



DORCHESTER AND CAROLINE COUNTIES, MARYLAND DRIVING TOUR

Finding a way to freedom

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

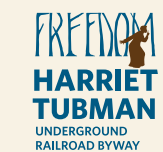


Harriet Tubman was one of the most famous Underground Railroad agents in our nation's history. Born into slavery in Dorchester County, Araminta Ross took the name Harriet after her marriage to freeman John Tubman. She successfully escaped to Philadelphia in 1849. Then she boldly returned 13 times to rescue family and friends and guide them safely to freedom along the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad was a secret network of people, places, and routes, which provided shelter and assistance to escaping slaves. It was symbolically named after the new steam railroads, using terms such as "passengers," "depots," and "conductors." The Underground Railroad operated in opposition to United States laws, and participants, both black and white, faced harsh criminal penalties if caught.

The escapes of enslaved African Americans intensified on the Eastern Shore in the decades leading up to the Civil War. Escape meant leaving loved ones, enduring a dangerous journey, and facing probable capture and punishment. The promise of freedom inspired some to take the risks and run. Some of these stories survive, and this byway takes you through the landscapes where they took place. You will realize how daring and determined self liberators like Harriet Tubman were. For more information, visit: www.TourDorchester.org, www.TourCaroline.com, and HarrietTubmanByway.com.

**HEART OF CHESAPEAKE
COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA**
2 Rose Hill Place, Cambridge, Maryland 21613
410.228.1000



DORCHESTER COUNTY

Following the War of 1812, prices for local crops of grain and timber plummeted. Some landowners struggling with debt began to sell their slaves to plantations in the Deep South. Others, including many Methodists and Quakers, freed their slaves for religious or moral reasons. By the 1850s, nearly half of the 8,000 African Americans living in Dorchester County were free and living in well established communities.

1 Dorchester County Visitor Center "Information and Orientation for the Journey"



An exhibition orients visitors to Harriet Tubman and Dorchester County's role in the Underground Railroad. The Dorchester County Visitor Center at Sailwinds Park provides information about the region's natural and cultural history, attractions, and amenities. Open daily from 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. (410-228-1000)

2 Dorchester County Court House "Challenging Slavery"



In 1850, Harriet Tubman's niece, Kessiah, and her two children escaped from the auction block at the front of the court house. Kessiah's husband, John Bowley, a free, black ship carpenter, whisked them away and transported them by boat to Baltimore, where Tubman met them and led them to Philadelphia.

The original courthouse burned in 1852. This building, constructed in 1854, stood at the center of Cambridge's political and economic life. In 1857, the trial of Samuel Green, a free black farmer, Methodist preacher and Underground Railroad agent, drew national attention when he was sentenced to ten years in prison for owning a copy of the anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In 1858, Hugh Hazlett, an Irish laborer and Underground Railroad conductor was captured and brought by boat to be imprisoned here. He escaped, was recaptured, and later sentenced to 44 years for assisting fugitive slaves.

3 Long Wharf "Portal to Slavery - Gateway to Freedom"



In the 18th century, when people, goods, and information traveled by water, Cambridge was a regional center for the slave trade. Ships from Africa and the West Indies brought kidnapped Africans and sold them along this waterfront. From here, the Choptank River extends 65 miles northeast to its headwaters in Delaware. For enslaved people fleeing Dorchester County, the waterway served as a passageway, as well as an obstacle, forcing them to either stowaway on vessels or walk far to find safe crossings at shallow points. Either way, self liberators knew that by following the river, they would come within a day's travel to Underground Railroad stations in Delaware.

4 Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center "Keeping the Flame Alive"



The Harriet Tubman Organization is one of the oldest community organizations dedicated to the memory of Harriet Tubman. Over the past three decades, efforts of this institution have included memorials to Tubman, tours to significant sites associated with her life, museum exhibits, educational programming, celebrations, and community outreach. (410-228-1000)
Continue on Race Street. Go right on Route 16.

5 Stanley Institute "Stampede of the Slaves"

It was one of the most dramatic escapes in Underground Railroad history. On the evening of Saturday, October 24, 1857, twenty-eight men, women and children escaped from their nearby slave quarters and fled. National newspapers called it a "Stampede of Slaves." They somehow safely made it all the way to Canada without being caught.

