponsored by the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, arrived in the fall of 1865 to teach black students in Church Creek.¹¹ The school, recently organized by the black community in a district called Oldfield south of the town of Church Creek and conducted in their small church, was similar to other community efforts throughout the county. Osbourne's observations, captured in letters she wrote to the *Zion's Herald*, a Methodist newspaper, reveals the enthusiasm and determination of students—young and old—to achieve literacy. The "children have an unbounded love for and pride in their school," she wrote, providing a window into the likely and similar sentiments in black communities within the National Monument boundaries, whose school records have not survived and whose teachers were not Freedmen's Bureau-sponsored educators. "They enjoy everything in school life with a keen relish," Osbourne wrote for her readers, noting that some children often walked miles each day to attend school. "I have one little fellow in school who walks six miles to get here; if you could see him you would be astonished that such a little pair of feet could measure such a distance. He is six years old and quick to learn, but cannot talk very plain; he goes to sleep some times and fails off his seat; but when I think that the little fellow has to get up with the sun in order to accomplish his long journey by nine o'clock I cannot refuse to let him sleep in school."¹² With part admiration and part sympathy, Osbourne watched some of her students help a young disabled child, Henny, "who taxes her strength too heavily in her long walk of four miles to school." Osbourne noted that the students walked slowly to

⁹ See Fuke, *Imperfect*; Butchart, *Schooling the Freed People: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861–1876*; Paul A. Cimbala, and Randall M. Miller, eds., *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ All of the school were initiated by the local black community and then supported by the Bureau. See the following reports for some of these Freedmen's Bureau Schools, independent schools and associated churches: "Clement Waters House (Aka Thomas M. Meredith House, Lewis House), D-81." "Harrisville Colored School, D-816." "St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606." "Jefferson Memorial Church, D-597." "Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586."

¹¹ *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. The school was located south of the town of Church Creek in a district called Oldfield.

¹² Mary S. Osbourne, *Freedmen's Record. Organ of the New England Freedmen's Aid Society*. June 1, 1868, 96.

accommodate her “feeble steps,” reserved the best seat in the classroom for her, and “wait on her with unwearied attention during playtime.”¹³

Sentiment against the Freedmen’s Bureau teachers increased with each passing day. White residents of Church Creek held a town meeting in October 1865 and determined that Osbourne must leave. A “committee” of five men visited Osbourne in the home where she was staying, threatening her with veiled warnings of violence and delivered a letter outlining the white community’s grievances against her. “The committee thus far has failed to do their duty, and I very much fear that I shall not have an opportunity of seeing what ‘Southern chivalry’ is. Excuse me if I haven’t much respect for this particular characteristic of Southern rebels.”¹⁴ Though she did leave the house where she boarded and moved into another home of a supportive white family, Osbourne continued teaching in the community through to the 1869–1870 school year.



Figure 9.2. Freedmen’s Bureau schools provided education for adults, too. Public schools were so uncommon in the South that some white people attended Freedmen’s Schools. Library of Congress.

¹³ Ibid., March 14, 1866.

¹⁴ Ibid., December 1, 1865, 94. See also, Fuke, *Imperfect*, 101–4.

The Bureau also helped families reclaim their indentured children. Bureau agents met with families, interviewed former white enslavers and forced local courts to release the children to their families. On the day the Bureau representatives arrived in Cambridge in July 1867, sixty-five-year-old Simon Ross was there to plead with agents to help him bring his children, eighteen-year-old Benjamin, sixteen-year-old David, and thirteen-year-old Charles home.¹⁵ Indentured by John D. Parker since May 1857, Ross had been fighting for their return since then. Until the Bureau agents arrived, no one listened.¹⁶ It took more than a year before Parker released the children.¹⁷ Fighting the Freedmen’s Bureau and keeping children indentured deprived black families’ opportunities to educate their children and benefit from their contributions to the whole family’s standard of living.

For Tubman’s brother John Stewart, living in Auburn with his new wife Millie Hollis (formerly of Bucktown) and building a new life there, waiting for Bureau help to regain custody of his two boys, John Henry and Moses, was not an option. Indentured in Talbot County, the boys were out of Stewart’s reach. He turned to other means. His niece and her husband, John and Kessiah Bowley and their children resettled in Dorchester County sometime during 1867, after spending a year or so with Tubman in Auburn before returning to Maryland from Canada. Once settled near Cambridge, John Bowley “went across the [Choptank] river at night,” to the Haddaway plantation and liberated John Henry from indentured servitude. The Bowleys kept him secreted in their home until John Henry could safely travel to Auburn.¹⁸ After “things quieted down,” Bowley rescued Moses from the Haddaway’s farm, and sent him to his father in Auburn, too.¹⁹

The Bureau could only do so much. Extra-legal and violent reprisals against African Americans continued throughout Reconstruction. On September 30, 1867, a white man, Robert Vincent, shot and killed Harriet Tubman’s husband John dead. A close neighbor of John’s in the Aireys district near Bucktown, Vincent had engaged in a verbal altercation with Tubman on the side of the road near their homes. The first news reports indicated that Vincent had threatened to kill John Tubman on the morning of September 30th after a disagreement over “the removal of some ashes from a tenant-house on Vincent’s farm.” Vincent chased Tubman down the road with an ax, but Tubman escaped harm. Later in the day, around 5 p.m., Vincent and Tubman met again on the road, quarreled, and Vincent shot Tubman in the forehead and killed him.²⁰

¹⁵ Osbourne. July 25, 1867.

¹⁶ Court, *Chattel Records*. “John D. Parker from David Ross,” and “John D. Parker from Benjamin Ross,” and “John D. Parker from Charles Ross,” May 25, 1857, pp. 275–78.

¹⁷ “Maryland and Delaware, Freedmen’s Bureau Field Office Records.” Assistant Commissioner, Roll 1, Letters Sent. Vol. 1, May 1866–July 1868.

¹⁸ Harkless Bowley, “Harkless Bowley Letters,” in *Earl Conrad/Harriet Tubman Collection* (New York: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 1939–1940). Letter, Bowley to Conrad, August 24, 1939.

¹⁹ Ibid. Letter, Bowley to Conrad, August 24, 1939. John Stewart nee Robert Ross apparently did not send for his daughter Harriet (Ritty) Ross.

²⁰ “Outrage in Talbot County. A Colored Man Murdered,” *Baltimore News American*, October 7, 1867.



Figure 9.3. A Freedmen's Bureau agent preventing violence from erupting between armed blacks and whites.
Library of Congress.

Violence against freedmen continued unabated in the South for years after the war, as whites struggled with a new social order.²¹ For some in the white community, in Maryland as elsewhere, black displays of independence were often perceived as insolence or disrespect, warranting swift and sometimes violent reprisal.²² Maryland was no different than other parts of the South, and its white residents struggled to adjust to emancipation and new laws imposed by Reconstruction leaders and government officials.²³ Violence took many forms—shooting, stabbing, beating, and lynching, among other methods of physical terror. Studies have uncovered records of more than 4,000 lynchings in the United States between 1877 and 1950, the vast majority people of color.²⁴ In Maryland, preliminary research on the lynching victims reveals dozens between 1870 and 1930.²⁵

Dorchester County, then, was experiencing the same transformative changes as the rest of the South. The exact details of what actually happened the day Vincent murdered John Tubman cannot be known. Vincent never “stopped to see if his shot proved fatal, but continued on his way home,” a Baltimore newspaper reported.²⁶ Arrested for murder,

²¹ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 119–23. For Maryland, see, Fields, *Slavery*, 142–49. Fuke, *Imperfect*, 205–12.

²² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 120.

²³ Fields, *Slavery*, 149–51.

²⁴ <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org>

²⁵ http://slavery.msa.maryland.gov/html/casestudies/judge_lynnch.html

²⁶ “Outrage in Talbot County, A Colored Man Murdered.”

Vincent faced a jury trial that September. In court, he testified that John Tubman had threatened him earlier in the day, and later, along the same road, Tubman “rushed out of the woods with a club and made at him, whereupon he seized his gun and fired,” fatally wounding him.²⁷ The state’s case against Vincent hinged on the testimony of two African Americans, Rachel Camper, a neighbor, and Tubman’s son, Thomas, then thirteen years old. Thomas was the only one to have witnessed the killing. The *Baltimore American*, noted that, “it was universally conceded that he [Vincent] would be acquitted” because only “a colored boy” had witnessed the deed, and that the jury “was composed exclusively of Democrats,” meaning former Confederate sympathizers still reluctant to accept African Americans as their equals. The jurors, the paper charged, were still a long way from “convicting a fellow Democrat for killing a Negro. But even that will follow when the Negro is armed with the ballot.”²⁸ The jury deliberated for ten minutes, returning a verdict of “not guilty.”²⁹

The struggle for political and civil rights paralleled African Americans’ efforts to find good paying jobs, build homes, churches, schools, and businesses, and participate fully in new opportunities offered in the post-war economy. In July 1868, and after a contentious fight with former Confederate States over its provisions, Congress ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Guaranteeing civil rights and equal protection under the laws to African Americans, the Amendment was the second of three Reconstruction Amendments passed by 1870. Congress mitigated the resistance to conferring civil rights to blacks in the former Confederate states by requiring each state vote to ratify the amendment as a condition of readmittance in the Union. The third and final Reconstruction Amendment, the Fifteenth, secured the vote for black men when ratified in February 1870. African American men had been preparing for exercising the franchise for several years by the time it became the law of the land. In early May 1867, eighty black men met in Church Creek and started their own African American Republican Club. They created registries of black voters for election districts in Cambridge, East New Market, and Church Creek in preparation of future black political participation.³⁰ In November 1870 they could finally vote.

²⁷ “Letter from Cambridge. Trial of Robert Vincent,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 17, 1867.

²⁸ Lucretia Coffin Mott, “Letter, Lucretia Coffin Mott to Martha Coffin Wright, January 1, 1867,” in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1867). John Tubman left behind his wife Caroline, and four children, Thomas, Ann, William and Alexander. See 1860 U.S. Census, Dorchester County, MD, and 1880 U.S. Census, Dorchester County, MD.

²⁹ “Letter from Cambridge. Trial of Robert Vincent.”

³⁰ Fuke, *Imperfect*, 158. Black women would wait, along with white women, to gain the right to vote until the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.



Figure 9.4. Images of Black male suffrage in Southern States. Library of Congress.

For several decades after the Civil War, black communities in and near the NM boundaries, from Taylor's Island to Christ Rock outside of Cambridge, to Bucktown and Blackwater, built churches and schools. The first postwar effort began in Peter's Neck, on White Marsh Road with the establishment of Malone's African Methodist Episcopal Church. For decades before the Civil War, separated communities connected by footpaths, waterways, and logging roads through the woods in Peter's Neck, from Harrisville Road to Smithville Road, provided a strong social network among free and enslaved black communities.³¹ The immediate formation of churches and schools after emancipation indicates that faith communities existed long before freedom came, and these paths through the fields and woods and waterways facilitated shared worship. Though no black churches were established here before the Civil War, shared meals, prayer, and socializing kept the communities linked. Methodist Camp Meetings were popular in the region, particularly at Madison and Taylor's Island, providing social and spiritual connections that strengthened

³¹ See at Smithville, “Jefferson Memorial Church, D-597.” At White Marsh, “Malone’s Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586.” At Harrisville, “St. Paul’s Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606.” And “Harrisville Colored School, D-816.” And further east beyond the NM boundaries, see at Oldfield/Church Creek, “Clement Waters House (Aka Thomas M. Meredith House, Lewis House), D-81.” And at Cambridge, “Christ Rock Methodist Church, D-585,” in *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2013). And Maryland Historical Trust, “Rock School, Stanley Institute, D-43, Cambridge, MD,” *ibid.* (2008). Also see Interview with Rev. Keith Cornish, October 19, 2011, Harriet Tubman State Park, Church Creek, MD.

families and communities. In the decades after the Civil War, local communities established four African American churches. Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church (originally African Methodist) was the first to be established, in 1864 on White Marsh Road; it was followed by Christ Rock Methodist Episcopal Church near Cambridge in 1875; St. Paul's United Methodist Church at Harrisville in 1880; New Revived United Methodist Church, once known as Jefferson Methodist Episcopal Church, was established at Smithville in 1876, and an unidentified black church on the outskirts of Church Creek on the road to Cambridge was established between 1865 and 1877.³² African American land ownership in this region grew throughout the early to mid-1800s and into the early 1900s, and though barely visible on the landscape today, these sites have significance to the descendants of these community builders seeking to preserve historical and cultural heritage.



Figure 9.5. The Stanley Institute is one of the first independently established black schools in Dorchester County. The one-room schoolhouse located at Christ Rock outside Cambridge opened in 1867 and closed in 1962. It is now a museum. Dorchester County Office of Tourism.

³² Lake, "An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland."



Figure 9.6. The Zion School, established in 1868, in East New Market as it looked in the 1980s.
It was torn down during the 1990s. Maryland Historical Trust.

By the 1860s, nearly two dozen free black families owned land between Buttons Creek and Parson's Creek. During the decade, Jacob Jackson died on his farm at the age of sixty-nine in 1864. His wife Dinah and adult sons, Thomas and John, faced legal challenges to inheriting Jacob's property. Jackson mortgaged his property in the late 1850s and incurred a \$2,000 debt to Samuel M. Brohawn. He repaid the debt sometime between mid-1862 and mid-1863, but he died the following year. A lawsuit brought by Dorchester resident Henry Collins against Jackson in 1859 was refiled against Dinah and her sons, tying up the estate's assets, including his home property, for more than a decade.³³ According to the National Park's Cultural Landscape Report, by 1870 Dorchester County Circuit Court of Equity named Benjamin Harrington Trustee of the estate and ordered him to sell the "lands of Jacob Jackson, deceased," to satisfy Collins's claims. Harrington auctioned the property, with the winning bid going to Reverend Levi D. Travers of Taylor's Island for six hundred and twenty-five dollars.³⁴ Five years later, Travers sold the Jackson farm to John R. and Sarah E. Brown, who may have already been renting the property. Brown may have been one of the Atthow Pattison heirs and unsuccessful plaintiffs in the legal battle involving the

³³ Court, "Land Records," Liber FJH 5 folio 385.

³⁴ Levi D. Travers, it will be recalled, was the enslaver of a portion of the twenty-eight freedom seekers who fled Dorchester County on October 24, 1857.

rights and title to Rit Ross and her children during the 1850s.³⁵ Dinah Jackson, in the meantime, stayed nearby, moving in with Maria Thomas before Harrington sold the property.³⁶

One of Jacob Jackson's neighbors and friends was Jeremiah Malone. In 1827, James Jones executed a deed of manumission, setting Malone free in August 1836. He had already sold Malone to Rueben Tall, another Madison area white landowner, for the remainder of his term just as his brother Thomas had done with Jacob Jackson.³⁷ The Jones family enslaved many of Malone's family members, setting them free beginning in the 1820s through the early 1860s.³⁸ Malone lived on White Marsh Road with his first wife Priscilla, and then later his second wife, Rose Ann, and his children, Hester, Lucinda, Jane, and Sylvester. In July 1864 he and Rose deeded a portion of their property to a group of local black trustees—David Linthicum, James Keene, Vince Green, Drew Otho, and Murray Keene, John Jones, Andrew Opher, James Brown, and John E. Opher—to build a church and school. By 1866 a small church building stood on this property, which also served, initially, as a school and community center. The cemetery contains graves from the early 1870s including several Civil War veterans, and is still in use by local families to bury their loved ones.³⁹ Many members of the newly formed Malone's Church were listed in the Methodist Church records of the Church Creek Charge in 1863 in "Class #4 Tobacco Stick." It is likely these church members belonged to the white Methodist church in Madison but removed themselves to their own black church on White Marsh Road in 1864 or soon thereafter.⁴⁰

Enslaved and set free in 1862 by William M. Robinson, Vince Green may have been the son of another Vince Green, once enslaved by James Jones and who owned property near Jacob Jackson, too.⁴¹ The other trustees of the church owned property and were free men before the end of the war as well.⁴² Andrew Opher lived on a large farm valued at \$950

³⁵ See "Equity Records, 1811–1966," ed. Dorchester County Circuit Court (Maryland State Archives). See also, See Frank M. Ewing Tract Boundary Survey for the Conservation Fund: MSA CSU 2141-2299; MSA CSU 2141-2314-1; MSA CSU 2141-2314-2; MSA CSU 2141-2314-3; MSA CSU 2141-2314-4; and Deeds: Jackson & Brohawn FJH 5 folio 385; Brown & Brown FJH 5 folio 385-386. Thank you to Jennifer Hanna, Historical Landscape Architect, at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston, and author of the Cultural Landscape Report for sharing some of this research. John R. Brown's role in the lawsuit requires further research.

