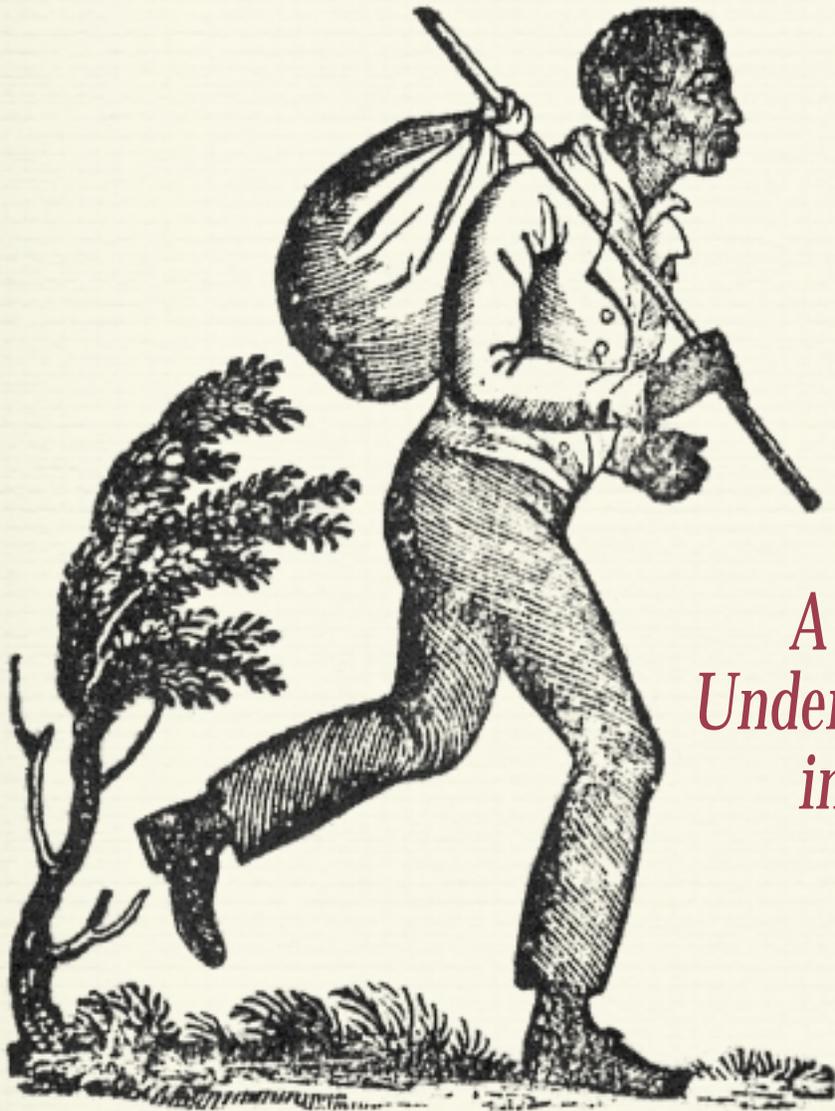


NEW JERSEY'S UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE

“Steal Away,
Steal Away...”



*A Guide to the
Underground Railroad
in New Jersey*

NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Introduction

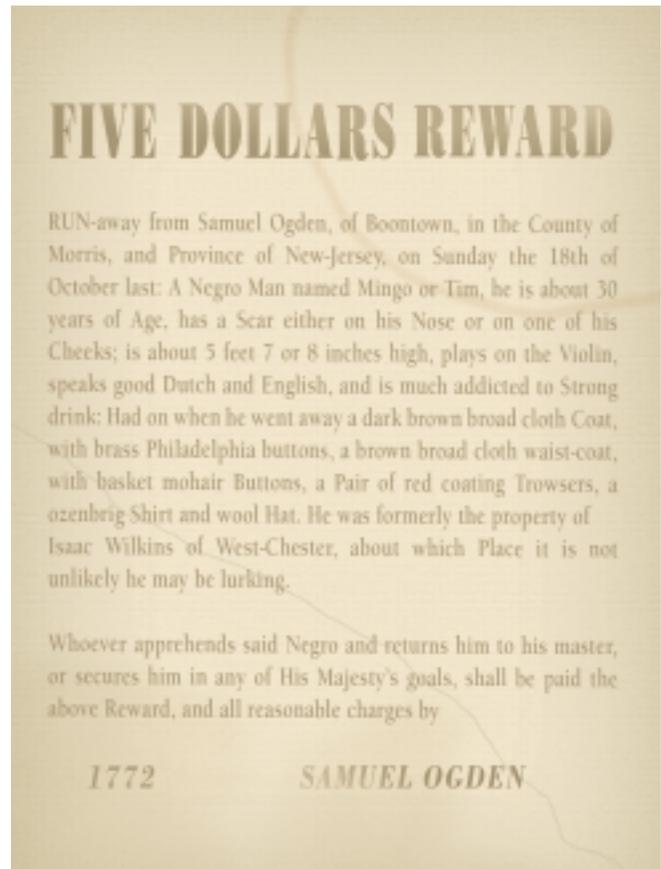
*Steal away, steal away,
steal away to Jesus
Steal away, steal away home,
I ain't got long to stay here*