In 1867, this one-room schoolhouse was moved here. The black community maintained it to educate their children until 1962. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places (410-228-6657).

6 Church Creek "Crosscurrents of Slavery and Freedom"

An important shipbuilding center during the early 19th century, Church Creek suffered the consequences of interaction between highly mobile and helpful free black sailors and the area's enslaved workers. As a result of these encounters, escapes were more common here than anywhere else. Church Creek was also the site of some illegal retrofitting of Chesapeake built schooners for the slave trade in the 1830s. John Wesley Reed fled from here with Tubman and others during her last rescue mission in December 1860.

7 Woolford / Harrisville Road "Roots of Family and Community"

Harriet Tubman was probably born nearby on Anthony Thompson's plantation in 1822. Her father, Ben Ross, was a skilled timber foreman, married to Rit Green, who belonged to Thompson's young stepson, Edward Brodess. Sometime after Brodess reached adulthood, he moved Green and five of her children, including baby Araminta (Harriet Tubman), to his farm in Bucktown, but by 1840, Green was back living on Thompson's farm (currently privately owned), where she and Ross remained until 1847. A large community of enslaved and free black families lived and worked between Harrisville and Whitmarsh Roads, creating an important social world for Tubman and her family.

8 Madison "Secret Codes"



Teenaged Harriet was hired out to John T. Stewart, who owned farms, a shipyard, and businesses here. Her father, Ben Ross, also worked for Stewart after he was freed in 1840. While working here, Tubman likely learned of the secret communication network supported by black mariners, as well as about safe places in the north and how to navigate by the stars. It was near here that Harriet met and married freeman John Tubman in 1844.

In December 1854 Harriet Tubman sent a coded letter to Jacob Jackson, a free black farmer who lived west of Madison. The postmaster read the letter and confronted Jackson, and he denied understanding what it meant. Soon, however, Jackson notified Tubman's three brothers of her plans to lead them north from their parent's home at Poplar Neck in Caroline County.

9 Joseph Stewart's Canal "Danger and Drudgery in the Marshes"

The Stewart family owned tracks of timber in the area. Joseph Stewart and other area landowners designed a canal to float cut logs and agricultural products to the wharves and shippards in Madison Bay. Enslaved and free people dug this seven mile canal through the marsh by hand from 1810 into the 1830s, a grueling and sometimes deadly endeavor.

Harriet Tubman learned important outdoor survival skills when she and her father worked in the timbering operations in this region. Skills Tubman used when guiding passengers along Underground Railroad routes.

Cross the canal at Parson's Creek Bridge. Continue about one mile and turn left onto Smithville Road toward Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge or continue ahead two miles to Taylors Island Marina, restaurant, and facilities and return to Smithfield Road. Drive about four and one half miles and turn left onto Hip Roof Road. Go two miles and turn left onto 335/ Golden Hill Road.



10 Future Site of Harriet Tubman State Park "Honoring a Hero"

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's death in 2013, the State of Maryland is building the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park in her honor. The landscapes in the vicinity of the park have changed little since Tubman's childhood, when she lived, worked, and traveled these environs. There are also plans for a visitor center and a memorial, as well as additional interpretation at many of the sites along the byway.

Turn right on Key Wallace Drive.



11 Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge "Timeless Landscapes"

This 27,000-acre refuge contains wetlands and forests similar to those of the mid-19th century found along the Big Blackwater River and its major northern branches, the Little Blackwater and Transquaking Rivers. These wetlands provided protection to freedom seekers, who followed the rivers northward, hid in the forests and marshes, foraged for food, and struggled through water to throw pursuers off their trail. (410-228-2677)

12 Harriet Tubman Historical Marker / Brodess Farm "Harriet Tubman's Childhood Home"

(Privately owned) While this area has been historically recognized as Harriet Tubman's birthplace, there is no conclusive evidence. Edward Brodess moved Tubman's mother, Rit, and her children, to his farm in Bucktown in 1823 or 1824. Tubman spent her early years working here and on nearby farms. No trace remains of Brodess' home that once sat near the existing house at the end of the lane.

When Tubman's mother, her sister, and younger brothers were hired out to neighboring farmer Polish Mills, she was refused permission from her master to see them. On November 12, 1833, Tubman snuck away to see her mother. That night, the spectacular Leonid Meteor shower lit up the night sky. She and her brothers feared the end of the world had come, because Harriet had been so bold to sneak away.