³⁶ U.S. Census, 1870. Dorchester County, 4th District, 22

³⁷ County, "Certificates of Freedom." March 27, 1826 recorded and manumitted on August 29, 1836.

³⁸ See for example various listings for Col. John Jones manumissions. *Ibid.*

³⁹ See "Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586."

⁴⁰ See Dorchester County Genealogical Magazine, Vol. XVI #1, May 1986, p. 6. Their names are: Ezekiel and Matilda Stanley, Vince and Elizabeth Green, David and Harriet Linthicum, Moses and Emilie Tubman, James and Lesta Brown, Mariah Thomas, James and Hester Keene, Mariah Marine, Eliza Banks, Abraham and Eliza Bishop, Josiah and Tessa Marine, Phoeby Cornish, Hanna Barnes, Harriet Ennalls, Levine and Martha Banks, Summers Cornish, John S. Linthicum, Alphena Keene, Hester Banks, and Ridgely Stanley.

⁴¹ County, "Certificates of Freedom," June 9, 1862. The older Vince Green ran away from James Jones in June 1827 but was either captured or returned on his own. Jones later manumitted him. See "20 Dollars Reward," *Cambridge Chronicle*, June 24, 1827. More research into Green and his family is needed.

⁴² Census, "United States Federal Census, 1860."

with his wife, Lovey Bowley and eleven children. David Linthicum lived in this community too, with his wife Harriet Bowley, his mother-in-law Biner Bowley, and their children.⁴³ This community represents just a portion of Dorchester's African American landowners, who, by 1870 represented twelve percent of all real estate ownership in the county, the lowest on the Eastern Shore but still double that of the Western Shore and Southern Maryland.⁴⁴



Figure 9.7. Malones Church on White Marsh Road was established in 1864, with the first church opening in 1866. Currently closed, the church was rebuilt in 1890 and needs immediate stabilization and preservation. Dorchester County Office of Tourism.

The 1877 Lake, Stevenson, and Griffing map of the Parson's Creek district shows two structures, "Colored School No. 1 & Church," indicating the community had separate buildings for education and worship by that time.⁴⁵ In 1872, the State of Maryland adopted control of black schools, but funding remained a small percentage of what was allocated to white schools, so black communities continued to support their schools in any way they could. In 1895 a new church building replaced the old.⁴⁶ The school building at Malone's, called "Public School No. I, District 4 for colored children" remained in use until the 1960s when desegregation laws forced the inclusion of black students in area white schools. As

⁴³ Hester Bowley was John Bowley's sister and Kessiah Bowley's sister-in-law; Lovey a cousin.

⁴⁴ Fuke, *Imperfect*, 55.

⁴⁵ Fuke, *Imperfect*, 203. And Brugger, *Maryland*, 419.

⁴⁶ Lake, "An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland."

jobs lured people to the canning factories in Cambridge and beyond, church attendance declined, forcing closure in 1987.⁴⁷ The trustees of the church demolished the school building in the late 1990s, and the church needs immediate stabilization and preservation.

Landowners in the Peters Neck, Harrisville Road, and Blackwater region continued to cut timber and till the land for agriculture for decades after the Civil War. The land, being low, flooded easily and over time became less productive. Many African Americans in Dorchester left the county for jobs in Baltimore, Washington, Wilmington, New Jersey, Philadelphia, and beyond. The black population in Dorchester dropped nearly sixteen percent between 1860 and 1870, from 8,987 to 7,556 people.⁴⁸ For those who stayed, new jobs in canning factories—fruit, sweet potatoes, lima beans, white potatoes, and tomatoes, in addition to oysters and crab meat—in Madison and Cambridge offered steady work and pay. Oystering, trapping muskrat for furs, and fishing provided steady employment and income, too.⁴⁹ Several railroad branches laid during the 1870s, including the Cambridge and Seaford and the Baltimore and Eastern Shore, provided rapid transportation for agricultural and seafood products from Dorchester to markets in major East Coast cities.

⁴⁷ “Malone’s Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586.”

⁴⁸ Fuke, *Imperfect*, 49.

⁴⁹ During the 1920s and the Great Depression, agriculture suffered an economic collapse, contributing to further abandonment of poorly drained and fallow fields. Muskrat trapping and the selling of furs helped provide income and sustenance to many Dorchester families. Many sold their pelts to the Delmarva Fur Farms, Inc., of Philadelphia, a corporation that owned thousands of acres in the Blackwater region. On December 31, 1931, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission - established in 1929, by the passage of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act and authorized to study and approve land or water resources recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for purchase or rental by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - approved the purchase of 10,000 acres in Dorchester County from Delmarvia Fur Farms, and two other landowners in the Blackwater region. Blackwater's extensive marshes, shallow water habitats subject to seasonal flooding and drainage conducive beneficial foraging habitat for wildlife, and agricultural fields essential to thousands of migrating and wintering waterfowl. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge now includes 28,000 acres of lush tidal marsh, forests of hardwood and pine, freshwater wetlands, and cropland. The refuge provides resting and feeding area for migrating and wintering waterfowl, particularly Canadian geese following the Atlantic Flyway. Well-established bald eagle populations, once endangered, and the equally rare Delmarva fox squirrel have benefited from the Refuge's conservation efforts. Additionally, hundreds of acres of the former Thompson plantation west of Harrisville Road, and additional land in the Peter's Neck, Madison and Blackwater region were purchased during the early to mid-20th century by Besley & Rogers. Fred W. Besley was Maryland's first State Forester. His goal upon retirement in 1942 and in partnership with son-in-law S. Proctor Rogers, was to “acquire, manage and produce continuous crops of standing timber and wildlife forest land.” He hoped to manage reforestation and improve wildlife diversity and health. Many of the early, historical paths leading through the woods, fields, and wetlands in the Peter's Neck are have been preserved by Besley & Rogers conservation efforts. Glenn A. Carowan and John Statsko, “Comprehensive Conservation Plan Approval for Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Including Blackwater Nwr).” See also http://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/md-conservation-history/FWB_DemoForest_Dedication.aspx

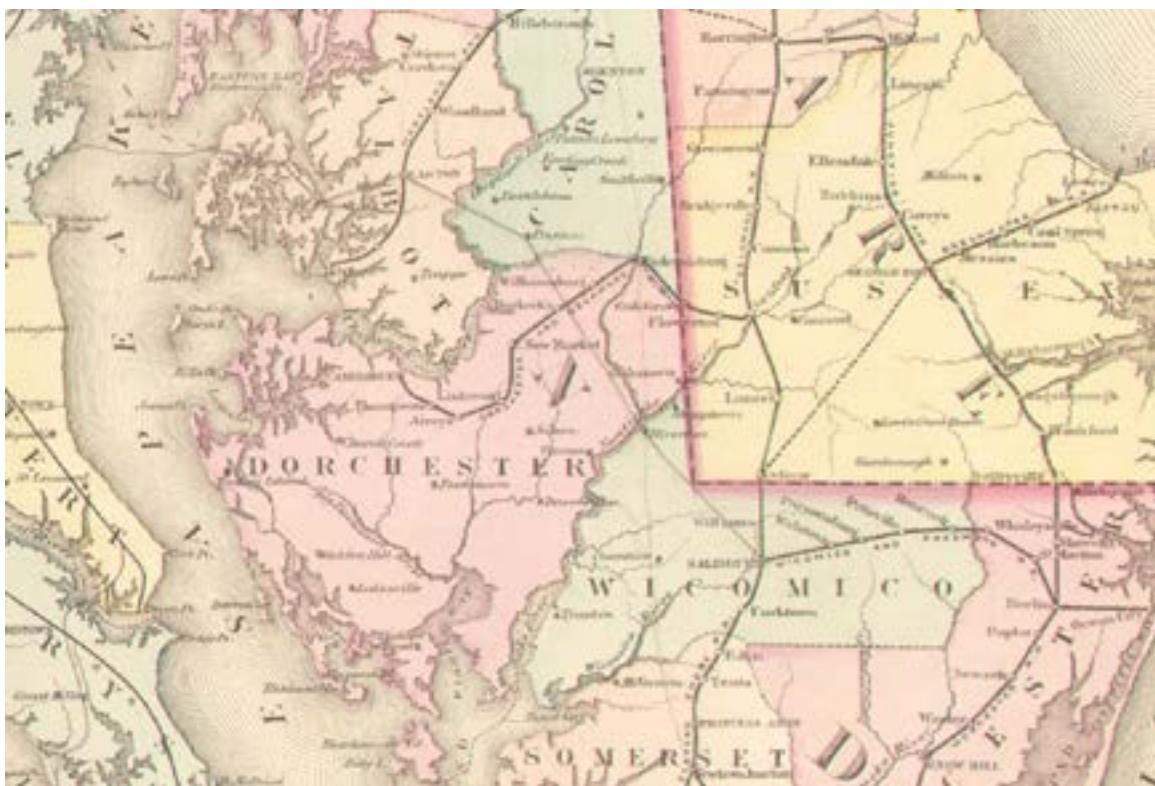


Figure 9.8. 1877 map of Dorchester showing the Cambridge to Seaford, Delaware railroad. Access to distant markets via rail helped expand the agricultural and canning businesses in the region. Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

The Smithville community established a small congregation called Jefferson Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, now known as the New Revived United Methodist Church, approximately a quarter mile south of Taylor's Island Road (MD Route 16) in 1876. The current single-story Gothic Revival frame church, built in 1924, replaced an unknown earlier structure. The church is still active, though membership has declined dramatically since the middle of the twentieth century. Sea-level rise threatens the church and graveyard today.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ See “Sea Grant film explores a diminishing Smithville,” and the documentary film *Smithville*, <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/news/sea-grant-film-explores-diminishing-smithville>.



Figure 9.9. New Revived Church in Smithville, established in 1876, still holds services. Dorchester County Office of Tourism.

In 1880, the black community at Harrisville established Union Mission Church, a “plain wooden structure without a steeple.” Situated on Harrisville Road, between the boundaries of the former Thompson plantation and the Baptist Meeting House in Woolford on Rte. 16, the property also supported the Harrisville Colored School.⁵¹ In 1896, the School Commissioners of Dorchester County acquired the school, making it a publicly owned institution. A new church replaced the old in 1910 and the congregation renamed it St. Paul’s Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1940, the church trustees reacquired the school from the Dorchester County Board of Education, which deaccessioned several schools in the county after consolidating school districts, and they refashioned it into a community center.⁵² The church is no longer used for regular services and needs preservation.

⁵¹ “Harrisville Colored School, D-816.” And “St. Paul’s Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606.” The congregation, established in 1880, did not complete a church building until 1888. According to the church history, the original church building was sold to Mrs. Fannie Cornish for use as a house for her parents after a fire burned their home.

⁵² “Harrisville Colored School, D-816.”



Figure 9.10. Harrisville Colored School and Church along Harrisville Road opened in 1880 but are both closed now.
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.

There were many free families already living in Bucktown when Maryland celebrated Emancipation on November 1, 1864, including nearly twenty black landowners, some of them immediate neighbors to the Brodess property. The five Brodess brothers—Richard, John, Charles, Benjamin, and Thomas—operated their deceased parents' farm near the village.⁵³ Their sister Mary Ann married neighbor William Mills and their youngest sister, Henny, lived with her. In the village, the store passed through several owners until 1871 when Thomas Meredith, Pritchett Meredith's son, purchased the store and shopkeeper's house for \$2,000 from the Corkran family. Meredith owned thousands of acres of agricultural fields in and around Bucktown worth \$8,000 in 1870.⁵⁴ He eventually acquired the Corkran “Big House,” to the southeast of the store. The property remained in the family until the Great Depression, though in 1892 and years after Meredith’s death, the heirs sold the store and shopkeeper’s house.⁵⁵ Descendant Jay Meredith and his wife Susan acquired the store, shopkeepers house, and the federal style residence in the 1990s, bringing the property back under family ownership. After years of renovation and stabilization, the Bucktown Village Store is open to the public for visitors exploring the Harriet Tubman Byway and the sites associated with her life within the Monument boundaries.

⁵³ John was also a school teacher.

⁵⁴ “Bucktown Village Store, D-80.”

⁵⁵ Ibid. “Meredith/Bradshaw House/Bucktown Storekeepers House, D-774.”; “Clement Waters House (Aka Thomas M. Meredith House, Lewis House), D-81.”

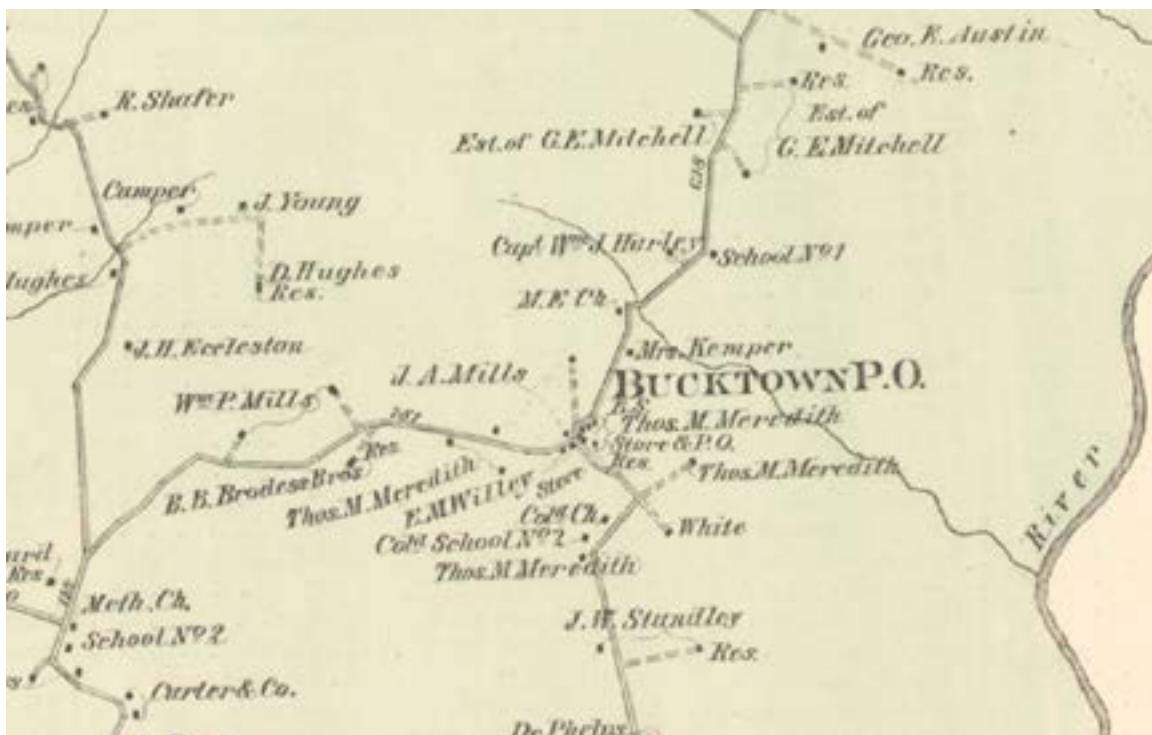


Figure 9.11. 1877 Map showing “B.B. Brodessa Bros.” property, the Bucktown Store, and Bazel “Col’d” Church and “Col’d School No. 2.” Johns Hopkins University, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases.

Before his death in 1881, Meredith sold “eighty-one square perches of land to the Trustees of the Bucktown Mission Church of the Methodist Episcopal denomination” to the black community for one dollar. This may have been a formal transaction to legally ensure ownership by the black trustees of the church, for the 1877 county map shows two buildings labeled “Col’d Ch. & Col’d School No. 2” on the site.⁵⁶ Nathan Bazel (Baswell), a formerly enslaved man from Bucktown and a soldier in Co. A 19th USCT, became the congregation’s first minister and for whom the church is named. A newer church building replaced the original in 1911 and remains on the property. The congregation closed the church several years ago, and the building is in severe disrepair with a collapsed roof and unstable walls exposing the interior to the elements.⁵⁷ Immediate stabilization and preservation is needed.

