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The Challenge of Nominating the Underground Railroad in Delaware as a Historic Byway

The Underground Railroad has been called the nation's first civil rights movement. Perhaps the most dramatic protest against slavery in United States history, it was a clandestine network of people who assisted fugitive slaves to escape to freedom in the North, moving them through hiding places connected by secret routes including trails, roads, streams, and rivers. An estimated 100,000 people escaped slavery through the Underground Railroad from 1810 to 1850. The movement reached its peak between 1840 and 1860,

Those who guided freedom seekers along the way were "conductors," and Harriet Tubman, a former slave from Cambridge, Maryland, became the most famous of these. She often traveled through Delaware, where she was assisted by a well-developed network anchored in Camden and Wilmington and a string of free-black communities. Although there is written evidence that thousands of freedom seekers fled through Delaware, they left few physical traces of their flight on the land or in buildings. This article describes how that challenge and others were met in developing a nomination for the Harriet Tubman Historic Byway

DAVID L. AMES

University of Delaware

Delaware

DEBRA CAMPAGNARI MARTIN

Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware

Delaware

ROBIN KRAWITZ

Delaware State University

Delaware

SARAH BEETHAM, LAEL ENSOR,

ANN FANGMANN, and ERIN FERRITER

Center for Historic Architecture and Design

Delaware

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DAVID L. AMES, SARAH BEETHAM, LAEL ENSOR, ANN FANGMANN,
ERIN FERRITER, ROBIN KRAWITZ, and DEBRA MARTIN

Patterned after the National Scenic Byways Program, the Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway Program seeks to recognize and preserve highways in Delaware that “showcase the natural beauty and unique features of the state and foster the preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources while benefiting economic development through tourism and recreational opportunities.” This article looks at the challenges in developing a nomination for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware.

QUALIFYING AS A SCENIC AND HISTORIC HIGHWAY

The National Scenic Byways Program was created as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which was the first national transportation legislation to go beyond building roads to consider enhancing the areas adjacent to them. The byways program is a national effort to identify, promote, and manage the richly diverse system of highways in the United States to “create a network of exceptional driving experiences” (National Scenic Byways Program 1999, 16).

To be designated as a Delaware Scenic and Historic Highway, a road must exhibit at least one intrinsic quality. “Intrinsic qualities” are features seen from the road that can be physically attractive or are otherwise considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area. They should relate to the road and to each other and include the special views, places, buildings, sites, and other features that residents enjoy and draw tourists. These qualities are categorized as “scenic,” “historic,” “natural,” “cultural,” “archeological,” and “recreational.”

Historic quality, as defined by the National Scenic Byways Program, “encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or man made, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation of the past” (National Scenic Byways Program 1999, 16). However, the program does not define historic significance except to say that features determined historic by recognized programs, such as the National Register or HABS, can be considered significant as a byway with historic intrinsic quality. Although a survey of state scenic byway programs found that some states such as Florida require that all historic intrinsic features along a byway be on the National Register, most states do not.

This may be because the National Byway Program is less concerned with individual sites than in the story told by a series of related sites along a road. The standard is that the “historic quality of a byway depends on the connection that the road makes among individual resources along the corridor... [and] the historic story or theme should provide a link among resources at various points along the highway and a means of interpreting these resources to the visitor.” In short, roads “tell stories” through their intrinsic qualities, and what one sees from the road and the story are what ties the intrinsic qualities together. The goal of the Delaware portion of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Historic Byway is to provide the traveler with opportunities for experiencing the story of Delaware’s Underground Railroad (Fig. 1). The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway will be part of a larger, multistate Underground Railroad Byway beginning in Maryland and continuing northward through Delaware into Pennsylvania and New York.