13 Bucktown Village Store "Site of Harriet Tubman's First Act of Defiance"



At this crossroads, sometime around 1835, Harriet Tubman was almost killed by a blow to her head she received while attempting to assist a fellow enslaved man flee from an angry overseer. As a result of the injury, Tubman experienced life-long health problems and seizures that sparked vivid dreams, changing her views and motives the rest of her life. At the time, Bucktown was a busy community with two stores, a shopkeeper's home, blacksmith, farms, and shippards on the nearby Transquaking River. Operated by Bucktown Village Foundation (410-901-9255).

Turn right at the store onto Bestpitch Ferry Road and head to the one-lane Bestpitch Ferry Bridge. Buses MUST turn around in parking lot/boat launch on right-hand side at river. Return to Bucktown Store; turn right onto Bucktown Road.

14 Bestpitch Ferry Bridge "Marshland Secrets to Escape"

This historic wooden bridge over the Transquaking River provides a view of Dorchester County marshlands. In this countryside, knowledgeable local people could hide for days, even weeks, and follow the waterways north toward Caroline County and freedom. NARROW, ONE-LANE BRIDGE with weight limit.

15 Scott's Chapel / Bucktown United Methodist Church "One Church, Two Congregations"



Free and enslaved blacks and white members attended segregated worship services at this church, founded in 1812. Harriet Tubman and her family may have worshiped at this location. The church had separate graveyards; African Americans were buried across the road. The current building was constructed in 1891.

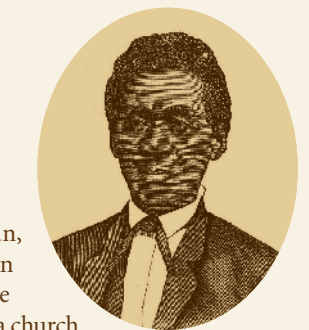
Follow Bucktown Road to Route 50. Turn right on Route 50 and left at the first light onto Route 16.

16 Faith Community United Methodist Church

"Caught: An Underground Railroad Agent"

Sarah Young, a free black woman, deeded this land in 1843 to seven free black trustees, including the Rev. Samuel Green, a preacher at a church on this site in the 1850s. Green lived close by near Route 16 with his wife Catherine. An Underground Railroad agent, Green helped Harriet Tubman and many others flee to freedom. He secreted the famous Dover Eight group in March 1857 and was arrested for his role in their escape. Lacking enough evidence to convict him, authorities charged Green with possessing a copy of the anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Turn left from the church parking lot onto Route 14/Railroad Avenue. In East New Market, turn on Route 16 North toward Preston.



CAROLINE COUNTY

During Antebellum years, enslaved people ran to Caroline County, because of the area's geography and the abolitionist movement active there. Two major routes of the UGRR crossed Caroline County. Quakers and African Americans ran a network on the east side of Preston, and Harriet Tubman and her parents ran the west side from Poplar Neck. Fleeing slaves used the Choptank River as a guide until they eventually had to cross it or its tributaries to reach Delaware and farther north.

17 Jacob and Hannah Leverton Home "Station House of Quaker UGRR Agents"



(Privately owned) Jacob and Hannah Leverton were white Quaker abolitionists. Their brick house near Hunting Creek has been described as

"the main stopping place for the Underground Railroad in the region." Their son, Arthur W. Leverton and a free black neighbor, Daniel Hubbard, were exposed in 1858 as agents of the Underground Railroad. When a mob assembled in Dorchester County to apprehend them, Daniel Hubbard fled to Philadelphia and Arthur Leverton to Indiana. Soon after, Leverton's family sold their home and joined him in Indiana. (410-673-1910)

Return on Seaman Road and turn right onto Route 331. Turn left onto Route 817. The mill is on the left at 3531 Seaman Road.

18 Linchester Mill

"Enslaved and free blacks working side by side"



Hunting Creek divides Dorchester and Caroline counties. Linchester supported a mill, general store, post office and homes. Mills and dams provided important crossing points over creeks for freedom seekers heading north through the county. Daniel Hubbard, a free black ship carpenter, may have helped build Linchester Mill. (Owned by Caroline County Historical Society, 410-673-1910)

Turn left on Route 318 and travel into Preston. Turn left on Maple Avenue and follow the signs to the Village of Choptank.