— Negro spiritual

Some of those daring and artful runaway slaves who entered New Jersey by way of the Underground Railroad (UGRR) no doubt sang the words of old Negro spirituals like "Steal Away" before embarking on their perilous journey north. The lyrics of these precious black folk songs indeed often had double meanings, serving as code songs that conveyed plans to escape the yoke of bondage. The phrase "steal away" thus meant absconding; "Jesus" and "home" symbolized the yearned for freedom in the North; and the words "I ain't got long to stay here" meant that flight northward was imminent.

Running away as a form of protest by slaves against their bondage is as old as African enslavement itself on American soil. The first European settlement on land that would ultimately become part of the United States of America, a Spanish colony established in 1526 in the area of present-day South Carolina, witnessed the flight of its slaves; it is said they fled to neighboring Indians. The presence of African slaves in the British colonies of North America, whose history begins in 1607 with the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, was also marked by flight as an expression of resistance. The 1772 runaway slave notice shown on the right, for example, is evidence of slave dissent in colonial New Jersey.

Down to the outbreak of the Civil War, New Jersey continued to bear witness to the presence of runaway slaves. However, with the passage in 1804 in New Jersey of *An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery*, these fugitives come increasingly from the South; this legislation indeed made New Jersey part of the "Promised Land," those northern states to which bondspersons escaped to quench their thirst for freedom. And from the early 1830s on, these escapees



were connected to the Underground Railroad, that secret network of persons and places—sometimes well organized and other times loosely structured—that helped southern runaway slaves reach safety in the northern states and Canada.

The Underground Railroad is an immensely popular subject, a fact attributable perhaps to the dramatic and exciting nature of its operation, as well as to its having served as the nation's first example of biracial cooperation in the cause of social justice. Coinciding with the UGRR's popularity has been the perpetuation of many myths, legends, and misconceptions surrounding it. Tales about tunnels, trapdoors, and secret compartments connected to the UGRR abound, perhaps exceeded only by the number of UGRR sites and communities for which an association with the Underground Railroad is claimed, often without credible evidence. UGRR operatives usually acted clandestinely because of the illegality of assisting

fugitive slaves, a circumstance that has further served to make documenting the Underground Railroad—separating fact from fiction—difficult.

While the origin of the term "Underground Railroad" remains obscure and rooted in several apocryphal tales, the term can be dated to roughly 1830, after the appearance of the first trains in the United States. It was the rise of radical abolitionism in the 1830s, however, that helped to create a nurturing climate for the UGRR. This new approach to the antislavery cause found expression in such forms as the publishing in 1831 of William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* and the founding two years later of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with its aversion to "moral suasion" and its call for immediate emancipation without compensation to slaveholders.

The scale of the Underground Railroad has often been exaggerated, with some estimates exceeding 100,000 participants. More recent scholarship seems to suggest that between 30,000 and 40,000 runaways—50,000 at the very most—were involved. Although running away was a very common form of slave protest, the overwhelming majority of southern slaves who absconded during the antebellum period remained in the South, many gravitating to the region's urban centers, where they often sought to pass themselves off as free blacks. The advent of the Civil War reinforced this tendency to remain in the South, with runaway slaves flocking in droves to the invading Union forces that came near them and becoming known thusly as "contraband."

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Underground Railroad, of course, lies foremost in its serving as an expression of slave resistance. Slaveholders and their sympathizers, in attempting to make slavery morally defensible, asserted that slaves were simple, child-like creatures who were very much contented with their bondage. Each fugitive who headed north therefore personally refuted the claim that bondspersons had no desire for freedom.

Underground Railroad runaways also helped exacerbate the sectional strife over the issue of slavery, thereby facilitating the very event—the Civil War—that would lead to slavery's end. Indeed, slave flight to the North prompted the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which, as a concession to the slave states, empowered federal agents to apprehend and return runaways who had fled to the free states. Public opinion in many parts of the North, however, increasingly turned against this legislation, some of its provisions (for example, the power of federal marshals to deputize individuals to assist in capturing runaways) being perceived as grave violations of civil liberties. Some free states therefore enacted personal liberty laws that sought to nullify the Fugitive Slave Act. Such laws in turn infuriated the South; it saw them as further evidence of a hostile North prepared to deny slaveowners their property.

NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Most Underground Railroad fugitive slaves hailed from the Upper South, in particular, the states of Kentucky, Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Most were males between the ages of 15 and 30 who traveled singly—by foot, horseback, wagon, stagecoach, carriage, train, and boat—and at night, often guided by the North Star. While great attention has been accorded the role of white abolitionists in assisting UGRR fugitives, this role appears somewhat overdrawn.



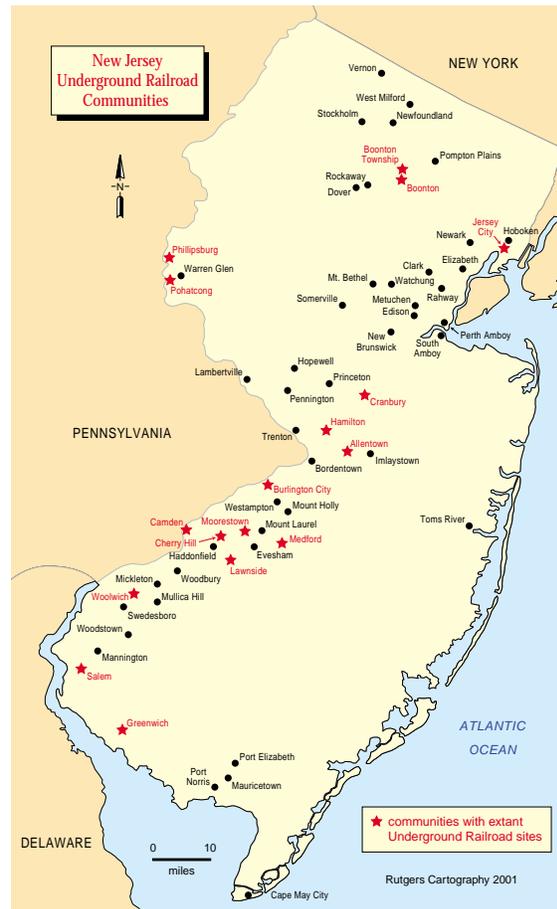
In the South, where slave patrols made escape an extremely risky undertaking, the fugitives, when not relying solely on their own cunning and wile to reach the free states, were mainly assisted by free blacks and fellow slaves. And in the North, free blacks—acting individually, in the vigilance committees common to many northern cities, or through their own churches and self-help organizations—were often in the forefront of efforts to provide shelter, financial help, and general support to the runaways. Indeed, on reaching the North, the "passengers" were routinely hidden, fed, clothed, allowed to rest, and cared for at each "station," which could be any kind of structure, for example, a house, church, hotel, or store.

NEW JERSEY UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

New Jersey, an integral part of the eastern corridor of the Underground Railroad, received fugitives mainly from the Atlantic coastline states of Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Its proximity to the slave states of Delaware and Maryland, as well as its location between two of the most active UGRR metropolitan centers—Philadelphia and New York City—only serves to underscore the crucial place it occupied in the movement of runaway slaves northward.

New Jersey is also identified with the Underground Railroad's two most celebrated figures. One, the legendary Harriet Tubman, spent the summers between 1849 and 1852 as a hotel worker in Cape May, earning money to finance her forays into her native Maryland Eastern Shore to guide fugitives slaves to freedom. And in all probability she traversed the state in leading some of her estimated 300 charges from Maryland to safety. The other, William Still, was a native New Jerseyan who was distinguished by being both the most important UGRR operative in Philadelphia and the author of the 1872 classic *The Underground Railroad*. This study, which offers accounts of the flights of the fugitives he assisted in Philadelphia, is especially noteworthy because it alone among nineteenth-century works on the Underground Railroad made the freedom-seeking fugitives—not the abolitionists who assisted them—the true heroic figures of the Underground Railroad's dramatic and compelling story of struggle against oppression.

Finally, no other northern state exceeded New Jersey in the number of all-black communities that served as UGRR sanctuaries for southern fugitive slaves. Springtown



(Cumberland County), Marshalltown (Salem County), Snow Hill (present-day Lawnside, Camden County), and Timbuctoo (Burlington County) were among such places, located mainly in rural South Jersey, in which fugitive slaves also settled. One consideration for remaining in these communities was the physical safety they afforded runaway slaves; there are several instances recorded of slave catchers being run out of town with haste when they were discovered in such communities.