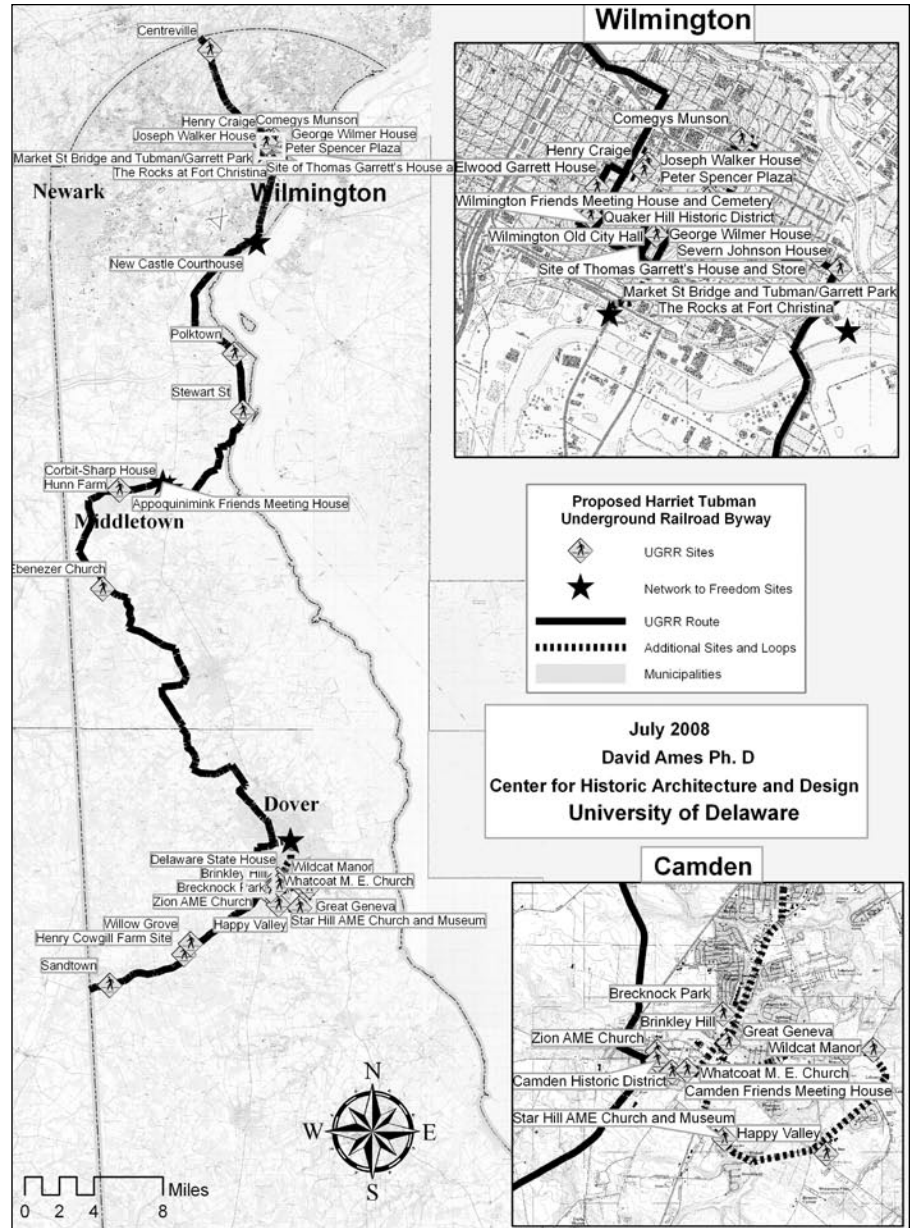


Fig. 1. Map of Proposed Underground Railroad Byway (Maps by David Ames).

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Despite its name, the Underground Railroad was neither a railroad nor underground—it was a clandestine network of people who assisted fugitive slaves in their escape to freedom in the North, moving them through hiding places connected by secret routes including trails, roads, streams, and rivers. What came to be called the “Underground Railroad” after 1830 was

“perhaps the most dramatic protest action against slavery in United States history (Bordewich 2005, 237). Reaching its peak between 1840 and 1860, the Underground Railroad helped an estimated 100,000 slave escape between 1810 and 1850.