19 Village of Choptank / Choptank Landing "Escape Route Across River by Boat"

Josiah Bailey, a skilled shipwright, escaped slavery in November, 1865 by rowing a boat at night six miles from Jamaica Point in Talbot County up the Choptank River. He rowed past here to Poplar Neck where he met Harriet Tubman at her parents' home. Tubman led Bailey and three others from Poplar Neck to Canada. They were hotly pursued by owner William Hughlett, who offered an unusually high reward of \$1,500 for Bailey. The village of Choptank, known as Leonard's Wharf in 1855, was a port and steamboat landing for the town of Preston.



20 Poplar Neck

"Site of Harriet Tubman's Most Daring Rescues"

Dr. Anthony C. Thompson owned 2,200 acres of heavily forested land. In 1847, his timbering operations and sawmill employed large numbers of free and enslaved black laborers, including Harriet Tubman's father, Ben Ross. Tubman's parents were active in the Underground Railroad, and she most likely made her first escape via Poplar Neck. Later, Tubman led her three brothers to freedom from here on Christmas Day 1854. Fearing her parent's exposure as agents after the Dover Eight escape in 1857, Harriet returned to rescue them at great risk to herself.

21 Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Cemetery "Secret Meeting Places"



This graveyard may have served as a meeting place for self liberators journeying on the Underground Railroad. In 1849 white Quakers deeded this lot and their old meeting house to black Methodists who established the Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Church.

Return to Preston on Marsh Creek Road which becomes Sunset Boulevard. Turn right on Main Street and left onto Route 16 to Harmony. Turn right on Grove Road and travel 1 mile to the cabin on the left.

22 Webb Cabin

"Typical African American House"



This cabin (c.1852) is the only surviving log dwelling on the Eastern Shore known to have been built by a free black man (James Webb). The structure is typical of the housing of most African Americans during that period. Built on ballast stones from ships, it stands near the Choptank River, Hog Creek and several roads, including Harriet Tubman's possible Underground Railroad route from Poplar Neck. (Owned by Caroline County, 410-679-0655)

Continue on Grove Road. Turn right on Route 16/Bethlehem Road. Turn left onto Route 404/Shore Highway and left at the Gay Street exit.

23 Court House Square / Denton



"Site of Slave Auction and Jail"

This was the site of the slave market and jail where Hugh Hazlett and others were held for their involvement with the Underground Railroad. The Museum of Rural Life on the Square has an exhibit and more information. (Museum of Rural Life, 410-479-2055)

Continue on Gay Street and cross the bridge. Just past the light turn right into the parking lot at Choptank Electric.

24 Tuckahoe Neck Meeting House



"Quakers as UGRR Agents"

(Privately owned) Built in 1803, this was one of five Quaker meeting houses in Caroline County, whose members sustained a local Underground Railroad Network. Quakers supported women's equality and the end of slavery. Hannah Leverton and other abolitionists spoke here.

From the parking lot exit, turn right onto Route 328. Just past the light turn left on River Landing Road.

25 Choptank River Heritage Center

"A Once Thriving Port"



Enslaved African Americans worked in shippards here on the Choptank River. During the 1850s, steamboats loaded with freight and passengers made weekly trips to Baltimore. Underground Railroad conductor Hugh Hazlett boarded a steamboat here in 1858 to face trial and possible mob violence downriver in Cambridge. (410-479-4950)

Turn right on River Road. Turn right onto Route 404 east to Route 313 north. Go 10.5 miles. Turn right onto Christian Park/Red Bridges Road.

26 Red Bridges / Christian Park

"A Place to Wade across the Choptank"



While freedom seekers traveling north were tempted to use bridges, they usually avoided them as the threat of recapture was high. This stream at the headwaters of the Choptank River is a logical place where self liberators could have crossed and continued on to UGRR safe houses in Sandtown, Delaware.

Right turn on Route 313 north. Go 1.2 miles bear right on 313 again. Turn Right on Route 287 east/Sandtown Road.

27 Sandtown, DE / Delaware State Line

"Mason-Dixon Line"

Sandtown is located on the border between Maryland and Delaware. Freedom seekers reaching Sandtown still risked recapture, but they were well on their way to freedom.