The Underground Railroad is an epic American story featuring the forces of righteousness arrayed against those of evil—forces locked in moral combat over the elimination of perhaps the greatest expression of inhumanity: the ownership of one human by another. Certainly the important New Jersey chapter in this antislavery saga merits recounting. Some New Jerseyans indeed transcended conventions of race, class, gender, and culture and accepted the bold challenge of striking a blow against the peculiar institution. In so doing, they, often at great sacrifice and risk, bequeathed to future generations of New Jerseyans an Underground Railroad heritage worthy of being appreciated, celebrated, and preserved—a heritage first made possible by those who, in their quest for human dignity, respect, and freedom, were moved to "steal away, steal away."

Chronology

of Events Relating to the Underground Railroad in New Jersey

1619 As part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, 20 Africans are landed in Jamestown, Virginia, marking the beginning of the historical presence of blacks in English North America. These slaves are listed in later censuses as indentured servants.

1623 Dutch establish Fort Nassau, a military post in present-day Gloucester City in Camden County; it may have witnessed the presence of African slaves for its construction and maintenance.

1625 Dutch establish colony of New Netherland; it includes New Amsterdam (present-day New York City), where 11 African slaves are recorded.

1639 African slaves present by this year in Pavonia (located in or near present-day Jersey City), which, as part of New Netherland, was the first permanent Dutch settlement on New Jersey soil.

1664 English seize New Netherland from the Dutch, establish the colony of New Jersey, and find slaves who had been on Burlington Island (Burlington County) since 1659. The Concessions and Agreements, the constitution governing the establishment of New Jersey, encourages slavery by granting settlers additional land for any slaves imported.

1675 First legislation implying the actual presence of black slaves in New Jersey is enacted; it prohibits transporting or harboring a slave who has left his or her owner without permission.

1676 New Jersey is divided into two provinces—East Jersey (mainly North Jersey) and West Jersey (mainly South Jersey)—thereby marking the proprietary period, which lasts until 1702. Owing to East Jersey's topography, more advanced state of economic development, and considerable Dutch presence, most slaves are located here, rather than West Jersey, which had a large Quaker presence.

1680 Between 60 and 70 slaves are recorded for the Shrewsbury (Monmouth County) manor of Colonel Lewis Morris, marking the largest slaveholding in New Jersey up to this time.

1688 Francis Daniel Pastorius, a Germantown (Philadelphia) Quaker, writes the first antislavery tract to appear in the American colonies; it is subsequently read during the same year at the yearly meeting of Delaware Valley Quakers held in Burlington.

1702 New Jersey becomes a royal colony and, owing to the desire to increase the Crown's wealth, the importation of slaves into New Jersey is encouraged.

1726 New Jersey slaves number roughly 2,600, approximately 8 percent of the colony's population.

1734 A slave conspiracy is uncovered by authorities in Somerville, the first such significant plot for New Jersey.

1741 In Hackensack three slaves are convicted and burned alive for setting fire to seven barns, marking New Jersey's second significant slave plot. Subsequent conspiracies are unearthed in Perth Amboy in 1772 and Elizabethtown in 1779.

1745 Roughly 4,700 slaves are recorded for New Jersey; they constitute approximately 7.5 percent of New Jersey's population.

1750 By this date, most slaves imported into New Jersey are arriving directly from Africa, rather than the Caribbean.

1776 Declaration of Independence is adopted on July 4, marking the official beginning of the American Revolution. Some New Jersey slaves, like others elsewhere, use the chaos of the war to flee and, in some instances, later present themselves as free blacks.

New Jersey's first state constitution is adopted on July 2; it grants the franchise to women and free blacks.

Several blacks, including Burlington County's Oliver Cromwell, cross the Delaware River with Washington on the night of December 25 and engage in the Battle of Trenton, marking a turning point in the American Revolution

1783 With the end of the American Revolution, some New Jersey free blacks and slaves leave with the British troops and settle in Nova Scotia.

1786 New Jersey enacts legislation that essentially bans the further importation of slaves, thereby ending the African slave trade to New Jersey. Another provision of this law makes manumissions easier.

1789 U.S. Constitution takes effect; it states that no runaway slave becomes free by escaping from one state to another (article 4, section 2, clause 3)

1793 New Jersey Society for the Abolition of Slavery, the state's first antislavery organization, is established.

First federal Fugitive Slave Act enacted; it requires appropriate officials in the state to which a runaway slave has fled to return the fugitive to his or her owner.

1804 An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, New Jersey's first abolition law, passes. It frees all black children born on or after July 4, 1804, after serving an apprenticeship to their mother's owner of 21 years (female) and 25 years (male).

1807 Free blacks and women lose the franchise granted in the state constitution of 1776.

1808 The importation of African slaves into the nation becomes illegal as the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the United States is banned.

1818 In the wake of a scandal involving the sale of Middlesex County slaves and free blacks in the slave market of New Orleans, the state adopts legislation prohibiting the selling of slaves outside of the state.

1826 New Jersey passes legislation that authorizes the return to their owners of fugitive slaves from other states residing or apprehended in New Jersey.