Legend suggests that the term “Underground Railroad” may have been coined by a frustrated enslaver from Kentucky who concluded that a slave he could not find must have “gone off on an underground road” (Bordewich 2005, 237). The term came into use shortly

after the steam railroads were introduced in the 1820s, when railroad terminology made useful metaphors. Agents often referred to fugitive slaves as “parcels,” “passengers,” or “cargo.” Those who guided freedom seekers along the way were “conductors,” and the people who provided their homes as safe houses were called “station masters.” Harriet Tubman was one of the most famous conductors.

DELAWARE’S PART OF THE STORY

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in Delaware is being nominated on the basis of its historic intrinsic qualities. Scenic and cultural aspects will be considered as secondary intrinsic qualities.¹ The general corridor for the byway was outlined and the specific route chosen after a review of scholarship and preservation planning studies on the Underground Railroad in Delaware and the history of its African American communities. The route was then surveyed for its intrinsic qualities, and research was undertaken to identify and evaluate the significance of historic sites and intrinsic quality features associated with the Underground Railroad along the proposed route to create an intrinsic quality inventory of sites.

Delaware has nine sites on the Underground Network to Freedom of the National Park Service. Eight of these form the core of the historic intrinsic quality sites on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway (Essag 1996; Williams 1992). The Network to Freedom was established in 1998 by Congress to tell the story of the resistance against the institution of slavery in the United States through escape and flight.

In addition, to better understand the history of the Underground Railroad in Delaware and provide a framework to interpret the significance of intrinsic quality sites, a historic context was written by Kate Clifford Larson and Robin Bodo, *The Underground Railroad in Delaware: A Research Context* (2007). Clifford Larson is a historian and biographer of Harriet Tubman, and Robin Bodo is a historian with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office who specializes in the history of the Underground Railroad.

The historic context developed six major themes: slavery as an inhuman institution and the situation in Delaware; abolition and the long effort to end slavery; Delaware’s Underground Railroad stories begin and end in other states and the place of Delaware in the Underground Railroad network; interpersonal networks to freedom in Delaware that fed and supported the Underground Railroad; Who escaped? How personal circumstances determined the choices individuals made and the challenges they faced; and pathways and barriers to freedom provided by Delaware’s physical landscapes.

The themes show how the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is linked to the unique history of slavery in Delaware. As a slave state through the Civil War and one of only two states where slavery was not legally abolished until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 (Essah 1996, 186), Delaware was fraught with conflict as abolitionist Quakers, Methodists, and others fought against proslavery interests from the Colonial era to the Civil War. Delaware’s history as a slave state is paradoxical, developing differently from neighboring states—the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and the southern states of Maryland and Virginia.

Introduced into Delaware in 1639 by the Swedes, slavery was influenced by powerful conflicting cultural influences from the South and the North. A strong Quaker influence increasingly opposed to slavery came from Pennsylvania from the north at the same time that a planter culture supporting slavery came from Maryland from the west and the south. These contending cultures would make Delaware a microcosm of the national regional divisions between the antislavery North and proslavery South.

Slavery peaked in Delaware in 1790, when slaves accounted for 9,000 of its 12,700 African Americans. With 30 percent of its black population free, Delaware had the highest proportion of free blacks among the slave states. By 1830, the enslaved population in Delaware had dropped to 3,330, or 17 percent of the state’s 20,000 blacks. The average slaveholding Delaware farm had only three to six slaves, who acted as laborers and house servants and lived in available spaces in the homes of their enslavers or in outbuildings on the farm.

Motivated largely by personal circumstances, freedom seekers were most commonly young men in good health, traveling alone or in small groups. Men could travel quickly, attracting less attention than a family because male slaves were often sent on errands and could defend themselves from challenges. Women were less likely to attempt escape; most could not bear the thought of leaving their children behind, but faced with the threat of separation by sales of family members to the Deep South, many families felt escape was worth trying (Schneider and Schneider 2007).