28 Adkins Arboretum & Tuckahoe State Park

"Typical Woodland and Marshland"

Four miles of walking paths along streams and wetlands and through the forests are reminiscent of those that travelers on the Underground Railway passed through.

From Denton drive west on Route 404; turn right on Route 480; make an immediate left onto Eveland Road; drive two miles ahead to park entrance.

FREEDOM HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

This driving tour will guide you along a path back in time to the places, sites, and scenes of Harriet Tubman's life and the region's 19th century Underground Railroad

history. Many of the landscapes, where Tubman labored as a slave and where she executed her most daring Underground Railroad rescue missions, remain untouched since that time.

Visit exhibits, homes and home sites, churches and meeting houses, mills and court houses that illustrate the story of slavery and the daring pursuit of freedom through the Underground Railroad. At some sites, the original antebellum structures are long gone. In other places, the historic homes are privately owned. (Please respect the homeowners' privacy.) Throughout the area, rivers, streams, marshes, fields, and forests are the same that Tubman and others traversed so long ago. You can begin and end your journey anywhere along the route. Allow a minimum of six hours to complete the entire 125-mile tour.

THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

RANAWAY from the subscriber on Monday the 17th ult., three negroes, named as follows: **HARRY**, aged about 19 years, has on one side of his neck a wen, just under the ear, he is of a dark chestnut color, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high; **BEN**, aged about 25 years, is very quick to speak when spoken to, he is of a chestnut color, about six feet high; **MINTY**, aged about 27 years, is of a chestnut color, fine looking, and about 5 feet high. One hundred dollars reward will be given for each of the above named negroes, if taken out of the State, and \$50 each if taken in the State. They must be lodged in Baltimore, Easton or Cambridge Jail, in Maryland.

ELIZA ANN BRODESS,

Near Bucktown, Dorchester county, Md. Oct. 3d, 1849.

The Delaware Gazette will please copy the above three weeks, and charge this office.

- 1** **Dorchester County Visitor Center**
N 38 34.276, W 076 03.865
- 2** **Dorchester County Court House**
N 38 34.336, W 076 04.567
- 3** **Long Wharf, Cambridge**
N 38 34.494, W 076 04.323
- 4** **Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center**
N 38 34.223, W 076 04.557
- 5** **Stanley Institute**
N 38 32.684, W 076 06.179
- 6** **Church Creek / Whitehaven Area**
N 38 30.090, W 76 09.143
- 7** **Woolford / Harrisville Road Area**
N 38 29.770, W 076 11.185
- 8** **Madison Area**
N 38 30.440, W 076 13.352
- 9** **Joseph Stewart's Canal**
N 38 29.300, W 076 15.766
- 10** **Future Site of Harriet Tubman State Park**
N 38 26.882, W 076 08.260
- 11** **Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge**
N 38 26.834, W 076 07.157
- 12** **Brodess Farm**
N 38 27.552, W 076 02.888
- 13** **Bucktown Village Store**
N 38 27.550, W 076 01.884
- 14** **Bestpitch Ferry Bridge**
N 38 25.047, W 075 59.598
- 15** **Scott's Chapel/Bucktown United Methodist Church**
N 38 27.984, W 076 01.649
- 16** **Faith Community United Methodist Church**
N 38 35.801, W 075 54.879
- 17** **Jacob and Hannah Leverton Home**
N 38 42.303, W 075 53.415
- 18** **Linchester Mill**
N 38 42.082, W 075 53.841
- 19** **Village of Choptank / Choptank Landing**
N 38 40.892, W 075 57.067
- 20** **Poplar Neck**
N 38 43.439, W 075 56.301
- 21** **Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Cemetary**
N 38 43.250, W 075 55.556
- 22** **Webb Cabin**
N 38 45.346, W 075 53.571
- 23** **Court House Square / Denton**
N 38 53.179, W 075 49.975
- 24** **Tuckahoe Neck Meeting House**
N 38 53.504, W 075 50.576
- 25** **Choptank River Heritage Center**
N 38 53.302, W 075 50.375
- 26** **Red Bridges / Christian Park**
N 38 59.838, W 075 47.178
- 27** **Sandtown, DE / Delaware State Line**
N 39 01.787, W 075 44.313
- 28** **Adkins Arboretum & Tuckahoe State Park**
N 38 57.281, W 075 55.871

- UGRR Exhibit
- Kayak Launch
- Food
- Restrooms