Segregation in public facilities kept blacks and whites separated throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1896, the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* upheld the constitutionality of “separate but equal” accommodations in public facilities, dealing a stunning blow to the civil rights of African Americans. By the turn of the century, Jim Crow laws further circumscribed African American liberties and rights. Grandfather clauses—limiting the right to vote to those eligible to the franchise

⁵⁶ Lake, “An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland.”

⁵⁷ “Bazel’s Chapel (Bazel’s Methodist Episcopal Church), D-274.”

before the Fifteenth Amendment passed—were defeated when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1910, challenged the law in Maryland.⁵⁸

After the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, which struck down state laws segregating schools by race, in 1954 Maryland began the process of complying with the court order. Cities like Baltimore and the state's University system were among the first to transition to integrated classrooms. But white residents in rural counties like Dorchester fought desegregation with vigor. Years of violent and non-violent protests on the streets of Cambridge and occupation by the National Guard ushered in integration in 1969.⁵⁹

Harriet Tubman After the Civil War

After the war, Tubman rejoined family and friends who had settled in Auburn, New York. She struggled to make ends meet and provide for a household of dependents. Through hard work and the collective efforts of boarders, family, and friends, Tubman managed to retain ownership of her home. In November 1868 Sarah Bradford, a modestly successful Victorian-era author, published a short biography of Tubman called *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, bringing brief fame and financial relief to Tubman and her family.⁶⁰ Tubman married Nelson Davis, a veteran twenty-two years her junior, that same year. She and Davis adopted a baby girl, Gertie, in 1874, and together they ran a brick-making business and sold crops from their small farm. Her wood frame home burned in 1880, and she and Nelson built a new home made of bricks from nearby yards.

⁵⁸ Brugger, *Maryland*, 420–26.

⁵⁹ For excellent histories of the Civil Rights movement in Cambridge, see, Joseph R. Fitzgerald, *The Struggle Is Eternal: Gloria Richardson and Black Liberation* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018). Peter B. Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, MD* (Miami: University Press of Florida, 2003).

⁶⁰ To ensure that Tubman received the greatest benefit from the sales of the book, Bradford agreed to forgo any royalties, and donors were sought to underwrite the cost of publishing the book with William J. Moses of Auburn. During the summer and fall of 1868, William G. Wise, a local Auburn businessperson, organized a subscription drive “for the benefit of Harriet Tubman,” raising over \$430 to cover the costs of printing 1000 copies. See William G. Wise, “Subscription List,” in *Harriet Tubman Collection* (Auburn, N.Y.: Harriet Tubman Home Museum, 1868). See also, Ellen Wright Garrison, “Letter, Ellen Wright Garrison to Martha Coffin Wright, December 26, 1868,” in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1868).



Figure 9.12. Harriet Tubman’s brick residence (front view above) and barn (below) in Auburn/Fleming, New York. The property is owned and operated by the AME Zion Church and the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. A management partnership with the National Park Service is pending to operate the Park. National Park Service.



Figure 9.13. Harriet Tubman with family, boarders, and friends standing next to her barn in 1887. L-r: Tubman, daughter Gertie Davis, husband Nelson Davis, Lee Cheney, John Alexander, Walter Green, Sarah Parker, niece Dora Stewart. Cornell University Library.



Figure 9.14. Harriet Tubman circa 1885. H.S. Squyer, Auburn, New York.
National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian.

Tubman often experienced financial insecurity. In 1886, Sarah Bradford published a new edition of Tubman's biography titled *Harriet, the Moses of Her People*. She included stories not revealed in the first biography from 1868, and the rewritten narrative includes far more racist language, and the Tubman quotes reflect a more deeply caricatured plantation dialect. The sales of the book helped Tubman pay her taxes and other bills.



Figure 9.15. Harriet Tubman at sixty-four years old. Taken in Boston around the time Sarah Bradford released a second edition of Tubman's biography in 1886. Ohio History Collection.

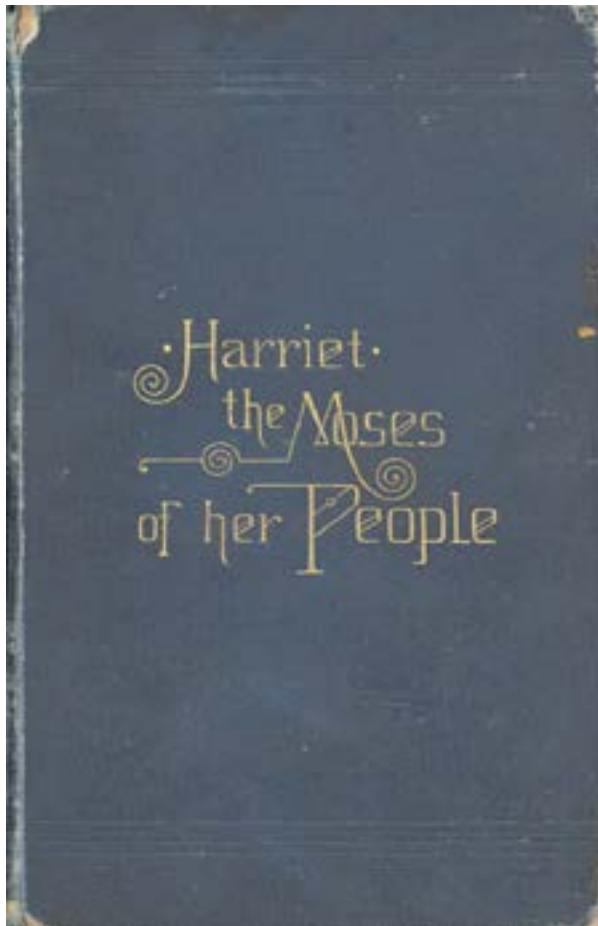


Figure 9.16. Sarah Bradford issued a second edition of Tubman's biography in 1886, with new stories but more racist language. Bradford reprinted this edition in 1896, and she published a fourth edition—with an addendum and additional stories—in 1901.

Nelson Davis was a sick man for most of the time he lived in Auburn. Suffering with tuberculosis, he died on October 18, 1888, at the age of forty-five.⁶¹ Tubman's older brother, John, seventy-seven, died the following year.⁶² As Tubman aged, work became more difficult; she lived day to day by selling chickens and eggs, vegetables from her garden, and sometimes a little milk and butter. Her brother William contributed to the household finances, too, but donations of food and money from friends and relatives helped make ends meet.⁶³ She took in orphaned children, cared for elderly and indigent people, and provided a home for the sick and homeless.⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Davis,” *Cayuga County Independent*, October 18, 1888.

⁶² “John Stewart,” in *North Street Cemetery Records* (Auburn, NY: Cayuga County Historian’s Office, 1889).

⁶³ Conrad, “Tatlock Interview.”

⁶⁴ Walter Green and Harriet Dunbar are just two orphaned children Tubman took care of during the 1880s and 1890s. She took them from the Cayuga Asylum, now known as Cayuga Centers.

A Civil War pension helped her financial situation. Beginning in 1865, Tubman filed a claim for unpaid wages for her war service as a nurse and a spy.⁶⁵ No action was taken, however, and after her husband's death, Tubman applied for a widow's pension under the Dependent Pension Act of 1890. Designed to provide benefits to any disabled war veterans or their widows and dependents, the new pension act expanded the original pension plan that provided compensation only to veterans suffering with disabilities directly related to war service.⁶⁶ Within a month of the enactment of the Pension Act in June 1890, Tubman filed her first claim; five years later, on October 16, 1895, she was finally granted an \$8.00 per month pension as the widow of Nelson Davis.⁶⁷ She received a lump sum retroactive payment of approximately \$500 in late October 1895, covering the sixty some odd months from the time she first applied for the widow's pension until it was finally approved. When Tubman finally received payment in October 1895, her friends viewed it as inadequate; she still deserved back pay and official recognition of her service that would come with it. Finally, in January 1899, Congress awarded her twenty dollars per month: eight dollars per month as the widow of Nelson Davis and twelve dollars for her services as a nurse.⁶⁸

Tubman became deeply engaged in the spiritual and social world of the A.M.E. Zion Church in Auburn.⁶⁹ In 1891, the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion church moved from its location on Washington Street to a new spot on Parker Street. Tubman pledged \$500 for its construction.⁷⁰ She stayed actively involved in community work, raising money and collecting clothing for needy families. "I have been appointed by the first M.E. and the A.M.E. [Zion] Churches of Auburn," Tubman told Mary Wright in a dictated letter, "to collect clothes for the destitute colored children and the things which you sent are very acceptable."⁷¹ She had long hoped to establish a home for sick and elderly African Americans, but a lack of financial resources stymied that dream. Her home remained a

⁶⁵ Congress. House of Representatives, "Harriet [Tubman] Davis, Widow of Nelson Charles, Alias Nelson Davis, Pension Claim," in HR 55A-D1. *Papers Accompanying the Claim of Harriet Tubman* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1890-1899). Miscellaneous note, Jan. 24, 1887, "2nd Sess. 49th Cong. On motion of Mr. Levering leave was granted *Harriet Tubbman* [sic] to withdraw papers from the files of the HOPR. Record, 2nd Sess. 49th Cong. Vol. 18, pt. 1, page 954." Tubman also received some help from Philip Wright in Medford, Massachusetts, who apparently retrieved the files and sent them to her in Auburn. He encouraged her to have the claim petition taken up by her local representative. "Nobody deserves a pension more than you," Wright wrote to her, "and believe that if the matter were pursued by the proper person—the representative from your district in New York—you could get it." See letter, Philip G. Wright to Harriet Tubman, November 24, 1887.

⁶⁶ Donald R. Shaffer, "'I Do Not Suppose That Uncle Same Looks at the Skin': African Americans and the Civil War Pension System, 1865–1934," *Civil War History*, June 2000.

⁶⁷ Representatives, "Tubman/Davis Pension File."

⁶⁸ Don Shaffer, in his work on African American Civil War pensioners, has discovered that while eighty-four percent of white widows who applied received pensions, only sixty-one percent of black widows did.

⁶⁹ For an excellent discussion of the role of churches in black women's lives and organizational activities, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Black Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). See also, Darlene Clarke Hine, *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America*, ed. Kathleen Thompson (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), 184–86.

⁷⁰ "Bills Menace Historic Church," *Syracuse Post Standard*, January 28, 1982.

⁷¹ Harriet Tubman, "Letter, Harriet Tubman to Mary Wright, May 29, 1896," in Ms.A.10.1 no. 90 (Boston: Boston Public Library Rare Book Room, 1896).

refuge for those in great need of shelter. Tubman “is as busy as ever going about doing good to everybody—her house is filled with ‘odds and ends’ of society—and to many are outcast,” Jane Kellogg wrote to Ednah Cheney in 1894.⁷²

In the spring of 1895, Tubman purchased a twenty-five-acre farm adjacent to her home on the Auburn/Fleming line. The property included a large brick residence, a smaller wood frame home, several outbuildings and barns, orchards, and fields. On the day of the auction, Tubman “appeared with very little money,” but was determined to purchase the estate—a perfect site for an infirmary and a home for the sick and homeless. “There was all white folks but me there,” she later told Sarah Bradford, “and there I was like a blackberry in a pail of milk.” Asked how she could possibly pay for the land, she responded, “I’m going home to tell the Lord Jesus all about it.”⁷³

Friends and supporters contributed \$250, and she obtained a mortgage of \$1000.⁷⁴ Within months, she convened a group of A.M.E. Zion ministers and incorporated her property into the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc.⁷⁵ Tubman rented out the residences to defray the mortgage costs until she could raise enough money to open her dreamed-of facilities. She continued to care for elderly, sick, and homeless people, in addition to orphaned children she took from the county asylum.⁷⁶

Tubman approached several longtime friends and patrons, including Ednah Cheney, Frank Sanborn, and Mary Wright to help her pay for another edition of Bradford’s *Harriet, The Moses of Her People*. “If they will help me the money they can hold the books until I can sell enough to pay them back,” she told Wright. “Miss Cheney has done very well by me and I do not wish to ask for money [but] if through her influence I can get the friends to help me I shall be ever thankful. My home is incorporated [sp] for an asylum for aged colored people that will hold the mortgage and I won’t be trouble[d] now.”⁷⁷ Lillie B. Chase Wyman wrote an article about Tubman for the *New England Magazine* in March 1896; another in *The Chautauquan* by Rosa Belle Holt soon followed in an effort to raise Tubman’s profile and generate interest in her new humanitarian venture.⁷⁸

⁷² Jane Kellogg, “Letter, Jane Kellogg for Harriet Tubman to Ednah Dow Cheney, April 9, 1894,” in Ms.A.10.1 no. 36 (Boston: Boston Public Library Rare Book Room, 1894). See also, “Letter, Jane Kellogg to Ednah Dow Cheney, June 25, 1894,” in Ms.A.10.1 no. 37 (Boston: Boston Public Library Rare Book Room, 1894). Kellogg indicated that Tubman was having trouble raising the requisite funds, but that she “is not discouraged but is working along with that object still in view.” Cheney quickly sent along twenty dollars.

⁷³ Sarah H. Bradford, *Harriet. The Moses of Her People* (New York: J. J. Little & Co., 1901), 150.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 150. See also, Bonnie Carey Ryan, *Archaeology of John Brown Hall at the Harriet Tubman Home: Site Report*, ed. Douglas V. Armstrong (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Archaeological Research Report, 2000), 16; J James E. Mason, *Tribute to Harriet Tubman, the Modern Amazon*, ed. Edward U.A. Brooks (Auburn, N.Y.: Tubman Home, 1914).

⁷⁵ The directors were: George E. Carter, James E. Mason, Henry J. Calles, Wesley A. Ely, and Charles A. Smith. See Cayuga County Clerk, “Harriet Tubman Home, Certificate of Incorporation,” (Auburn, N.Y.: Cayuga County Clerk’s Offfce, 1896). See also “New Corporations,” New York Times, April 5, 1896.

⁷⁶ Mason, *Tribute*.

⁷⁷ Tubman, “Tubman to Wright, May 29, 1894.”

⁷⁸ Lillie B. Chase Wyman, “Harriet Tubman,” *The New England Magazine*, March 1896; and Holt, “Heroine.” Wyman, and possibly Holt, may have also received information about Tubman from Eliza Wright Osborne.

Tubman continued to frequent suffrage meetings in New York and Boston, and traveled as far as Chicago and Washington, DC, too. When she trekked to Boston, she also visited her nephew Elijah Stewart and his family, friends from Maryland, and her former abolitionist associates and their children.⁷⁹ Because she could neither read nor write, Tubman “paid no attention to time-tables.” She would go to the train station in Auburn and “sit and wait for the first train that would take her easterly to Boston.”⁸⁰

In April 1897, the *Woman’s Journal*, the white suffrage movement’s official newspaper, reported several receptions in Tubman’s honor in Boston, sponsored by former abolitionists and current suffragists.⁸¹ To get there, however, Tubman sold one of her cows to pay for her train ticket.⁸² William Lloyd Garrison’s son, William Jr., welcomed her to a gathering at his office where he offered the latest edition of her biography for sale.⁸³ Tubman visited with Sanborn and the other Garrison children, and spoke at the Old South Meeting House on Washington Street in the city.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Conrad, “Tatlock Interview.”

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Concerning Women,” *The Woman’s Journal*, April 17, 1897.

⁸² Helen Tufts Bailie, “Helen Tufts Bailie Journal, 1886–1936,” in *Helen Tufts Bailie Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1897).

⁸³ “Concerning Women.” See also William Lloyd Garrison Jr., “Scrapbooks Vol. IX: ‘The Anti-Slavery Struggle,’” in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1897).

⁸⁴ Hannah Parker Kimball, “Christ in the Slums,” *The New England Magazine*, July 1897, 635.



Figure 9.17. Harriet Tubman at a National Association of Colored Women convention in Washington, DC in July 1896. At seventy-four years old, she continued her campaign for suffrage.⁸⁵ Tubman frequently attended suffrage meetings in New York and Boston throughout the late 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s, and she spoke as often as she could.