1830 Signaling the rise of radical abolitionism and the formation of antislavery vigilance committees in various northern cities, the Underground Railroad begins after the first appearance of trains in the nation in 1829. The origin of the term remains unclear.

1831 Indicative of the onset of radical abolitionism that helps to create a climate favorable to the operation of the Underground Railroad, William Lloyd Garrison prints the first issue of *The Liberator*, an antislavery newspaper.

1833 American Anti-Slavery Society is formed in Philadelphia, further evidence of the growth of radical abolitionism.

Slavery is abolished in the British Empire, making Canada a safe settlement area for runaway slaves participating in the Underground Railroad.

1838 Frederick Douglass uses the Underground Railroad to flee from bondage in Maryland. The abolitionist leader later becomes an Underground Railroad operative while living in Rochester, New York.

1840 New Jersey State Anti-Slavery Society, the state's second statewide abolition organization, is formed.

1844 New Jersey's second constitution is adopted; while eliminating property qualifications for voting, it continues to restrict the franchise to white males.

1846 New Jersey's second abolition law is enacted; it eliminates apprenticeships for all black children born after its passage and, although formally outlawing slavery, makes the state's remaining slaves (all of them elderly persons) "apprentices" for life, another form of slavery.

1847 William Still, a New Jersey native, begins his work in Philadelphia with the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery; this work enables him to become an important figure in the operation of the eastern corridor of the Underground Railroad.

1849 Using the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery in Maryland's nearby Eastern Shore; her summers from this year to 1852 are spent working in hotels in Cape May and earning money for her own Underground Railroad exploits.

First statewide black convention is held in Trenton (August 21 – 22); participants agitate for the return of the franchise to black males.

1850 Fugitive Slave Act passes as part of the Compromise of 1850; this law, giving the federal government primary responsibility for capturing slaves fleeing to the North, causes some free blacks, fearing kidnapping, and fugitive slaves to flee to Canada and prompts some northern states (New Jersey not included) to pass "Personal Liberty Laws" that sought to nullify the Fugitive Slave Act.

1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act repeals the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and introduces the doctrine of "popular sovereignty"; this allows territories to decide whether to be slave or free states.

1857 Dred Scott decision is rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court; it holds that blacks are not American citizens and that Congress has no authority to prohibit slavery in any part of the nation.

1859 John Brown conducts a raid on the federal arsenal in Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in an effort to spark a large-scale slave rebellion. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, abolition activists and Underground Railroad operatives, are implicated in this conspiracy.

1860 Eighteen slaves are recorded for New Jersey by the U.S. Census, making the state the last in the North in which slaves can be found.

1861 With the firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina by the Confederate forces, the Civil War begins. The Underground Railroad ceases to operate, as southern slaves who abscond from their owners gravitate toward the invading Union forces that come into their vicinity, rather than fleeing to the free states of the North.

1863 The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln goes into effect. It frees slaves in the Confederate states, but not those that remain in the Union. This encourages even greater numbers of southern slaves to flee from their owners.

1865 Thirteenth Amendment is ratified, bringing to an end the long presence of bondage on American soil. Presumably any of the 18 slaves recorded for New Jersey in 1860 who are still living are freed by this amendment.



Underground Railroad Sites

The UGRR sites identified in this guide are not to be considered as the only such sites in New Jersey. Rather, they have been selected because they both meet certain criteria established for determining UGRR sites and reflect to some extent the wide geographical area in which the UGRR operated in New Jersey. As additional research is done, it is anticipated that the number of verifiable UGRR sites will expand. Given the secrecy generally surrounding the operation of the UGRR, it is not always easy to determine sites. Unless specifically indicated or listed with a telephone number, sites are not open to the public for tours. Visits to sites not open to the public should not involve entering the site or its premises. Where such sites are private residences, residents of such sites should not be disturbed through ringing doorbells or knocking on doors; such sites are to be viewed from the street.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church*

1092 Sheppards Mill Road
Greenwich (Springtown), Cumberland County
(856) 451-2700

This is one of the oldest black churches in New Jersey, dating to the early 1800s. Located in Springtown, a swamp area that was well known for providing succor to fugitive slaves from



Delaware and Maryland arriving from across the Delaware Bay, evidence for its association with the Underground Railroad is considerable. In addition to local oral tradition as a source of documentation, there is Wilbur H. Siebert's

1898 study of the Underground Railroad. In his Appendix E (a state-by-state, county-by-county listing of UGRR operatives), Siebert identifies seven persons as UGRR operatives in Cumberland County, five of whom were members of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. It is likely runaways were hidden both on the property of the five and at this church. Black churches in many communities were used for such a purpose.