The movement to abolish slavery is a critical interpretive theme of the Underground Railroad story in Delaware. The abolition movement nationally and in Delaware reflected three historic trends. First, in the wake of the American Revolution, Enlightenment ideals of independence, equality, and the dignity of man led many to question the practice of holding slaves. Second, The Great Awakening, a religious movement, which included the Quakers, Baptists, and Methodists, considered ending slavery a moral imperative. Finally, the convergence of these political and religious movements resulted in many voluntarily freeing their slaves.

From the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, Quakers and other abolitionists in Delaware appealed to their legislature to enact gradual or total abolition. Although laws abolishing slavery were passed in many Northern states, Delaware Quakers fell short of abolition but succeeded in having a ban of importation and exportation of slaves within the state passed in 1787. This “dealt a staggering blow to slavery in Delaware” (Williams 1996, 150). To continue the push to abolish slavery, the Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery was founded in Dover in 1788. After this, many Delaware Quakers, led by Thomas Garrett of Wilmington, helped to organize the Underground Railroad as a means of resistance. Three Quaker meetinghouses on the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway are significant Underground Railroad sites: the Camden Friends Meeting House, the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House, and the Wilmington Friends Meeting House.

The growth of free black communities in Delaware is another critical part of the story of the Underground Railroad (Fig. 2). From 1790 to 1810, the free black population in Delaware more than tripled from 4,000 persons to over 13,000, expanding the percentage of free African Americans from 30 to 75 percent. The city of Wilmington, in particular, experienced spectacular growth in free blacks, becoming a magnet for free black migrants from rural Delaware and the South. By 1830, the percentage of free blacks in the city stood at 79 percent, and by 1860, only four persons remained enslaved in the city.

Although a majority of the state’s black population was legally free, no blacks in Delaware were really free. Many whites saw them as a “threat to their racialized conceptions of civil society” (Essah 1996, 84) and moved to deny them basic rights. Moreover, both free blacks and enslaved people lived under the constant threat of being kidnapped and sold into slavery in the Deep South.

A significant number of the known Underground Railroad agents operating in Delaware were African Americans. The most famous was Harriet Tubman, who made thirteen trips through the state on the way from Maryland to Canada while rescuing friends and family enslaved on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Samuel D. Burris, a free black resident of Kent County, was prosecuted and jailed for his Underground Railroad activities and was saved from being sold into slavery only by the intervention of his friends in Wilmington. In Camden, William and Nathaniel Brinkley and Abel Gibbs (later Abraham) were among the members of the black community whom Tubman felt she could trust (Williams 1996, 165-170). Wilmington, the north central hub of Underground Railroad activity in Delaware, was home to many African American conductors, most of whom worked with Thomas Garrett, who by his own account helped more than 2,700 slaves escape (McGowan 2005). Black communities and churches did much of the work on the Underground Railroad, guiding fugitives from one safe house to the next, providing food and clothing, and forwarding messages about successful escapes to anxious loved ones still in slavery.