Library of Congress.

In August she met with Professor Wilbur Siebert in Cambridge, who interviewed her for his documented anthology on the Underground Railroad.⁸⁶ Though Tubman was “considerably aged and worn,” he wrote, “her mind was still clear.”⁸⁷ He noted that she dozed off at “frequent intervals” of every half hour or so for a few minutes, then regained consciousness and carried on “without losing the thread of the conversation.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Library of Congress. *Harriet Tubman at a National Association of Colored Women convention in Washington, DC in July 1896*. Courtesy Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park, Maryland. Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/tubman.aspx>.

⁸⁶ Wilbur Henry Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1898).

⁸⁷ Siebert, “Tubman Interview [Siebert].”

⁸⁸ Ibid.



Figure 9.18. Harriet Tubman posed for a photograph for Wilbur Siebert, who included her image and history as an Underground Railroad agent in his 1898 book, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*. Ohio History Collection.

Tubman’s fame spread overseas; Queen Victoria of Great Britain read Tubman’s narrative and being “pleased with it,” sent Tubman her Diamond Jubilee commemorative medal in 1897, and an exquisite fine-lace shawl.⁸⁹ The Queen also invited Tubman to her birthday celebration, but Tubman regretted that she “didn’t know enough to go.”⁹⁰ It was more likely that she could never have afforded to go.

⁸⁹ James B. Clark, “An Hour with Harriet Tubman,” in *Christophe: A Tragedy in Prose of Imperial Haiti*, ed. William Edgar Easton (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1911). The shawl is on display at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

⁹⁰ Ibid. The letter, “was worn to a shadow,” Tubman told Clark. “It got lost, somehow or other. Then I gave the medal to my brother’s daughter to keep,” 65.



Figure 9.19. The delicate lace shawl Queen Victoria sent Harriet Tubman in 1897. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Charles L. Blockson.

The terrible headaches and seizures from her childhood head injury remained a constant in her life. As she aged the headaches bothered her and she suffered more. Sometime during the late 1890s, she endured brain surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital to alleviate the pressure from her skull fracture.⁹¹ Later, she told Sarah Bradford's brother Samuel Hopkins,

When I was in Boston, I walked out one day, I saw a great big building, I asked a man what it was, and he said it was a hospital. So I went right in, and I saw a young man there, and I said, ‘Sir, are you a doctor?’ and he said he was; then I said ‘Sir, do you think you could cut my head open?’ … Then I told him the

⁹¹ Bradford, *Harriet*, 1901. “Harriet’s friends will be glad to learn that she has lately been for some time in Boston, where a surgical operation was performed on her head.” 151. Efforts to locate records of this surgery have been unsuccessful. Thanks to Jeffrey Meflin at the Massachusetts General Hospital Archives for researching this.

whole story, and how my head was giving me a powerful sight of trouble lately, with achin' and buzzin', so I couldn't get no sleep at night. And he said 'Lay right down on this here table,' and I lay down.

'Didn't he give you anything to deaden the pain, Harriet?'

No sir; I just lay down like a lamb before the slaughter, and he sawed open my skull, and raised it up, and now it feels more comfortable.

'Did you suffer much?'

Yes, sir, it hurt, of course; but I got up and put on my bonnet and started to walk home, but legs kind of give out under me, and they sent for a ambulance and sent me home.⁹²

Samuel Hopkins's grandson, Samuel Hopkins Adams, later wrote that Tubman refused anesthesia when offered. She preferred a bullet to bite on, she told him, like the Civil War soldiers she had held down during medical amputations during the war. "Harriet lay motionless as a log, mumbling prayers through teeth clenched on the bullet."⁹³

⁹² Ibid., 152–53.

⁹³ See Samuel Hopkins Adams, *Grandfather Stories* (New York: Random House, 1947), 277.



Figure 9.20. Harriet Tubman circa 1900–1905 and sometime after brain surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Tubman faced discrimination and struggled to claim her rights as a full citizen.

Over the last few decades of her life Tubman transitioned her activism to women's rights, Civil Rights, humanitarian activities, anti-poverty, health care advocacy, and more. Though she remained quite active, she was becoming feebler, and many visitors and friends feared she was close to death many times. In November 1899, Agnes Garrison, who was spending time in Auburn visiting with her aunt, Eliza Wright Osborne, encouraged Tubman to tell "stories of her youth which a stenographer took down as best she could," though it was "impossible to unravel the chronology."⁹⁴ Eager to record as much of Tubman's memories as possible, they met with her several times. "We had another bout with Harriet . . . she got warmed up to her narrative yesterday and acted out parts of it, crawling on the floor, gesticulating and singing one of the old songs in a curious, nasal, mournful voice."⁹⁵ Agnes

⁹⁴ Agnes Garrison, "Letter, Agnes Garrison to Ellen Wright Garrison, November 24, 1899," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1899). Agnes is the daughter of Ellen Wright and William Lloyd Garrison II. Agnes also noted in her letter that Tubman "refused refreshments because it was Friday" and she "always fasts . . . until the Lord comes down from de cross."

⁹⁵ "Letter, Agnes Garrison to Ellen Wright Garrison, November 26, 1899," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1899). The transcript of these interviews has not been located. Though one of the children is most certainly her great niece Eva Katy Stewart, the identities of the other children remain unknown.

marveled at Tubman's persistence, noting that at seventy-seven years old, Tubman was caring for three orphaned children.⁹⁶

In 1901, Bradford issued another edition of *Harriet, The Moses of Her People*, adding twenty-one additional pages of biographical material. Bradford earmarked profits from the book's sale for Tubman and the dependents in her home. She worried about Tubman's health and vulnerability. Tubman was "in deplorable condition," Bradford told Franklin Sanborn, "a pure wreck," and that she would keep the money she gets for Tubman and pay her bills as needed.⁹⁷ Longtime friend Emily Howland sold copies, too.⁹⁸

Though friends thought Tubman was too fragile to live much longer, she rallied. She attended numerous suffrage, church, and community meetings in New York and Boston. While attending a suffrage meeting at Eliza Wright Osborne's home in Auburn during late 1902, Susan B. Anthony met again with Harriet; they had not seen each other for some time, perhaps since the earlier suffrage meeting in Rochester in 1896. Anthony would later write, "[t]his most wonderful woman - *Harriet Tubman* - is still alive . . . All of us were visiting at the Osborne's, a real love feast of the few that are left and here came *Harriet Tubman!*"⁹⁹

⁹⁶ "Letter, Agnes Garrison to Ellen Wright Garrison, December 1, 1899," in *Garrison Family Papers* (Northampton, MA: Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, 1899).

⁹⁷ Letter, Sarah Bradford to Franklin Sanborn, May 11, 1901(1?), in Jean Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and Life Stories* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

⁹⁸ Emily Howland, "Emily Howland Diaries," in *Howland Family Papers* (Swarthmore, PA: Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, 1901–1905). See entries for December 21–23, 1901; January 4, 18; Nov. 15, 18.

⁹⁹ Conrad, *General Tubman*, 216. Susan B. Anthony dated this January 1, 1903. Elizabeth Smith Miller, Gerrit Smith's daughter, Emily Howland, Rev. Anna Howard Shaw and Ellen Wright Garrison, daughter of Martha C. Wright and the wife of William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., were all in attendance. Emily Howland also wrote in her diary of this gathering of aging suffragists at Osborne's home, noting that "Harriet said we should never all be there again together I tho't so I dreaded to turn away from the charmed group of [?] souls." See Howland, "Howland Diaries." November 18, 1902. See also (Ida Husted Harper, ed. *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. V (New York: J.J. Little & Ives Co., 1922), 60.

Mrs. Tubman, Who Served Col. Shaw's Last Meal, Present at His Memorial



SHAW'S NURSE AT MEMORIAL

Mrs. Tubman, Who Gave the Colonel His Breakfast the Morning He Was Killed and Nursed His Soldiers, Comes to Monument.

THOUGH 92, JOURNEYS FROM AUBURN, N. Y.

Show Veterans Association, Salem Garrison and Bell Post Hold Exercises at the Memorial and Leave Tributes.

Overlooking the Lowell-ist on Indian ridge, where lie the remains of Longfellow, a wreath of flowers has been placed on the grave of the colored boy. The grave of an old Negro, Mr. Peter Wilson, camp No 2 and Leslie F. Steiner camp No. 1, S. W. V., placed their flags on the grave.

Gen. Andrew C. Wellington's grave was covered with flags, wreaths and flowers. The last resting place of Gen. George W. H. Hunt, the commanding general, a member of the wife of '96, was marked by a G. A. R. flag and marker. The grave of Capt. John C. Jackson, Chaplain, had here its usual complement of wreaths and flowers.

A bunch of roses red, white and blue, and a red rose, were the only decorations on the grave of the late Phillips Brooks. The graves of Capt. Charles H. Parker, Capt. George D. Harrington, Capt. James Peleg Williams, Col. F. Stevens Davis, Gen. F. W. Palmer, Gen. C. Huntington Whistler, Major Henry L. Abbott, Capt. Frank M. Stover, Lt. William Lowell Chapman and James Jackson Lowell were marked with flags.

The cross of decoration was placed on the grave of Capt. Charles H. Parker, and those of his father and brother, Charles Theodore Russell and Charles Andrew Parker, who were decorated for the cross of honor.

John A. Andrew just 16 spent yesterday morning decorating a series of graves. A service was held on Chapel hill, consisting of an address by Commander Jonathan C. Smith, followed by a prayer by Captain Holden, vocal soloes by the Highland quartet, and the reading of a soldier's address at the cemetery. The exercises were conducted by the Boston veterans divided into 26 squads and decorated several hundred graves. All day long which included a procession by the band and guard, and an address by Commodo. Knowles.

FOREST HILLS CROWDED.

Constant Stream of Humanity Passed in and Out During the Entire Day.

From the opening to the closing of the exercises, a constant stream of humanity passed in and out of Forest Hills cemetery yesterday.

The Forest Hills line of the Elevated were taxed to their full capacity. The cemetery never before presented such a beautiful appearance. The beat of drums and the measured tread of marching veterans could be heard all about the grounds as they performed their sacred duty of decorating the graves.

Little knots of veterans would gather around the grave of a comrade and would stand silent until the reading of the record of the dead, by the officer in charge of the detail of the G. A. R.; a wreath would be placed, and the detail of soldiers would move away in the grave of another comrade. This simple ceremony repeated itself all day.

The younger veterans of the Spanish war performed a similar duty for the graves of the ancestors of the grave of the revolutionaries, General George Jacob Warren. A large floral cross and

over each spoke of the death of Union of six colors, whenever the country's honor had been threatened, and prophesied for the human heart man a higher place in the country than the white man who was a traitor to the country that gave him birth.

The service was opened to end from the movement by company E of the 9th regiment, V. I. The march past was followed by a salute of twenty-one guns.

Officers, ladies, matrons had finished the exercises, Robert A. Bell paid G. A. R. dues and the matrons' Boston area association stamp E, a children's organization connected with the corps. There were 20 children in charge of Mrs. Susie Way, mother of the late General. Major General Edward Dixson read the names of the day. Prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Moore, who also recited an extract from Longfellow's Address to the Indians. After a stirring address by the Rev. H. J. Coffin, pastor of the Elmwood Congregational Church, was followed by a quartet of veterans, and tape was sounded for the bugle.

return to the day the post and company were to meet at the spot where the graves of 160 soldiers were decorated and on the return the corps, under the command of Major General Edward Dixson, marched to the harbor in memory of the colored soldiers.

Mrs. Tubman, Who Gave Shaw His Last Meal, at Memorial.

Not the least interested spectator of the悲痛 gathering attending the exercises at the Shaw memorial was one who, bent with the weight of years, grand son and tender on the shoulders, attended the service of the departed and who was the cynosure of all who were present. Her 80-year-old son, a great old man, a Christian worker in the South during the war, gave Col. Shaw his last breakfast before going into the battle, and now him like his son, she too, was ready to follow after her own race, who had the grand purpose to return alive from the terrible war.

Mrs. Tubman, whose home is near in Auburn, N. Y., came from there last week to attend a reception at the Harvard Club, New York, in honor of the solicitation of the W. C. T. U. She was born in slavery in eastern Maryland, and was 27 years old when she first came to Boston in 1849. Later she came to Auburn, and aided by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Frank H. Garrison and others, was instrumental in raising money and other aid for southern refugees in Canada.

When the war broke out she was sent South by Gov. Andrew on a similar mission. She was in Boston, S. C. and her cousin was preparing to go south to recruit soldiers for the soldiers during the day and deliver them night by shooting through the lines. Later she became a nurse and remained in service until the war was over. She was born in slavery and was manumitted before she escaped from slavery and never saw her husband afterward. She now has a widow daughter, Mrs. Maria, who has a vicious appearance. When asked to point out The Herald photographs, she gladly commented that she had never seen so much beauty in her life.

Figure 9.21. Tubman was often hosted in Boston with receptions and other types of gatherings. In 1905 she attended a memorial celebration in honor of Col. Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts regiment. A reporter took her photo of her during the services. She was eighty-three years old. Boston Herald, May 31, 1905. National Park Service.

The financial weight of her properties had long been overwhelming for Tubman. Her dream of opening an independent infirmary and home for aged blacks faltered due to lack of funds, so she continued to care for people in her home. At the second meeting of the National Association of Colored Women, held in Chicago in August 1899, Tubman offered her twenty-five-acre property to the organization, hoping that they would be able to carry on her vision for the home. The organization thanked Tubman for her offer, but declined to accept it because the property was encumbered by a mortgage.¹⁰⁰ At one point Tubman had to sell her cows to pay the taxes on the property.¹⁰¹ Finally, during 1903 she signed over the deed to the A.M.E. Zion Church so that the church could fulfill her dream of establishing a home for aged and sick people of color.

¹⁰⁰ National Association of Colored Women, "Minutes of the Second Convention of the National Association of Colored Women... August 14th, 15th, and 16th, 1899" (paper presented at the Second Convention of the National Association of Colored Women, Chicago, IL, August 14–16, 1899).

¹⁰¹ "Tubman Home Dedicated," *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, June 23, 1908.

The home officially opened in June 1908. The large brick building—outfitted as an infirmary and nursing home and named the “John Brown Hall” in memory of the radical abolitionist whom Tubman admired so deeply—employed a director and nurses. The celebration included tours of the Home’s facilities, showcasing the beds, linens and other supplies procured through the efforts of family and the local black community. A parade down South Street, a band concert, reception, and dance completed the day’s festivities.¹⁰² Representatives from Central New York churches, local officials, Tubman Home board members, and representatives from the Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs of New York all attended. Tubman spoke a few words to the crowd: “I did not take up this work for my own benefit . . . but for those of my race who need help. The work is now well started and I know God will raise up others to take care of the future. All I ask for is united effort, for ‘united we stand: divided we fall.’”¹⁰³ The church continued to rent out the wood frame building until a later date when it, too, was refurbished and made into a rest home.



Figure 9.22. Harriet Tubman Home board of managers, circa Spring 1912 at the “John Brown Hall” Infirmary. Tubman was ninety years old. John Brown Hall burned down during the 1940s. Courtesy of the Harriet Tubman Home Inc.

¹⁰² “Tubman Home Open and Aged Harriet Was Central Figure of Celebration,” *Auburn Citizen*, June 24, 1908.

¹⁰³ Ibid.



Figure 9.23. The wood-framed Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged opened sometime before 1914, a few years after John Brown Hall opened, offering shelter and care for aged and infirm African Americans. The building is open for tours today. National Park Service.

By 1911, Tubman had difficulty walking, and within the year moved into John Brown Hall and was cared for by the staff. On March 10, 1913, at the age of ninety-one, she died of pneumonia. Friends and family, including Rev. E.U.A. Brooks and Rev. Charles A. Smith, who had known Tubman during the war when he was soldier with the Massachusetts 54th in South Carolina, Smith's wife Frances, Martha Ridgeway, Tubman's nurse, Eliza E. Peterson of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Texas, and Tubman's two great-nephews, Charles and Clarence Stewart, gathered by her side.¹⁰⁴ Before lapsing into a coma, Tubman told those around her, "I go away to prepare a place for you, that where I am you also may be."¹⁰⁵ News of her death spread across the country, Canada, and England.