Goodwin Sisters House

47 Market Street
Salem, Salem County
For many years, prior to any extensive research on New Jersey's Underground Railroad, this house, constructed in 1821, was the state's best-documented



Underground Railroad station. By 1838 it had become a UGRR station operated by Abigail Goodwin and her sister,

Elizabeth, both Quaker abolitionists. One source of documentation is correspondence between Abigail and William Still, Philadelphia's famed UGRR operative. Another source of documentation is a diary kept by a nephew of the sisters.

Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church*

172 Garwin Road
Woolwich, Gloucester County
(856) 467-2992

This edifice, housing one of the oldest AME congregations in New Jersey—it dates to the early 1800s—was constructed in 1834. Evidence for its association with the Underground Railroad is strong. First, the community in which it was situated—Swedesboro/Woolwich (Small Gloucester)—has been



identified as being part of the Underground Railroad network in New Jersey. Second, some of the residents of this community were runaway slaves, suggesting they would have been receptive to the idea of assisting other slaves who had absconded.

There are indeed members of the Mount Zion AME Church today whose forebears were fugitive slaves who settled in Small Gloucester. Third, and perhaps of greatest importance, there is primary-source documentation indicating that two members of this congregation—Pompey Lewis and Jubilee Sharper—were UGRR operatives.



Peter Mott House*

26 Kings Court
Lawnside, Camden County
(856) 546-8850

This house in Lawnside (formerly known as Snow Hill and Free Haven), built around 1844, is an extremely precious Underground Railroad site. Not only is it one of the few extant UGRR stations that was owned and operated by an African American, but it is probably the only site of its kind in the nation: a black-owned and -operated UGRR station in an all-black town. Lawnside was incorporated as a municipality in 1926, the only all-black community in New Jersey, and possibly in the North, to have such a status. Peter Mott (1807? - 1888) was a free black farmer, possibly a fugitive slave from Delaware, who also served as the pastor of Lawnside's historic Mt. Pisgah AME Church.

Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church

265 Spruce Street
Camden, Camden County
Established in 1832, this is Camden's oldest black institution.



It is located in what was Fettersville, Camden's earliest black settlement. Its link to the Underground Railroad comes through the person of Reverend Thomas Clement Oliver, perhaps New Jersey's foremost Underground Railroad operative. Oliver served as the pastor of this church during the mid-1840s. It is likely that the church assisted fugitives coming up from Salem and Cumberland Counties, as well as from Philadelphia; its location in the all-black settlement of Fettersville would have aided such a role.



Edgewater (at Croft Farm)*

End of Bortons Mill Road,
off Brace Road
Cherry Hill, Camden County
(856) 795-6225

This house, constructed in 1741, served in the antebellum period as an Underground Railroad station. It was

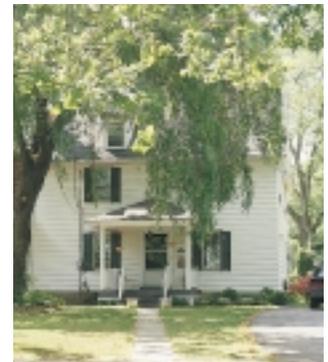
purchased in 1816 by Thomas Evans, a Quaker abolitionist.

By 1840, when Thomas Evans moved to Haddonfield and the house became the property of his son, Josiah Bispham Evans, also a Quaker abolitionist, it had become a stop on the Underground Railroad. Under Josiah Bispham Evans the house continued as an Underground Railroad safe house. A 1918 handwritten statement by Walter W. Evans, a descendant of Thomas and Josiah Bispham Evans, traces the history of the house and mentions his family's oral tradition that documents its use as a UGRR stop. It notes that fugitives, coming from Woodbury, were hidden in the "haymow" or "attic," then "hurried off in a covered wagon to Mount Holly." This statement is the property of the Haddonfield Historical Society.

Elisha Barcklow House

274 West Main Street
Moorestown, Burlington County

Built in 1765 by Elisha Barcklow, an English Quaker, this house, according to the oral tradition of the community, is regarded as an Underground Railroad station.



It was purchased in 1799 by William Roberts, who built the adjacent brick house. It is located on Kings Highway, an early major transportation artery that connected South Jersey to the northern part of the state and is also identified with the UGRR.



Dr. George Haines House

33 North Main Street
Medford, Burlington County

There is considerable evidence that this house was part of New Jersey's Underground Railroad.