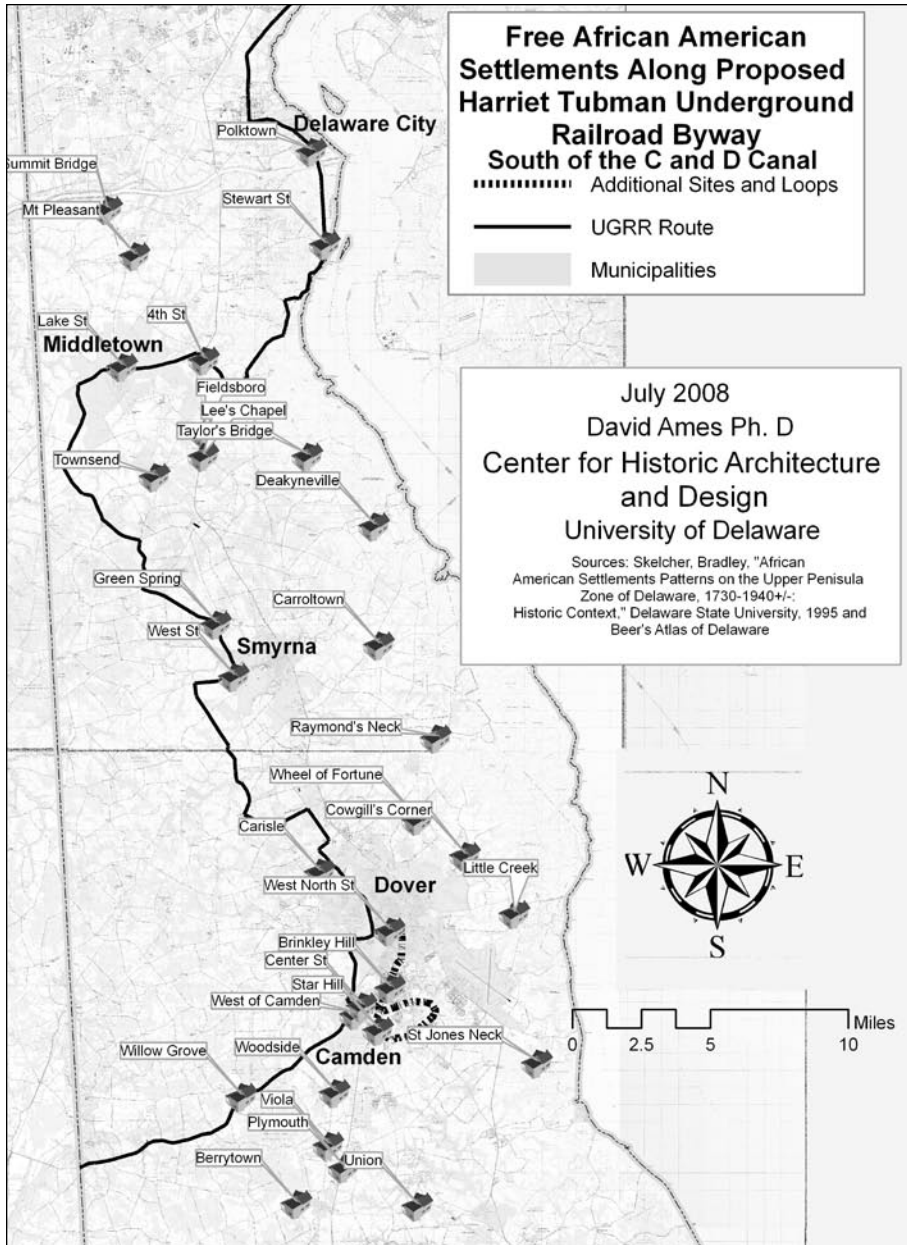


Fig. 2. Map of free African American settlements along the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad (Map by Bradley Skelcher).

Freedom seekers arriving at the cluster of free black communities in the Camden area could look for free black conductors William Brinkley or Samuel D. Burris to lead them the rest of the way through the state. Brinkley and Burris might seek the aid of John Hunn, a Quaker who lived in Middletown in the 1840s. His home was a stop on the way to Wilmington and Thomas Garrett. There, Garrett housed many freedom seekers in his home. If his home was full or being watched by law enforcement officials, he could

contact one of his many confederates in the free black community of Wilmington, including Joseph Walker, Comegys Munson, Severn Johnson, Henry Craige, George Wilmer, Abraham Shadd, and Davey Moore. These men opened their homes to freedom seekers and conducted them on the last leg of the journey north to the Pennsylvania border (Clinton 2004, 90).

While free black communities may have been magnets for freedom seekers, they were also dangerous places, because they were constantly

patrolled by slave catchers and law-enforcement officials. Blacks who participated in the Underground Railroad did so at great personal risk, since penalties for aiding a fugitive were much harsher for black agents than for white agents. It was the interpersonal network of like-minded people of both races working together to end slavery that defined the Underground Railroad in Delaware.

Many of Delaware's Underground Railroad stories begin and end in other states. As the last slave state before reaching free soil and adjacent to the slave states of Maryland and Virginia, Delaware was the chosen escape route for freedom seekers from Maryland's Eastern Shore and the Delmarva Peninsula, as shown in an analysis of runaway advertisements.