On the morning of March 13, several hundred Auburn residents and dignitaries from out of town attended a service held at the Tubman Home. Later that afternoon, her body reposed on the altar of Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church on Parker Street, where mourners paid their last respects. A funeral service attracted hundreds who listened to eulogies offered by church and local dignitaries. They spoke of Tubman's accomplishments, her heroic, moral, and righteous life of fighting for freedom and justice.¹⁰⁶ Mary Talbert recalled her last visit with Tubman, about a month before her death, when Tubman grasped her hand and urged her to "tell the women to stand together for God will never

¹⁰⁴ "Death of Aunt Harriet, 'Moses of Her People,'" *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, March 11, 1913; and "Harriet Tubman Is Dead," *Auburn Citizen*, March 11, 1913.

¹⁰⁵ "Death of Aunt Harriet."

¹⁰⁶ "A Race of Harriets Would Secure the Future of the Negro, Says Bishop Blackwell," *Auburn Citizen*, March 14, 1913.

forsaken us,” a message to the larger women’s rights community to overcome their racial differences in pursuit of a common goal.¹⁰⁷

The medal given to her by Queen Victoria was placed in the casket, and her hands clutched a crucifix; her casket was draped in an American flag.¹⁰⁸ She was buried at Fort Hill cemetery, next to her brother William Henry, nephew William Henry, Jr., and his wife Emma Stewart. Two small pine trees, planted as markers for William Henry and Emma framed the graves.¹⁰⁹ The *New York Times* listed her as one of the most important people in the world to have died that year.¹¹⁰



Figure 9.24. Harriet Tubman’s burial at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, NY. March 13, 1913. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Gift of Charles L. Blockson.

¹⁰⁷ *Auburn Citizen*, March 14, 1913, p. 5

¹⁰⁸ “Aunt Harriet’s Funeral,” *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, March 13, 1913.

¹⁰⁹ Those pine trees, now more than one-hundred years old, stand tall over the graves today.

¹¹⁰ For more family history, see Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*.

Tubman Myth and Memory

Tubman's legacy lived on in memory in the decades following her death. Her history, taught mostly in segregated classrooms through literature on black heroes and heroines, relied heavily on Bradford's nineteenth-century biographies.¹¹¹ Highly fictionalized accounts of her life began to appear in the 1930s and 1940s in young adult and juvenile works riding renewed interest in the Underground Railroad featuring mostly white heroes sweeping the nation at that time.¹¹²

During the 1930s, the American Communist movement appropriated Tubman as a feminist icon in recruitment literature aimed at women and the black community.¹¹³ The Party noted that while the slaves were struggling with freedom "from chattel bondage, a labor movement was growing up in America dedicated to the freedom of industrial slaves."¹¹⁴

During the late 1930s, Earl Conrad, a former teamster union organizer in Harlem, a Communist sympathizer, and New York correspondent for the *Chicago Defender*, began researching a full-length biography of Tubman. For five years Conrad faced resistance to his efforts to investigate and document Tubman's history. Librarians and archivists ignored or rejected his requests for help. Publishers turned down his manuscript time and time again. Finally, in 1943 Carter G. Woodson's newly founded African American press Associated Publishers in Washington, D.C. agreed to publish Tubman's biography.¹¹⁵

During World War II, in June 1944, The National Council of Negro Women sent a request to the U.S. Maritime Commission to name a Liberty ship in honor of Tubman. The S.S. *Harriet Tubman* was the first Liberty ship, out of thousands, named for a black woman, and only one of eleven named for an African American.¹¹⁶ It was possibly a direct result of renewed attention to Tubman's life though the publication of Conrad's biography the previous year that influenced the decision to name a ship for her. The *Auburn Citizen Advertiser* noted that Conrad was "partially responsible for the fact that the ship" would

¹¹¹ Benjamin G. Brawley, *Women of Achievement. Written for the Fireside Schools of the Women's American Baptist Home Mission Society* (Chicago: Women's American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1919); *Negro Builders and Heroes* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); Elizabeth Ross Haynes, *Unsung Heroes* (New York: DuBois and Dill, 1921); George F. Bragg, *Heroes of the Eastern Shore* (Baltimore: G. F. Bragg, 1939); *Men of Maryland* (Baltimore: Church Advocate Press, 1925); Thomas W. Burton, *History of the Underground Railroad, American Mysteries, and Daughters of Jerusalem* (Springfield, Ohio: Whyte Printing Co., 1925). See also, Henrietta Buckmaster, *Let My People Go* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

¹¹² David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 231–37. See, Hildegarde Hoyt Swift, *The Railroad to Freedom: A Story of the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1932); Anne Parrish, *A Clouded Star* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948); Oscar Sherwin, "I'se Free 'Fo' I Die," *The Negro History Bulletin*.

¹¹³ Sasha Small, *Heroines* (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1937).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 20.

¹¹⁵ See Earl Conrad papers, Cayuga Community College, Bourke Memorial Library, Auburn, NY. See also EC/HTC, Reel 1, Box 3, Folder C1.

¹¹⁶ Mary McLeod Bethune, "Letter, Mary Mcleod Bethune to Mrs. Caroll Johnson, May 4, 1844," in *Bryant Family Scrapbook* (Auburn, NY: Private Collection, 1944). See also Robert Bent, "Research Correspondence," in S.S. Harriet Tubman (South Portland, ME: Spring Point Museum, 1998).

bear Tubman's name, "because he brought her to general public attention" with his new biography. But it was a concerted campaign by black women across the country that made the difference.¹¹⁷

On June 3, the S.S. *Harriet Tubman* was launched from its berth at the New England Ship Building Company in the South Portland, Maine. Eva Stewart Northrup, Tubman's grandniece, christened the ship during the ceremony attended by Tubman relatives and dignitaries from across the country.¹¹⁸ The National Council of Negro Women sponsored a War Bond drive with the slogan, "Buy a Harriet Tubman War Bond for Freedom."¹¹⁹



Figure 9.25: The launching of the Liberty ship SS *Harriet Tubman*, South Portland, Maine shipyard, June 3, 1944.
National Archives.

¹¹⁷ "Harriet Tubman, New Liberty Ship, Launched in Maine," *Auburn Citizen Advertiser*, June 3, 1944.

¹¹⁸ See, *ibid.* "S.S. *Harriet Tubman*, Named for Woman Abolitionists, Goes Down Ways at Portland, Maine," *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 6, 1944; and Toki Schalk, "A Dream Come True," *ibid.*, June 10, 1944. Alida Stewart Johnson and Thelma Frazier, both grandnieces, were matrons of honor. Twenty-two relatives attended the festivities, including members of the Bowley, Stewart, Keene, Cornish, Proctor, Thompson, Bryant, Brickler, and Wilkins families.

¹¹⁹ "S.S. *Tubman* Goes Down Ways."

Conrad's book laid the foundation for fictionalized juvenile biographies of Tubman that emerged during the late 1940s and 1950s, including Dorothy Sterling's *Freedom Train, The Story of Harriet Tubman*, and Ann Petry's *Harriet Tubman, Conductor on the Underground Railroad*.¹²⁰ Both of these juvenile works, and those that followed, used fictitious characters and situations, expanding and perpetuating the mythical story of a runaway slave. These books, however, helped secure Tubman's place in the pantheon of American heroes, first as an African American icon and then, later, as a feminist symbol. The 1960s brought renewed attention to black history and historical figures, and by the 1980s Tubman's life story became a staple of mainstream juvenile literature. Racial and gender proscriptions muted and reconfigured Tubman's place in collective memory and historical literature, making her suitable for juvenile biographies but not as a subject of serious historical inquiry until the turn of the twenty-first century. Though the myths served the varied cultural needs of black and white Americans over time, the obscurity in which the details of her life remained reflected the racial, class and gender dynamics of our nation. Harriet Tubman's life is more remarkable in its truth than fiction, the essence of an American hero.

On the Eastern Shore of Maryland, history and the stories told by communities there are rooted in real and imagined memories about a time, a place, and people. Oral traditions and folk tales about Tubman and antebellum life in the region vary in faithfulness to historical events and people. Numerous fictionalized versions of Tubman's life story, including Ann Petry's still-in-print juvenile novel *Harriet Tubman, Conductor on the Underground Railroad* and the 1978 NBC two-part series *A Woman Called Moses* starring Cicely Tyson based on a novel written by Marci Heidish, influenced many of these beliefs. In combination with flawed and inaccurate Tubman biographies written in the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, and scores of fictionalized children's biographies that have flourished since the 1950s, these sources have served to suppress many memories rooted in the antebellum period. Until very recently, wayside signs at a small Harriet Tubman Park along Route 50 in Cambridge included fictionalized characters, situations, and events drawn from the Heidish novel and movie.¹²¹ Interestingly, until the 1940s, local residents accurately recalled that Tubman and her family were from the Madison area. The publication of Earl Conrad's 1943 biography, *Harriet Tubman* supplanted many of those memories because Conrad did not interview Maryland informants, nor travel to the landscapes of Tubman's youth. Though Conrad uncovered fascinating new details about Tubman's life, his flawed retelling of Tubman's time in Maryland facilitated the reimaging and reframing of Tubman's story on these historic landscapes and in ancestral communities. Conrad's mischaracterized stories about the Brodess family and Bucktown, for instance, eclipsed the

¹²⁰ Dorothy Sterling, *Freedom Train, the Story of Harriet Tubman* (New York: Double Day, 1954); Ann Petry, *Harriet Tubman, Conductor on the Underground Railroad* (New York: Harper Collins, 1955).

¹²¹ Ann Petry's juvenile book and the film *A Woman Called Moses* remain staples of curriculum guides for middle and high school classrooms.

voices of descendant communities in the Peter's Neck area, south of Madison where Tubman was born, and where her father lived.

As a result, conflicting and rival oral histories and traditions, some newly created, fueled a local struggle between different communities competing to tell their version of Tubman's story. Some memories reflect connections to rich nineteenth-century historical and cultural traditions. Some conflate these with the old biographies and fictional treatments, giving life to myths both old and new. These newly processed memories have served to suppress the documented historical record and first-person oral traditions rooted in the antebellum period. Myths and folk tales concerning Tubman's life persist in spite of historical documentation and the publication of twenty-first-century biographies.¹²²

Vestiges of historical memories remained with elders in many communities in Dorchester and the region, but with their deaths those stories and memories, in many cases, disappeared. Until the late twentieth century, most local published histories of Dorchester and the Eastern Shore ignored or barely touched upon black history.¹²³ While that imbalance has changed significantly in the past two decades due to the persistent efforts of the local black communities, including an exceptional, unpublished dissertation by Dr. Kay McElvey on Dorchester's early African American history, tourism officials, the State of Maryland, and numerous Harriet Tubman biographies and histories of Cambridge's Civil Rights Movement, much more could be done.¹²⁴ Changes in the natural environment also threaten the preservation of the region's African American heritage—as physical structures and landscapes disappear, so often do those memories.¹²⁵

The core of the Tubman interpretive experience is rooted in the physical geography and topography of the fields, forests, paths, and waterways of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These landscapes are physical and material, on the one hand, and intangible and nonphysical on the other. Harriet Tubman's community building are observable through the physical and human traces of those communities on the ground, and through the racial, familial, social, and economic relationships that shaped and influenced her life. Interpretation of these geographies of her life: the geography of place, the geography of family, the geography of slavery and freedom, the geography of faith, of communication, of skills, of memory, of communities belong on those landscapes.

The geography of place has deep meaning for Tubman's life experience as well as for those communities within which she lived. Today's descendants of those historic

¹²² Kate Clifford Larson, *Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004); Jean M. Humez, *Harriet Tubman: The Life and Life Stories*. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 2004); Catherine Clinton, *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 2004); Milton Sernett, *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory and History*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2008).

¹²³ Levy, *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland*.

¹²⁴ Kay Najiyyah McElvey, "Early Black Dorchester, 1776–1870: A History of the Struggle of African Americans in Dorchester County, Maryland, to Be Free to Make Their Own Choices," (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1991). Available through UMI and the Dorchester County Public Library.

¹²⁵ See Rona Kobell, "Harriet Tubman's Sinking History," *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 27, 2019.

communities still cherish and revere what many call their “home place.” Rooting visitors in these places, such as her birth site at the Thompson plantation at Harrisville; the fields and woods of the Brodess farm and Bucktown; the forests, fields, wharves, and creeks of Madison, White Marsh, and Peter’s Neck; the rivers and streams of Blackwater and the Choptank River estuary; and the Underground Railroad routes through Poplar Neck in Caroline County can help visitors visualize the breadth and scope of the physical and social landscapes of Tubman’s life. The Harriet Tubman Byway, the Tubman State Park, and the National Monument present potential opportunities for more and enhanced interpretation, preservation, and celebration. Local residents and those with ties to these landscapes may also benefit from growing interest in genealogy and heritage tourism.

CHAPTER 10

RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Historical research and documentation of local Native American indigenous communities—the Choptank and Nanticoke specifically (and possibly Manokin of nearby Somerset County)—of Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore.*

There are a few archaeological studies and scholarly investigations within the Monument boundaries, but they are limited in scope.¹ Today, there are approximately 300 descendant members of the Nause Waiwash band of Indians, named after two historic Nanticoke villages, who collectively represent the present day Choptank, Nanticoke, and Pokomoke peoples in the region. The group has endeavored to record and preserve their history and culture through research and oral histories, sponsoring an annual festival where they share crafts and demonstrations of traditional activities and customs, and establishing and conserving a Long House at the corner of Greenbriar and Maple Dam roads in Dorchester County (within the Monument boundaries.) Encouraging more research and documentation will elevate this history locally and nationally.²

- 2. Historical documentation of the slave trade to Maryland ports and the sale of enslaved Africans to local European Americans.*

Late twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholars have deeply researched the broad and expansive Trans-Atlantic trade from Africa to North and South America. They reveal

¹ See, for example: Lowery, Godfrey, and Eshelman, “Integrated Geology, Paleontology, and Archaeology: Native American Use of Fossil Shark Teeth in the Chesapeake Bay Region.”; Lowery, “Jack’s Reef in the Chesapeake and Delmarva Region: Research into the Coastal Archaeology of the Era between Circa Cal A.D. 480 and Cal A.D. 900.” Gallivan, “The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations.” Willie Graham et al., “Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake,” William and Mary Quarterly 64, no. 3 (2007); James H. Howard, “The Nanticoke-Delaware Skeleton Dance,” American Indian Quarterly 2, no. 1 (1975). Miller, “The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters Along Chesapeake Bay: An Overview.” Martin D. Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (2018); Martin D. Gallivan and Victor D. Thompson, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016); Davidson, “A Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Lower Delmarva Region of Maryland”; Curry, “Birdstones: Some Clarifications from Maryland”; Walker, “Final Report: Phase I Archaeological Identification Survey and Phase II Archaeological Assessment Survey Tract 100m [Linthicum Site/Tubman State Park], Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Ninth Election District, Dorchester County, Maryland.”

² See this Maryland Historical Trust property survey on the Long House building. “Hughes Chapel, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Nause-Waiwash Longhouse, D-282.”

important notable factors that shaped the trade to the Chesapeake and its influence on the contours of colonial life for European settlers and Africans alike. Specific regional studies focusing on the arrival of Africans to the Eastern Shore of Maryland remain limited.

Examination of the extensive records of the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, reveal that few of the more than 30,000 slave trade voyages sailed directly from Africa to Maryland ports. The records of the initial purchase and distribution of enslaved Africans to different areas of Maryland, however, do not exist in county level accounts. The inability to trace the trade of enslaved Africans to the Eastern Shore of Maryland complicates identifying the cultural origins of enslaved people in the HRS area in Dorchester County.

3. *Development of genealogical resources, including conferences, database development, oral history workshops, and “brick wall” sessions specifically for African American genealogy.*

The National Park Service should consider hosting workshops or information sessions for individual historic communities in the region. With the help and resources of the Maryland State Archives, the Dorchester County Historical Society, and the Dorchester County Public Library, NPS could offer Saturday or evening sessions on how to research the roots of specific communities and families with professional genealogists, educators and interpreters. Financial support through partnerships with the state Archives, museums and historical societies to digitize historical resources related to Harriet Tubman, the Underground Railroad, slavery, abolition, and post-Civil War community building in the Monument area.