Dr. George Haines, Medford's

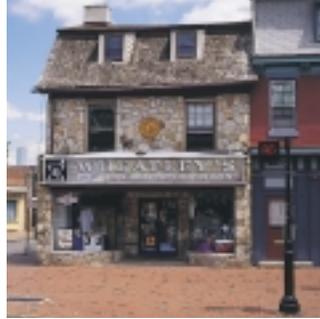
first resident physician and one of its most prominent citizens during the first half of the nineteenth century, built this house in 1826. According to local oral tradition, Haines, who was also a Quaker, abolitionist, and advocate for the cause of temperance, used this house as a safe haven for runaway slaves. The succeeding owner of the house, Dr. Andrew E. Budd, another physician, continued its role in the UGRR.

Local oral tradition identified the rear of the house as the place where the fugitive slaves were hidden, a story seemingly confirmed by a secret room underneath the kitchen in the rear of the house that was recently discovered during renovation of the house.

Burlington Pharmacy

301 High Street
Burlington City,
Burlington County

Constructed in 1731 and established as a pharmacy in 1841 (it is New Jersey's oldest pharmacy in continuous operation), this building, according to the oral tradition of the local community, was used frequently to harbor Underground Railroad runaways. During the antebellum period it was owned by William J. Allinson, a Quaker abolitionist and community benefactor, who also used it as a forum for antislavery rallies. The poet John Greenleaf Whittier, a close friend of Allinson and fellow Quaker abolitionist, is said to have denounced the evils of bondage from the doorsteps of this building.



Enoch Middleton House

2 Old York Road
Hamilton (East Crosswicks Village), Mercer County

Built between 1844 and 1848 as a summer home for Enoch Middleton, a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker merchant, this



house was a station on the Underground Railroad. On retirement, Middleton moved to this residence from Philadelphia and became both a UGRR stationmaster and a conductor; in the latter capacity he guided fugitive slaves brought to his home to Allentown, Cranbury, or

New Brunswick. Local oral tradition identifies this house as a UGRR station. Middleton is also identified in Wilbur H. Siebert's *The Underground Railroad: From Slavery to Freedom*, published in 1898, as a Burlington County UGRR operative.

Cranbury Inn

21 South Main Street
Cranbury, Middlesex County

Apparently built in three stages—the first section dating to the mid-1700s, the second to the late 1700s, and the third to the early 1800s—the inn is located in a community identified by various sources, including a strong local oral tradition, as having been connected to the Underground Railroad. Runaways were brought from Crosswicks Village or Allentown to Cranbury and then on to New Brunswick in traversing New Jersey to places farther north. There is also a local oral tradition associating the inn with the UGRR. Certainly the very nature of an inn—a place where people could stop for food and accommodations at all times of the day—would have made it an ideal place to serve as a UGRR station.



Springtown Stagecoach Inn

Route 519 South
Pohatcong, Warren County

The Springtown Stagecoach Inn has a long history that includes serving as an inn, blacksmith shop/forge, store, private residence, grange, municipal garage, and the



Town Hall for the community of Pohatcong. The oldest section of the building, a one-and-a-half-room stone structure, dates to about 1750; the upstairs and adjoining two-story structure—the second-oldest section—was constructed roughly fifteen years later. The third section, the Springtown Inn, constructed of red brick, was built around 1825 and was a stagecoach stop on the road leading out of Easton, Pennsylvania, through Phillipsburg, New Jersey, to points east, such as Somerville and Trenton; some of the stagecoaches traveled the New Brunswick Turnpike. There is a very strong local oral tradition that the inn served as an Underground Railroad safe house. The normal trafficking to and from an inn would have provided a perfect cover for a UGRR stop.

* Listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places

Underground Railroad Operatives



Abigail Goodwin
(1793 - 1867)

Staunch abolitionist, Underground Railroad operative, and humanitarian, Goodwin was born in Salem, the community of which she was a lifelong resident. She was a birthright Quaker, having grandparents on both sides who were Friends. Indicative of

her humanitarian spirit, she was involved in a number of activities that provided assistance to the needy. She was, for example, a founding member of the Female Benevolent Society of Salem, an organization dedicated to the relief of the infirm, aged, unemployed, and those widowed with small children. As an abolitionist she was active in the Female Anti-Slavery Society. She is perhaps best remembered, however, for her work with the Underground Railroad; she is probably the foremost female New Jerseyan associated with the work of aiding fugitive southern slaves. Her UGRR work made her a friend of many outstanding opponents of slavery, including William Still and Harriet Tubman. Documentation of her UGRR work from the 1840s to the start of the Civil War is found in her own correspondence with individuals like William Still and in the diary of one of her nephews.