4. *Additional historical and cultural research using specialists such as trained folklorists, ethnographers and cultural historians.*

Some historic communities have been abandoned, or their physical presence is now obscured or reconfigured by modern roads and buildings. Many communities have been reconstituted because of the physical movement of its residents to new places. Where might researchers look further for historical and cultural influences on Tubman and her familial and social communities within the NM? This may require the assistance of trained folklorists, ethnographers and cultural historians, and specific experts like culinary historian Michael Twitty. Additional research in the following areas may reveal more about Tubman's roots: language, music, food and foodways, architecture, agricultural practices, religious practices, death and burial customs, family, social, and gender conventions, medicinal and healing practices, and naming patterns.

5. *Archaeological investigations at significant sites within the monument boundaries.*

Archaeological work should be considered a priority at the following sites:

- a) The former Thompson home site and plantation, including Ben Ross's homesite and the sites of other African American families living on and near the Thompson lands along Harrisville Road.
- b) Jacob Jackson site
- c) Malone's Church at White Marsh
- d) Bazel Church in Bucktown
- e) Bucktown Village Store and shopkeepers house
- f) Brodess farm
- g) Former Pattison plantation along the Little Blackwater River at the Bridge
- h) Former Staplefort farm at the Little Blackwater River across from Pattison site
- i) Stewart's Canal
- j) Former James Cook site and current Native American Longhouse at Key Wallace Drive and Greenbriar Road.

6. *Sponsor further research into Harriet Tubman's history and context in the designated acquisition area in Caroline County.*

A significant part of the story of Tubman's pursuit of freedom in the region is linked to Dr. Anthony Thompson's two-thousand-acre plantation at Poplar neck near Preston in Caroline County. Quaker and free black neighbors constitute an unusual landscape of freedom in a slave-based world, offering exemplary opportunities to expand and integrate interpretation with the historical and cultural contexts in Dorchester County.

7. *Open the Jacob Jackson site to visitors; develop interpretation onsite and conduct quarterly tours of the property.*

8. *Work with the State of Maryland Highways Department to create a pull-off and access point at Parson's Creek/Stewart's Canal bridge area. Interpretive signage discussing the history of the canal and its relevance to Tubman's history.*

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Figure 5.16. *Showing proximity of free black settlement south of Madison [Tobacco Stick] and the Anthony Thompson plantation where Ben Ross lived in the Parson’s Creek District, Dorchester County, Maryland. Lake, Griffing & Stevenson, 1877.* Stevenson and Griffing Lake, “An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland,” (1877). <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p34%20Parsons%20Creek.jpg?sequence=22&isAllowed=y> Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>

Figure 5.17. *“Nat Turner & His Confederates in Conference.”* Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. “Nat Turner & his confederates in conference”

New York Public Library Digital Collections. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7086-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Figure 5.18. *Bucktown Village Store where Harriet Tubman, then Minty Ross, endured a near-fatal head injury when she was about thirteen years old.* Dorchester County Office of Tourism <https://visitdorchester.org/bucktown-village-store>

Figure 5.19. *Bazel Church and an older structure as they looked during the 1980s. The smaller building is no longer standing, and the church roof has collapsed into the interior of the building as of September 2019.* Bazel's Chapel (Bazel's Methodist Episcopal Church), D-274, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-274.pdf>

Figure 5.20. *Scott's Chapel on Bucktown Road. Like worshipers in the church, the cemetery was segregated, too.* Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway and All-American Road, Dorchester County Office of Tourism. <https://harriettubmanbyway.org/byway-sites/#browse> and <http://harriettubmanbyway.org/scotts-chapel>

Figure 5.21. *Artist's rendering of a Methodist Camp Meeting of African American worshippers.* Solomon Etinge, (1833-1905). "A Negro camp-meeting in the South." *Harper's Weekly*, 1872-08-10. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library. "A Negro camp-meeting in the South." New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-c65b-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Figure 6.1. *A waterfront scene similar to what Madison may have looked like during the mid-1800s. Steam and sailing vessels loaded raw and milled timber and other products from wharves like these.* Page 6 Photos. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p06%20Photos.jpg?sequence=10&isAllowed=y> at <http://jhir.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases.

Figure 6.2. *Road to Ben Ross's cabin site in Peter's Neck during the 1830s through the mid-1840s.* Author Photo.

Figure 6.3. *A table drawn up by Dr. Anthony C. Thompson in 1839 for probate purposes to document the future terms of service for each enslaved individual based on his deceased father's wishes.* Ben Ross is at the top of the list. Anthony C.

Thompson, “List of Anthony Thompson’s Negroes, 1839,” in *Levin Richardson Collection, 1758-1865* (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society). <http://m60006.eos-intl.net/M60006/OPAC/Details/Record.aspx?IndexCode=-1&TaskCode=1119963&HitCount=7&CollectionCode=2&SortDirection=Descending&CurrentPage=1&CurrentLink-Code=MM60006|2949994|1|7144054&SelectionType=0&SearchType=1&Bib-Code=MM60006|544661|3|7144056>

- Figure 6.4. *Church Creek district showing Jones plantation (top right) and the former Thompson home site (bottom left)* Church Creek District. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p51%20Church%20Creek.jpg?sequence=30&isAllowed=y> at <http://jhir.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases.
- Figure 6.5. *1840 U.S. Census showing “Benjamin Ross,” (4th name from bottom) with six “free” people in his household. Though not free, Rit, Tubman and several siblings lived with Ben while working nearby and the census taker may have assumed their status matched Ben’s.* U.S. Census. Year: 1840; Census Place: Parsons Creek, Dorchester, Maryland; Roll: 165; Page: 92; Family History Library Film: 0013185.
- Figure 6.6. *Brodess property (starred) in relation to Bucktown Village.* Bucktown District. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p59%20Bucktown%2c%20Milton.jpg?sequence=38&isAllowed=y> at <http://jhir.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases.
- Figure 6.7. *Reward advertisement for Tom Ritter and Nancy Ennals, who ran away in December 1847. Keene was still advertising for Nancy and Tom’s capture in April 1848.* Cambridge Chronicle, January 15, 1848. Maryland State Archives, Cambridge Chronicle Collection, MSA SC 2482. Maryland State Archives, Cambridge Chronicle Collection. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc2842_1_1/msa_scm8778/html/msa_sc2842_1_1_scm8778-0171.html
- Figure 6.8. *Jacob Jackson’s manumission deed, January 1826. Though not technically free until 1836, Jackson lived as a free man and recorded in the 1830 and 1832 census as free.* “Thomas Jones to Negro Jacob.” Liber ER 10 folio 180. Dorchester County.

- Figure 6.9. *Map of Caroline County with close up of Poplar Neck, where Dr. Anthony Thompson owned 2,200 acres. Thompson required the labor of dozens of free and enslaved workers, including Tubman and her father Ben Ross.* Isler, John B. *Map of Caroline County, Maryland.* [N.P, 1875] Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002628200>
- Figure 6.10. *The Flying Cloud Clipper Ship built in East Boston, possibly using timbers cut and hauled by Ben Ross and the enslaved men on Dr. Thompson's Poplar Neck plantation in Caroline County.* Butterworth, J. E. (active ca. 1853-ca. 1854), artist Brown, E. Jr. (active ca. 1852), artist Currier, Nathaniel (1813-1888), American, lithographer and publisher. *The Clipper Ship Flying Cloud. Ca. 1852.* Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. collection of early Californian and Western American pictorial material, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/tf1290066f>
- Figure 6.11. *Driveway leading to the former Dr. Anthony Thompson plantation in Poplar Neck, Caroline County, MD.* Author Photo.
- Figure 6.12. *Notice for the sale of Tubman's niece, Harriet Jolly and her two-year-old daughter Mary Jane.* Cambridge Democrat, June 27, 1849. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/msa_sc6044_1_65-0054.html. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.
- Figure 6.13. *Notice for the auction to sell Kessiah Jolly Bowley. The auction was postponed, giving her husband John Bowley time to find a way to save her.* "Negro for Sale," Cambridge Democrat, September 5, 1849. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/msa_sc6044_1_65-0083.html
- Figure 6.14. *Reward advertisement for "Minty" and her two brothers Ben Jr., and Harry [Henry].* Courtesy Bucktown Village Foundation. "Three Hundred Dollars Reward," Cambridge Democrat, October 3, 1849. Author Photo. Permission Granted by Jay Meredith of Bucktown Village Foundation.
- Figure 7.1. *The Leverton family home, Preston, MD. Quakers, the Levertons sheltered freedom seekers in their home, a major stop on the path to freedom.* Caroline County Museum of Rural Life and Historical Society. The Museum of Rural Life, 16 N. Second St., Denton, MD 21629. p: (410) 479-2730. email: info@carolinehistory.org

- Figure 7.2. *When Tubman arrived in Philadelphia in 1849 she had never seen a city before.* Schnabel, Finkeldey & Demme, Lithographer, C. M Autenrieth, Edward Collins, and Collins & Autenrieth. *Panorama of Philadelphia. Chesnut Street, east of Fifth / Collins & Autenrieth des.* Pennsylvania Philadelphia, 1856. [Philadelphia: Schnabel, Finkeldey & Demme's Lithogrc. Institute Phila] Photograph. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017651500>
- Figure 7.3. *Baltimore Harbor scene, ca. 1850. Some Dorchester County free and enslaved people worked on the docks in the harbor, secretly aiding Tubman and other freedom seekers.* Cropped from: Baltimore Harbor, Baltimore M.D., stereo card, Bell & Bro. (Washington, D.C.), photographer [ca. 1870]. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/stereo.1s12958>
- Figure 7.4. *Fugitive Slave Law passed by Congress in 1850. Part of the Compromise of 1850, which brought California into the union as a free state, the Act forced northerners to capture freedom seekers and return them to their enslavers.* United States Fugitive Slave Law. *The Fugitive slave law.* Hartford, Ct.? s.n., 185-?. Hartford, 1850. Printed Ephemera Collection; Portfolio 337, Folder 2. <https://www.loc.gov/item/98101767>
- Figure 7.5. *"Effects of the Fugitive Slave Law."* Freedom seekers and their helpers ambushed by armed whites. Kaufmann, Theodor, and Hoff & Bloede. *Effects of the Fugitive-Slave-Law,* 1850. New York: Publ. by Hoff & Bloede. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661523>
- Figure 7.6. *General Routes of various Networks to Freedom via the Underground Railroad.* Brochure. National Park Service Network to Freedom Program. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr/siteadmin/upload/All_Pages_5312018_3.pdf
- Figure 7.7. *Thomas Garrett operated a successful Underground Railroad station in Wilmington, DE for decades.* Chester County Historical Society. Licensing, Photo Archives, 601-692-4800. Use extension for Photo Archives.
- Figure 7.8. *William Still.* Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. "William Still; The underground railroad." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed October 7, 2019. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-bd22-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Figure 7.9. *Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Antislavery Society, 1851.* (rear, left to right): Mary Grew, E.M. Davis, Haworth Wetherfield, Abby Kimber, J. Miller McKim, Sarah Pugh, and (front, left to right): Oliver Johnson, Mrs. Margaret Jones Burleigh, Benjamin C. Bacon, Robert Purvis, Lucretia Mott, James Mott. Education @LibraryofVirginia, “Shaping the Constitution: Resources From the Library of Virginia and The Library of Congress,” http://edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/abolitionist_mott.

Figure 7.10. *Philadelphia Vigilance Committee Members.* Abolitionists Thomas Garrett, 1789-1871; Robert Purvis, 1810-1898; William Still, 1821-1902; Passmore Williamson; Nathaniel W. Depee; James Miller M'Kim; Jacob White; Charles Wise. “Philadelphia Vigilance Committee.” Photograph. 1850. Boston Public Library, Print Department. *Digital Commonwealth*, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/2n49tn59s>

Figure 7.11. *Sydney Howard Gay maintained an active Underground Railroad operation in New York City during the 1840s and 1850s with his associate Louis Napoleon, an African American agent whose career liberating people spanned decades.* Gay, Sydney H. From Portraits of American Abolitionists, Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/database/1123>. Portal 1791.

Figure 7.12. *Stephen Myers, with his wife Harriet, operated a busy safe house in Albany, New York.* Penn, I. Garland (Irvine Garland), 1867-1930. The Afro-American press and its editors, Springfield, Mass., Willey & co., 1891. Digitized and uploaded to the Internet Archive by Boston Library Consortium and Wellesley College. Internet Archives: https://archive.org/details/afroamericanpres00penn_0/page/82

Figure 7.13. *Stephen and Harriet Myers residence, Albany, NY. Their residence is an historic site opened to visitors.* Underground Railroad History Project. <https://undergroundrailroadhistory.org/the-stephen-and-harriet-myers-residence>

Figure 7.14. *Frederick Douglass fled enslavement in Maryland in 1838. Self-educated, Douglass became one of the most popular speakers on the Anti-Slavery lecture circuit and published several abolition newspapers.* Frederick Douglass, Chester County Historical Society, Albert Cook Myers Collection (West Chester, PA). Call no: Photo/Dg327/Bx29. <http://www.chestercohistorical.org/reproductions-permissions>.

Figure 7.15. *Born free in Caroline County, MD, Anna Murray Douglass helped Frederick escape from Baltimore. Harriet Tubman sought shelter for herself and her refugees in their home in Rochester, NY.*

Frederick Douglass National Historical Park, National Park Service (FRDO 246). <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=2813693&id=1EAB7209-1DD8-B71C-07FC-BAF2986D5D2F&gid=1EAB712D-1DD8-B71C-07F6DBBA9D198811>

Figure 7.16. *Announcement for the publication of the narrative of Richard Potter “An Indentured Apprentice, who was Kidnapped near Greensborough, Caroline County, Maryland, in the Year 1853.” Though rejected by most white people, the trade in kidnapped free blacks for sale to the Deep South was a constant threat to families on the Eastern Shore.* American Union. September 9, 1869.

Maryland State Archives, American Union Collection MSA SC 2929. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc2929/msa_sc2929_scm3528/html/msa_sc2929_scm3528-0153.html

Figure 7.17. *Reward for arrest of the arsonist who set the Dorchester County Courthouse on fire in May 1852. Some records were saved from the fire, but many were destroyed and leaving a gap in the historical record.* Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/msa_sc6044_1_65-0117.html

Figure 7.18. *Reward advertisement for Henry Jolly. “\$50 Reward,” Easton Gazette, Easton, MD. September 11, 1852.* Maryland State Archives, Easton Gazette Collection: http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc2940/msa_sc2940_scm12401/html/msa_sc2940_scm12401-0379.html

Figure 7.19. *Reward advertisement for Frank Duckett [Dockings.] Baltimore Sun, October 4, 1852.* https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/run-away_advertisements/pdf/18521012bs1.pdf

Figure 7.20. *Cover of Journal C of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia kept by William Still: containing notices of arrivals of fugitive slaves in Philadelphia with descriptions of their flight, 1852-1857.* William Still. *Journal C of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia kept by William Still: containing notices of arrivals of fugitive slaves in Philadelphia with descriptions of their flight, 1852-1857.* AmS .232. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Treasures Collection. <https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/2030>

Figure 7.21. *William Still's "Underground Railroad Journal C. 1852–1857."* Still recorded detailed information about some of the freedom seekers he helped through Philadelphia during the 1850s. William Still. *Journal C of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia kept by William Still: containing notices of arrivals of fugitive slaves in Philadelphia with descriptions of their flight, 1852–1857.* AmS .232. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Treasures Collection. <https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/2030>

Figure 7.22. *Suspension Bridge over Niagara River near the Falls, 1856.* The bridge was completed in late 1854. Currier & Ives. *The new suspension bridge--Niagara Falls.* New York: published by Currier & Ives. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002710659>

Figure 7.23. *James Stewart posted this reward for his enslaved man, Dick Bowley, on January 20, 1847.* Dick returned soon after this advertisement ran in the newspaper and was set free shortly afterwards. *Cambridge Democrat*, January 20, 1847. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

Figure 7.24. *Reward for the capture of Winnebar Johnson in June 1854.* Johnson settled in New Bedford, MA, and later his family joined him. “Reward,” *Cambridge Democrat*, July 5, 1854. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/msa_sc6044_1_65-0177.html

Figure 7.25. *Mary Jones's advertisement for the capture and return of Jane Pennington.* Jane successfully fled to New Bedford, where her parents had made a home. *Baltimore Sun*, May 1, 1854. https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18540526bs1.pdf

Figure 7.26. *Busy wharves in New Bedford.* The seaport was a popular safe haven for freedom seekers from Maryland. Tirrell, Joseph G. “New Bedford Wharf.” New Bedford Free Public Library, Joseph G. Tirrell Photograph Collection Box 1, Folder 93. Photograph. 1850. *Digital Commonwealth*, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/mk61t4129>

Figure 7.27. *A version of “Old Ship of Zion,” a Methodist spiritual with origins in 1830s–1840s Chesapeake Bay region.* Tubman invoked these words when she sent the coded letter to Jacob Jackson in December 1854. Gilkey, D., Jenks, A. S. (1859). *The Chorus, or, A collection of choruses and hymns: selected and*

original: adapted especially to the class-room, and to meetings for prayer and Christian conference. 10th ed., improved and enl. Philadelphia: A. S. Jenks. p. 170. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nc01.ark:/13960/t8md0qt24&view=1up&seq=176>

Figure 7.28. From left to right: *Harriet Parker residence near Smithville, Jacob Jackson site; Peter's Neck, former Thompson homesite, Jane Kane residence at Buttons Neck near the Creek.* Aeromagnetic map of western Dorchester County, Maryland, and parts of adjacent counties. U.S. Geological Survey, 1974. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34534>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>

Figure 7.29. *William's Still's "Journal C," notebook with page documenting the arrival of Harriet Tubman, her brothers, and friends, December 29, 1854.* William Still. *Journal C of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia kept by William Still: containing notices of arrivals of fugitive slaves in Philadelphia with descriptions of their flight, 1852-1857.* 79. AmS .232. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Treasures Collection. <https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/2030>

Figure 7.30. *Reverend Samuel Green.*

Figure 7.31. *Reward advertisement published by Levin Hodson for the capture of William Andrew Cook, noting he escaped with others. Cook and his companions made their way to freedom with Tubman's help. "\$300 Reward," American Eagle,* May 14, 1856. Cambridge, MD. Maryland State Archives, Dorchester County Newspaper Collection, American Eagle. MSA SC 6044. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_47/html/msa_sc6044_1_47-0004.html

Figure 7.32. *Pages from Sydney H. Gay's Underground Railroad account book, noting the arrival of "Captain Harriett Tubman" with the four men from Cabin Creek, May 1856.* Sydney Howard Gay Papers, 1743-1931, Record of Fugitives 1855 [-1856], MS #0475. Columbia University, "Sydney Howard Gay's 'Record of Fugitives,'" Book 2, 8-9. https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/fugitives/record_fugitives/book2/page8 and https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/fugitives/record_fugitives

Figure 7.33. *Travel schedule for the steamer Kent. Harriet Tubman and "Tilly" boarded the vessel on October 21, 1856 and headed south to Seaford, DE.* Cambridge Democrat, September 24, 1856. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections,

Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.
[http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/
msa_sc6044_1_65-0197.html](http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_65/html/msa_sc6044_1_65-0197.html)

Figure 7.34. *Enslavers Hughlett, Henry, and Wright posted hefty rewards to capture the three men. This made the escape more dangerous, especially because of Joe Bailey's distinctive facial scar.* *Baltimore Sun*, November 22, 1856. Maryland State Archives Legacy of Slavery in Maryland. https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5400/sc5496/runaway_advertisements/pdf/18561122bs2.pdf at <http://slavery2.msa.maryland.gov/pages/Search.aspx>

Figure 7.35. *Harriet Tubman and freedom seekers hiding in a root cellar. Actors in a scene from the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center orientation film, "Soldier of Freedom."* Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park, "Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom" Video. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/tubman.aspx>

Figure 7.36. *Harriet Tubman leading freedom seekers north. Actors in a scene from the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center orientation film, Soldier of Freedom.* Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park, "Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom" Video. Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/tubman.aspx>

Figure 7.37. *Reward for three of the "Dover Eight" freedom seekers. One of the rare escapes from the Bucktown area. Cambridge Democrat, March 18, 1857. "\$600 Reward,"* Cambridge Democrat, March 18, 1857. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.

Figure 7.38. *Enslaver Samuel Pattison's remarkable \$2,000 reward for the capture of his enslaved people who fled in October 1857. "\$2,000 Reward," Cambridge Democrat, October 28, 1857.* Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, Dorchester County Historical Society Newspaper Collection.
[http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_63/html/
msa_sc6044_1_63-0318.html](http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msa_sc6044/msa_sc6044_1_63/html/msa_sc6044_1_63-0318.html)

Figure 7.39. *An artist's sketch of the escape of the "Cambridge 28," showing families with children, a rare example in the history of the Underground Railroad.* Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library. "Twenty-eight fugitives escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland." New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-bccb-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

Figure 7.40. *Revolutionary John Brown circa 1859.* Brown deeply admired Tubman. She believed he was one of the greatest white men who ever lived because he was willing to die for her freedom. Black & Batchelder, Copyright Claimant, Black, James Wallace, and Martin M Lawrence, photographer. John Brown. ca. 1859. December 12. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009633569>

Figure 7.41. *Harriet Tubman.* Lindsley, Harvey B, photographer. *Harriet Tubman, full-length portrait, standing with hands on back of a chair.* ca. 1871. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003674596>

Figure 8.1. *Troops from the 6th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment firing into an unruly mob of southern sympathizers blocking Pratt Street and their progress toward the train station nearby.* Baltimore Maryland United States, 1861. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003663108>

Figure 8.2. *Map showing the distribution of four million enslaved people in the South in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War.* Hergesheimer, E. *Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States. Compiled from the census of.* Washington Henry S. Graham, 1861. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447026>

Figure 8.3. *Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts. He admired Tubman, and supported her trip to Beaufort, South Carolina to help in the relief efforts and offer her skills to the Union Army.* “John Albion Andrew.” Photograph Massachusetts Historical Society, From Portraits of American Abolitionists (a collection of images of individuals representing a broad spectrum of viewpoints in the slavery debate)
Photo. 81.14. 1862. <http://www.masshist.org/database/838>. Portal 1791

Figure 8.4. *Tubman brought Margaret Stewart Lucas north sometime before 1862. Margaret, then about nine years old, believed Tubman kidnapped her from her free family in Maryland. Here is Margaret as an adult with her daughter Alice circa 1900, Auburn, New York.*

Figure 8.5. *The Emancipation Proclamation set enslaved people free in the Confederate States only.* Lincoln, Abraham. *Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.* 1862. The Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana, Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/scsm000950>

- Figure 8.6. *Harriet Tubman in her Civil War uniform—haversack, Union Great Coat, and sniper’s rifle.* National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian. https://www.si.edu/search?edan_q=tubman
- Figure 8.7. *Artist rendering of the Combahee River raid, conducted under Harriet Tubman’s leadership, June 1863.* Harper’s Weekly, July 4, 1863. National Portrait Gallery/Smithsonian. https://www.si.edu/search/collection-images?edan_q=tubman&
- Figure 8.8. *Depiction of the Battle of Fort Wagner. Tubman witnessed the combat and nursed the wounded and dying.* “Storming Fort Wagner,” Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b52016>
- Figure 8.9. *List of the casualties of Commissioned Officers from the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment reported to the Massachusetts Surgeon General’s Office on December 30, 1864 by Major John WM. Appleton. Included in the report is the death record of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, on July 18, 1863 during the assault on Fort Wagner near Charleston, South Carolina.* Appleton, John W. “54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment list of casualties, December 20, 1864.” Document. December 30, 1864. Massachusetts State Archives. *Digital Commonwealth*, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/bk1292235>
- Figure 8.10. *Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln, District of Columbia.* Many free and formerly enslaved men from Maryland joined this regiment, including several from Dorchester County. William Morris Smith, photographer. Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln, District of Columbia. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cwp.4a40242>
- Figure 8.11. *African American soldiers mustering out and returning home to their families.* Waud, Alfred R., Artist. *African American soldiers mustered out at Little Rock, Arkansas.* Arkansas Little Rock United States, 1866. Morgan collection of Civil War drawings, Library of Congress Prints, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004660198>
- Figure 9.1. *Joint resolution of the thirty-eighth Congress of the United States of America, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, abolishing slavery.* Western Bank Note (Engraver), *Abolishing Slavery. Joint resolution of the thirty-eighth Congress of the United States of America, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, abolishing slavery.* D. R. Clark, Illinois, 1868. The Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana, Rare Book

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- Figure 9.2. *Freedmen's Bureau schools provided education for adults, too.* Taylor, James E., Artist. *Glimpses at the Freedmen - The Freedmen's Union Industrial School, Richmond, Va. /from a sketch by Jas E. Taylor.* Richmond Virginia, 1866. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/98501491>
- Figure 9.3. *A Freedmen's Bureau agent preventing violence from erupting between armed blacks and whites.* Waud, Alfred R., Artist. *The Freedmen's Bureau / Drawn by A.R. Waud.* 1868. Harper's weekly, 1868 July 25, p. 473. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/92514996>
- Figure 9.4. *Images of Black male suffrage in Southern States.* Taylor, James E., Artist. *The operations of the registration laws and Negro suffrage in the South /from sketches by James E. Taylor.* Southern States, 1867. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/96513248>
- Figure 9.5. *The Stanley Institute is one of the first independently established black schools in Dorchester County. The one-room schoolhouse located at Christ Rock outside Cambridge opened in 1867 and closed in 1962. It is now a museum.* Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway and All-American Road, Dorchester County Office of Tourism. <http://harriettubmanbyway.org/stanley-institute>
- Figure 9.6. *The Zion School, established in 1868, in East New Market as it looked in the 1980s. It was torn down during the 1990s.* <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-604.pdf>
- Figure 9.7. *Malones Church on White Marsh Road was established in 1864, with the first church opening in 1866. Currently closed, the church was rebuilt in 1890 and needs immediate stabilization and preservation.* Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway and All-American Road, Dorchester County Office of Tourism. <http://harriettubmanbyway.org/malones-church>
- Figure 9.8. *1877 map of Dorchester showing the Cambridge to Seaford, DE railroad. Access to distant markets via rail helped expand the agricultural and canning businesses in the region.* Stevenson and Griffing Lake, "An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland," (1877). Dorchester County. Cropped. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p29%20Outline%20Map%20of%20Dorchester%20Co.jpg?sequence=18&isAllowed=y>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County

and Baltimore City Atlases <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>

Figure 9.9. *New Revived Church in Smithville, established in 1876, still holds services.* Dorchester County Office of Tourism. <https://visitdorchester.org/new-revived-united-methodist-church>

Figure 9.10. *Harrisville Colored School and Church along Harrisville Road. They are both closed now.* Harrisville Colored School, D-816, *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2012), <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-816.pdf>. And *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP)* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 2012), <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-606.pdf>

Figure 9.11. *1877 Map showing “B. B. Brodessa Bros.” property, the Bucktown Store, and Bazel “Col’d” Church and “Col’d School No. 2.” Stevenson and Griffing Lake, “An Illustrated Atlas of Talbot & Dorchester Counties, Maryland,” (1877).* Bucktown District, Cropped. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/34140/p59%20Bucktown%2c%20Milton.jpg?sequence=38&isAllowed=y>. Johns Hopkins, Sheridan Libraries, Maps and Atlases, Maryland State, County and Baltimore City Atlases <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/34140>

Figure 9.12. *Harriet Tubman’s brick residence and barn in Auburn/Fleming, NY. The property is owned and operated by the AME Zion Church and the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. A management partnership with the National Park Service is pending to operate the Park.* From Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, Auburn, NY. <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=6097767&id=e62c8315-5416-4c9d-a3a2-c4894ff236d6&gid=A4F160F4-F641-4C38-B90F-C319B3D5CF82>

Figure 9.13. *Harriet Tubman with family, boarders, and friends standing next to her barn in 1887. L-r: Tubman, daughter Gertie Davis, husband Nelson Davis, Lee Cheney, John Alexander, Walter Green, Sarah Parker, niece Dora Stewart.* Florence Woolsey Hazzard papers, 1819-1976, 1925-1965, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Collection Number: 2516. Tubman and a group of colored invalids, Auburn, 1887. William H. Chaney, photographer. circa 1887. Box 2, Folder 12. https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/pdf_guides/RMM02516.pdf

- Figure 9.14. *Harriet Tubman circa 1885.* H.S. Squyer, Auburn, NY. Horatio Seymour Squyer, 1845-1905. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. NPG.2006.86. https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.2006.86?destination=edan-search/default_search%3Freturn_all%3D1%26edan_q%3Dtubman
- Figure 9.15. *Harriet Tubman circa 1886.* Wilbur H. Siebert Collection, MSS 116 AV; Box 79, Folder 14. Credit: Ohio History Collection.
<https://www.ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll32/id/10688/rec/2>
- Figure 9.16. *Sarah Bradford issued a second edition of Tubman's biography in 1886, with new stories but more racist language. Bradford reprinted this edition in 1896, and she published a fourth edition—with an addendum and additional stories—in 1901.* Sarah H. Bradford. *Harriet, The Moses of Her People.* New York: Geo. R. Lockwood & Sons, 1886; reprint 1896. And, Sarah H. Bradford, *Harriet The Moses of Her People.* New York: J. J. Little & Co., 1901.
- Figure 9.17. *Harriet Tubman at a National Association of Colored Women convention in Washington, DC in July 1896. At seventy-four years old, she continued her campaign for suffrage. Tubman frequently attended suffrage meetings in New York and Boston throughout the late 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s, and she spoke as often as she could.* Library of Congress. Courtesy Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park, Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/tubman.aspx>
- Figure 9.18. *Harriet Tubman posed for a photograph for Wilbur Siebert, who included her image and history as an Underground Railroad agent in his 1898 book, The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom.* Wilbur H. Siebert Collection, MSS 116 AV; Box 77, Folder 21. Credit: Ohio History Collection.
<https://www.ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll32/id/10628/rec/1>
- Figure 9.19. *The delicate lace shawl Queen Victoria sent Harriet Tubman in 1897.* Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Charles L. Blockson. https://www.si.edu/search?edan_q=tubman
- Figure 9.20. *Harriet Tubman circa 1900–1905 and sometime after brain surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.* Photo by W. H. Ernsberger, Auburn, NY.
- Figure 9.21. *Tubman was often hosted in Boston with receptions and other types of gatherings. In 1905 she attended a memorial celebration in honor of Col. Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts regiment. A reporter took her photo of her*

during the services. She was eighty-three years old. Boston Herald, May 31, 1905. Thank you to National Park Service Ranger Ryan McNabb in Boston for this discovery.

Figure 9.22. *Harriet Tubman Home Board of Managers, circa Spring 1912 at the “John Brown Hall” Infirmary.* Tubman was ninety years old. John Brown Hall burned down during the 1940s. The Harriet Tubman Home Inc., Collections, Auburn, NY. Courtesy The Harriet Tubman Home Inc.

Figure 9.23. *The wood-framed Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged opened sometime before 1914, a few years after John Brown Hall opened, offering shelter and care for aged and infirm African Americans. The building is open for tours today.* From Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, Auburn, NY. <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=6097767&id=e62c8315-5416-4c9d-a3a2-c4894ff-236d6&gid=A4F160F4-F641-4C38-B90F-C319B3D5CF82>

Figure 9.24. *Harriet Tubman’s burial at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, NY. March 13, 1913.* Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Charles L. Blockson. https://www.si.edu/search?edan_q=tubman

Figure 9.25. *The launching of the Liberty ship SS Harriet Tubman, South Portland, Maine shipyard, June 3, 1944.* National Archives, Record Group 208: Records of the Office of War Information, 1926 - 1951, Series: Negro Activities in Industry, Government, and the Armed Forces, 1941 - 1945, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/535828>

APPENDIX A

Architectural survey reports and Historic Register nominations for significant historic structures within the Monument boundaries (including some since demolished.)