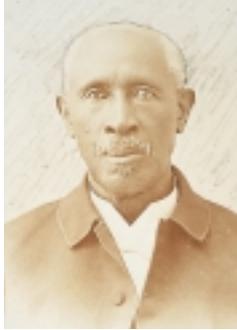


Charles Fern Hopkins
(1842 - 1934)

Abolitionist, humanitarian, soldier, and public official (state assemblyman, mayor, postmaster, and fire chief of Boonton), Hopkins was born in a rural section of New Hope, Warren County, and reared in Ledgewood, Morris County. During his youth he

aided his father's Underground Railroad work, transporting runaway slaves from one community to another. His father owned the Powerville Hotel, which served as a UGRR station. Hopkins' account of his Underground Railroad experiences appeared in the 1910 publication *Boonton*:

Gem of the Mountain, an account that identified individuals and communities that were part of the Underground Railroad's operation in the Boonton area.



Reverend Thomas C. Oliver
(1818 - 1900)

Perhaps the most important primary source document on the Underground Railroad in New Jersey is an oral-history interview of Oliver conducted in 1895 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, by Wilbur H. Siebert, author of the 1898 study *The Underground Railroad:*

From Slavery to Freedom. Oliver was born in Salem, where he received his early education in a Quaker school. By the time he was 14 or 15 years old, and was living in Philadelphia with his parents, he had become aware of their UGRR work. Shortly thereafter, he joined such work himself. His UGRR activities continued after the family relocated to Camden and continued to 1850, by which time he had served as a pastor of several AME churches in New Jersey, including Macedonia AME Church in Camden. Between 1850 and the mid-1880s he studied at Princeton Theological Seminary, served as the pastor of Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches in New York City, and did missionary work in New York City and Albany. He then moved to Canada where his ministry was associated with the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church. His final pastorate was at the BME church in Niagara Falls South.



Harriet Tubman
(c.1820 - 1913)

The most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad and the secret network's most celebrated figure, Tubman, whose original name was Araminta Ross, was born a slave on a plantation in Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

In 1849, when she was about 30 years old, her owner died, and she learned that she and her two brothers were to be sold to a Georgia slave trader. This prompted her, with the North Star as her guide, to escape from slavery and travel to Philadelphia. During the summer of 1849, and for the ensuing summers up to 1852, she worked as a cook in hotels

in Cape May, earning money to fulfill her promise to help unshackle other slaves. Between 1850 and 1860, she used her innate intelligence and courage to make 19 trips into Maryland and help over 300 slaves escape to freedom in the North, probably passing through New Jersey on some of her trips, both from Maryland and back. She guided many of her charges to Canada where, between 1854 and 1859, she resided in the small community of St. Catherines, Ontario. In 1857, on one of her last trips, she led her aged parents to safety. Her success as a UGRR conductor resulted in a reward of \$40,000 being offered in Maryland for her capture.

The Underground Railroad Suggested Readings

Blockson, Charles L.
The Underground Railroad.
New York: Berkley Books, 1987.

A collection of first-person narratives, grouped along state lines, that describes the experiences of runaway slaves who used the Underground Railroad. A brief discussion of New Jersey's UGRR is found in the chapter titled "Free Middle Atlantic."

Bradford, Sarah H.
Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People.
Auburn, New York: W.J. Moses Printers, 1869;
Reprint, Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1961.

A biography of Harriet Tubman that is based largely on recollections given by Tubman to the author. It mentions New Jersey as one of only two northern states known to Tubman before her escape from slavery in 1849 and indicates she returned to Maryland in the fall of 1852 from Cape May.

Franklin, John Hope, and Loren Schweninger.
Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Using mainly runaway-slave notices, this study discusses slave flight as a form of dissent. It points out that most fugitive slaves remained in the South; relatively few runaway slaves traveled north as part of the UGRR.

Gara, Larry.
The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad.
Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961.

A major study of the UGRR that debunks many of its myths and legends. It suggests, for example, that the total number of fugitives who participated in the UGRR has been exaggerated.

National Park Service.
Underground Railroad: Official National Park Handbook.
Washington, D.C.: U.S. Printing Office, 1998.

This handbook's three essays—on the myth of the Underground Railroad, American slavery, and the operation of the Underground Railroad itself—combine to provide a good understanding of the nature of the UGRR and the historical context in which it operated.

Siebert, Wilbur H.
The Underground Railroad: From Slavery to Freedom.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898; Reprint,
New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1967.

A pioneering study of the Underground Railroad that sheds light on its overall operation. It indicates the major routes used by UGRR fugitives in New Jersey and lists in its appendix New Jersey UGRR operatives county-by-county.

Still, William.
The Underground Railroad. 1872;
Reprint, Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970.

This classic study of the UGRR draws on Still's records of fugitives he aided in Philadelphia, which was a major UGRR center. In all probability, some of these runaways subsequently passed through New Jersey on their journey farther north.

Wright, Giles R.
Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.
Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988.

An overview of New Jersey's black past that contains a brief discussion of the state's UGRR, as well as the first published map of New Jersey's main UGRR routes.

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