Bucktown District:

Bucktown Village Store, D-80, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-80.pdf>

Clement Waters House (aka Thomas M. Meredith House, Lewis House), D-81, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2012 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-81.pdf>

Scotts Chapel (aka Bucktown Methodist Episcopal Church, Bucktown United Methodist Church), D-270, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-270.pdf>

Meredith/Bradshaw House/Bucktown Storekeepers House, D-774, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-774.pdf>

Harriet Tubman Historical Marker, D-281, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-281.pdf>

Yarmouth (White House Farm), D-83, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1977 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-83.pdf>

Bazel's Chapel (Bazel's Methodist Episcopal Church), D-274, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-274.pdf>

Brodess Farm, D-746, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-746.pdf>

Maple Dam Road:

Hughes Chapel, Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, Nause-Waiwash Longhouse, D-282, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2005 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-282.pdf>

Blackwater/Key Wallace Drive:

Staplefort House, D-131, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1997 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-131.pdf>

Harrisville:

Brooks Farm, D-36, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1975 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-36.pdf>

St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-606, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1981 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-606.pdf>

Harrisville Colored School, D-816, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1981 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-816.pdf>

Buttons Creek:

Jones Farm, D-38, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1975 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-38.pdf>

Madison/White Marsh district:

Malone's Methodist Episcopal Church, D-586, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2012 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-596.pdf>

Madison (nee Tobaccostick) District, D-650, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1975 <https://mht.maryland.gov/>

secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-650.pdf

John's Point Dwelling, D-223, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2012 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-223.pdf>

Jarrett Farmhouse, D-33, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1969 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-33.pdf>

Benjamin Smith House (Tall), D-32, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1969 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-32.pdf>

Parson's Creek/Smithville district:

Jefferson Memorial Church, D-597, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 1969 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-597.pdf>

Additional sites with possible relevance beyond HATU boundaries:

Church Creek Black School, D-739, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2002 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-739.pdf>

Vaughn Chapel, D-313, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2012 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-313.pdf>

Christ Rock Methodist Church, D-585, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2013 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-585.pdf>

Woolford Baptist Meeting House, D-231, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2012 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-231.pdf>

Lane Methodist Episcopal Church, D-206, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP), Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD. 2010 <https://mht.maryland.gov/secure/medusa/PDF/Dorchester/D-206.pdf>

APPENDIX B

History of the Bucktown Store:

Between 1802 and 1815, Clement Waters acquired hundreds of acres of land held by the various families in the Bucktown area, including the lot where the Bucktown Village Store and shop keepers house sit today. Clement Waters died in fall of 1817, and his heirs, daughter Jane Waters Parks Keene and her husband Benjamin Keene, divided Waters's lands. The Keene's received the properties at Bucktown. When, exactly, they built a store and shop keeper's house on the crossroads is not clear (or Waters built them), but by April 1826 Horatio North was advertising his specialty goods store in Bucktown. He sold "silk and cotton" fabrics, assorted "groceries, china, glass and queensware, hardware and cutlery, and many other desirable articles." Since North did not own property there, it appears the Keenes were leasing portions of the land they inherited. North is not listed in Bucktown in the 1820 or 1830 censuses. In 1829, Aaron Cook paid \$11.50 for a Trader's License to operate "Mercantile Business" with his son, William in Bucktown. Cook and his son are listed in Bucktown in the 1830 census, where he owned a couple hundred acres of woods, fields and a residence (though he did not own the store property.) No other trader's licenses were awarded to any other Bucktown residents at that time, so in 1830, there was only this store at the Bucktown crossroads. Aaron Cook is related to James Cook, the man who hired six-year-old Minty and forced her to check his muskrats in the marsh near the Little Blackwater Bridge.

In September 1834, the Keenes sold the store property to John Mills (see Deed, ER 14, 223-225 and FJH 1, 401-3). Mills ran the store and for a period in partnership with William G. LeCompte, who also lived in Bucktown (see notice for real estate auction, May 1837 "at the store of Messrs. LeCompte & Scott"). In 1846, management of the store fell to "Cowart and McNamara," but by the fall of 1849 John Mills, "Merchant," was shopkeeper again. John Hastings, a wheelwright, lived nearby, indicating the emergence of another business at the crossroads. In August 1853, John Mills sold the store property to John Bradshaw of Cambridge (see Deed FJH 2, 347), who rented the property throughout the 1850s. When Bradshaw died, his son, William Eugene Sulivane Bradshaw sold the property to the Corkran family (see Deed FJH 8, 248,) who at the time lived next door in the historic, Federal style, former Clement Waters house. It is during the Bradshaw period of ownership that the Maryland Historical Trust estimates that the store was renovated and expanded with a shed addition in the rear. Mills also owned property on the opposite corner, and after he died in the mid-1850s, his relatives, Polish and Bannamon Mills, opened a rival store there for a brief time.¹

¹ "Bucktown Village Store, D-80"; "Meredith/Bradshaw House/Bucktown Storekeepers House, D-774."

APPENDIX C

Archival Resources and Online Historical Databases:

Maryland State Archives (MSA): Provincial (colonial) government records; Land (deeds) records, Chattel, Bills of Sale, Certificates of Freedom, Court, Tax, Census, Probate, criminal civil, and judgment records, education, legislative, state, county, city and district records, photographs, church and diocese records, vital records, historical maps, Civil War, historical Maryland newspapers, and other records related to slavery and abolition in the state of Maryland. Of note is the MSA's online "Legacy of Slavery" database, which features records related to enslavement such as runaway advertisements, slave sales, slave censuses, and more. The MSA holds many Dorchester County records related to the lives of black and white families relevant in Harriet Tubman's world. <https://msa.maryland.gov>

Maryland Historical Society (MHS): The Historical Society holds vast collections of photographs, colonial records, slave trade and merchant shipping records, probate, land, private correspondence, account books, journals, and diaries; early broadsides, runaway advertisements, artwork, maps, Civil War, and other records related to slavery and emancipation in the state. <http://www.mdhs.org>

Maryland Historical Trust maintains extensive holdings of National Register nominations for the state. The *Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties* is a documentation archive of the state's architectural, archeological, and cultural resources including dozens related to the Study area http://mht.maryland.gov/research_mihp.shtml

Dorchester County Historical Society offers exhibits highlighting the history of the county with interpretations about local Native American, African American, and European American history and culture, colonial settlement, American Revolution, Early Republic, and antebellum history. The Todd Research Center holds the Society's collections, which includes primary resources, such as private letters, diaries, journals, account books, newspapers, and more. The Center is an important resource for researching family history and regional histories. www.dorchesterhistory.com

Caroline County Historical Society offers exhibits highlighting the history of the county with special interpretive resources including portions of historic homes from the mid-18th through the mid-19th centuries. Ongoing research supports dozens of historic sites in the county, including historical and cultural resources related Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. <http://www.carolinehistory.org>

National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom: A program consisting of sites and locations of people and events with a verifiable connection to the Underground

Railroad; programs, with educational and interpretive elements; and facilities sponsoring research and educational resources that pertain to the Underground Railroad. The nominations contain extensive documentation, including many for Dorchester County and the Study area. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1205/index.htm>

Family Search through the Mormon Church at www.familysearch.com—excellent genealogical and research sources, and includes many state, county, and city records for Maryland on microfilm and online. *Family Search* has also digitized Freedmen's Bureau Records. For non-digitized resources, local Mormon libraries loan out extensive microfilm collections.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore. <http://www.prattlibrary.org>—Online databases include historical newspapers and other records related to Maryland during the antebellum and post-bellum periods, and more. Free access with library card. Library card available to non-residents for a fee.

Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College—<http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/friends> extensive Quaker and regional history archives. Also, see <http://trilogy.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery>.

Links to the new online primary source database *Quakers and Slavery at Haverford College Libraries, Quaker and Special Collections*. <http://www.haverford.edu/library/special>

Library of Congress—www.loc.gov and the Library of Congress American Memory project, including African American historical resources, maps, Women's history, American culture and folk life, Civil War, photographs and prints, and more—<http://memory.loc.gov/am-mem/index.html>

National Archives: www.nara.gov and <http://www.archives.gov> and <https://catalog.archives.gov> and *Fold3*, a sister site/database holding service and pension records for black and white soldiers in all wars from the American Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish American War, WWI, and WWII. www.fold3.com

Baltimore City Freedom Records: http://mdhistory.net/msaref07/bca_sm230/html/index.html

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library—large collections and digitized resources: <http://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg>

Free African Americans in Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina and Virginia by Paul Heinegg: <http://www.freeafricanamericans.com>

Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery: digitized and transcribed advertisements from the *Christian Recorder* and other newspapers posted by individuals looking for displaced

family members after the Civil War - <http://www.informationwanted.org>

Transatlantic Slave Trade Database—35,000 documented voyages, fully searchable: <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>

Internet Archive—Free books, pamphlets, and other documents: Great resource for 19th century published sources. <http://www.archive.org>

Boston Public Library: www.bpl.org and Boston Anti-slavery collection online digital records <https://archive.org/details/bplscas> and https://www.bpl.org/archival_subject/anti-slavery-movement and <https://www.bpl.org/tag/anti-slavery-manuscripts>

Delaware State Archives: <http://www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/exhibits/document/slavery/toc.shtml>

Historical Society of Delaware (Delaware Historical Society; Delaware History Center): www.hsd.org

Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery - Chesapeake, Carolinas, and Caribbean during the Colonial and Ante-Bellum Periods. <http://www.daacs.org>

Making of America: Digitized 19th-century books, pamphlets, and journals covering the antebellum and Civil War periods, including extensive records of the Union Army and Navy: <http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagrp> and <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa>

Digital Collections at the University of Maryland: <https://digital.lib.umd.edu>

Documenting the American South—hundreds of narratives available, including dozens from or mentioning Maryland: <http://docsouth.unc.edu>

County histories: The History of Dorchester County, Maryland, by Elias Jones <https://archive.org/details/historyofdorches00jone>; The History of Caroline County, Maryland, from its Beginning by Edward M. Noble; and <https://archive.org/details/historyofcarolin-00nobl>; and History of Talbot County, Maryland, 1661–1861 by Oswald Tilghman , Samuel Alexander Harrison <https://archive.org/details/historytalbotco00harrgoog>/page/n12

Historical Society of Pennsylvania—important Underground Railroad resource, including Philadelphia's Underground Railroad agent William Still's “*Journal C*” digitization project: <http://www.hsp.org>

Sydney Howard Gay Papers, and Sydney Howard Gay's “*Record of Fugitives, 1855–1856*” Columbia University Special Collections. Journal and correspondence of UGRR agent Sydney Howard Gay in New York City. <https://exhibitions.library.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/fugitives>

Appendix C

Samuel May Abolition Pamphlet Collection. Cornell University Library: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/mayantislavery>

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission slavery and Underground Railroad Resources: <http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Slavery-Underground-Railroad-Resources.aspx#.VpUkIuIo7IU>

New York Historical Society: Researching the Underground Railroad and Slavery—<https://www.nyhistory.org/web/PDF/Slavery%20and%20Underground%20Railroad%20Resources%20Available%20at%20the%20New-York%20Historical%20Society%20Library.pdf>

Google Books at Google.com — <https://books.google.com/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp&ei=vMtLWaySMILp-AGnnoOwAQ&ved=0EKkuCBEoEA>

Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, Northampton, MA. Garrison Family Collection. Some items digitized: <http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/index.html>

Ohio Historical Society/Ohio History Center. Wilbur Siebert Papers, a significant collection of interviews with former abolitionists and freedom seekers during the 1890s. Link to Collection Finding aid available online and link to photographs: <http://www.ohiohistory.org/undergroundrr and, Ohio Pix for photographs collected by Siebert. http://ohsweb.ohiohistory.org/ohiopix>

African Americans in Antebellum Boston: <http://www.primaryresearch.org/bh>

Slavery related documents in Delaware: <http://www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/exhibits/document/slavery/toc.shtml>

Historical Society of Delaware (Delaware Historical Society; Delaware History Center): www.hsd.org

Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery—Chesapeake, Carolinas, and Caribbean during the Colonial and Ante-Bellum Periods. <http://www.daacs.org>

Rutgers University Special Collections—<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/scua.shtml>. Note William Still family papers.

New York Public Library: <http://www.nypl.org/collections> — digital library

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library—large collections and digitized resources: <http://www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg>

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System for African American Servicemen: <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss>

Lexis-Nexis for legal cases involving slaves/fugitives, available through public and university libraries.

American Slave Narratives—UVA: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/wpa/wpahome.html>

Remembering Slavery: WPA Slave Narratives audio <http://www.uncg.edu/~jpbrewer/remember>

Colored Conventions: Bringing Nineteenth-Century Black Organizing to Digital Life website for resources including detailed documentation, examination, and interpretation of decades of antebellum Colored Conventions: <http://coloredconventions.org/conventions>

Freedmen's Bureau Records online: <http://www.freedmensbureau.com> and also, extensive original records available via the Internet Archive <https://archive.org>; Family Search website <https://familysearch.org> and National Archives website <https://www.archives.gov/atlanta/finding-aids/black-history.html>.

Freedmen and Southern Society Project, University of Maryland: <http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen>

Charles Blockson Collection at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. <https://library.temple.edu/collections/blockson>

Black Abolitionist Archive: University of Detroit Mercy—http://research.udmercy.edu/find/special_collections/digital/baa/index.php?browseBy=DC_title_parent

Patriots of Color Database: http://www.archives.comGA.aspx?StateOfService=MD&ServiceType=&ComplexionDescription=&FederalBountyLandWarrant=&StateBountyLandWarrant=&FederalPensionNumber=&StatePensionApplication=&PensionState=&Verified=&_act=POCSearchResult&AlternateNames=&LastName=&FirstName=

Significant Newspaper Collections:

NewspaperArchive.com—18th-, 19th- and 20th-century digitized newspaper sources. www.newspaperarchive.com

19th-Century Newspapers available online through Gale Resources at local or university libraries.

Early American Periodicals: available through university and some public libraries.

Newspapers.com –historical newspaper archive: www.newspapers.com

Google Books and Google News—includes an historical archive of millions of pages of historical books and journals and some full-page newspaper images. Google Books at Google.com - <https://books.google.com/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp&ei=vMtLWaySMILp-AG-nnoOwAQ&ved=0EKkuCBEoEA> and Google Historical Newspaper Archive: <https://news.google.com/newspapers?hl=en>

Ancestry.com—invaluable online genealogical resource. www.ancestry.com. Fully searchable U.S. Censuses; military records; city, county, state and other federal sources; WPA former slave interviews; International Canadian records; Historical newspapers, state and county records, and more.

Historical Newspapers online at University of Pennsylvania: <http://guides.library.upenn.edu/historicalnewspersonline>

Fulton Historical Newspaper project—<http://www.fultonhistory.com> Online searchable historical newspapers.

Accessible Archives, accessed through local and university libraries. 18th- and 19th-century newspapers, African American newspapers, www.accessible.com.

Internet Library of Early Journals, a digital library of 18th- and 19th-century journals: <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej>

Brooklyn Daily Eagle Newspaper (1841–1902) <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle>

ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Extensive 18th-, 19th- and 20th-century newspapers digitized and fully searchable. Available through some public and university libraries. Available at National Archives sites.

Maps Collections:

University of Alabama Map Collection: <http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps> including Historical Maps of Maryland: https://cse.google.com/cse?cx=017926714905816008955%3A_indd4c4hbi&ie=UTF-8&q=nautical&sa=Search&sitewurl=alabamamaps.ua.edu%2Fsearchengine.htm&ref=alabamamaps.ua.edu%2F&ss=9170j31881734j11#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=maryland

Navigation and Coastal Survey (historical) charts/maps –<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/Coastal%20Survey%20Maps/maryland.htm> ; And here: <http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/navigationcharts/index2.html>

David Rumsey Maps: <http://www.davidrumsey.com/view.html>

Osher Map Library, University of Southern Maine: <http://www.oshermaps.org>

Appendix C

Perry-Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas: <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/histus.html>

The National Map: Historical Topographic Map Collection: <https://nationalmap.gov/historical>

Library of Congress Map Collection: <https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections>

Sanborn Insurance Maps—available online through numerous public and university libraries

Johns Hopkins Sheridan Library Collections—Maps: Maryland State, County, and Baltimore City Maps: <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/32586>

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