So close to freedom, Delaware was, however, a place to get through quickly, and its Underground Railroad was organized to keep freedom seekers moving north to Pennsylvania and east to New Jersey (Lowery 2007, 46-47). Philadelphia was a beacon for freedom seekers throughout the South. As one of the first accessible cities on free soil, it was a magnet for fugitives who could take advantage of both the anonymity offered by its size and the help from its free black and Quaker communities. Philadelphia was also the home of William Still, a free African American and member of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery, who worked tirelessly to forward freedom seekers who had passed through Delaware on to safety further north.

The physical and cultural landscapes of Delaware provided both pathways and barriers to freedom. While travel was eased by a flat landscape with many roads and streams, it was also made difficult by marshes, wetlands, and barriers like the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and open fields where concealment was difficult. Some areas with strong abolitionist sentiments were easier to traverse, such as Camden and Wilmington, while proslavery strongholds were dangerous and best avoided. Because it was reachable by water from adjoining southern states and provided a dense network of rivers and streams, the Delmarva Peninsula was a vital link on the Underground Railroad.

PREPARING THE NOMINATION AND MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD AS A SCENIC AND HISTORIC HIGHWAY

Nominating the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway as a Scenic and Historic Highway presents certain challenges. On the one hand, there is no question that the story of the Underground Railroad is significant in American and African American history. Neither is there any question that the Underground Railroad in Delaware was the essential last leg in the network in the East.

Yet its success depended on its secrecy, and the Underground Railroad left little evidence of its existence on the land or in buildings. Very few people involved in the Underground Railroad network knew more than how it worked locally. Most escaping freedom seekers, as well as some Underground Railroad agents, could not read or write, so there is little in the historical record about how and where the Underground Railroad existed or details about how it worked. Daring escapes became the stuff of rumor and legend especially after 1840 and reflected a large body of folklore, oral histories, and interviews with slaves and those who helped them, which survives in many communities. However, the validity of much of this testimony has been found to be questionable because it was not properly verified or because of what is now seen as a bias of early, mostly white historians in underestimating the role blacks played in the operation of the Underground Railroad. Verification is necessary to meet the current scholarship standards of the Network to Freedom.

Since the early histories of the Underground Railroad were written, scholars of African American history have shifted, according to Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, from "an approach focused heavily on the physical and institutional structure of black communities and the degree to which whites regulated and controlled black life [to one] emphasizing an agency model demonstrating the extent to which African Americans in slavery and freedom shaped and controlled their own destinies" (Goings and Mohl 2006, 2). Early histories of the Underground Railroad by white historians saw whites in charge as station masters and conductors assisting dependent black freedom seekers.

INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORIC BYWAY

If the route and features of the Underground Railroad were secret and invisible when it was operating, the major challenge in designating it as a historic byway is that it has kept its secrets very well. At first pass, the Underground Railroad would seem hard-pressed to meet the standard for having compelling historic intrinsic qualities. However, the most important feature of a historic byway is not its intrinsic qualities alone, but the story it tells. Indeed, the official manual of the program for preparing nominations states that the historic quality of a byway relates to the connection it makes among resources along its route and the way that the route and its resources tell an interpretive story to the visitor” (National Scenic Byways 1999, 19).

TRAVELING THE ROUTE

While the historic context is the more complete and multifaceted story, perhaps the major intrinsic quality for the traveler is the trip itself and how one can imagine being a slave escaping north through Delaware. Thus, it is a trip of the imagination. It is well documented that thousands of freedom seekers traveled through Delaware to reach the North. Although we know they entered or started traveling in the state and left it, it is not clear exactly which routes they took. A conductor could use numerous secret routes depending on where search parties and slave catchers were or to avoid any last minute dangers. Therefore, the Underground Railroad Byway was conceptualized as a corridor through Delaware—a funnel with its wide mouth along the western Delaware-Maryland border that narrowed as it went north toward Wilmington and Pennsylvania. The actual route or road of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway can be thought of as the center line of a broad corridor through which freedom seekers traveled north (Larson 2004, 99-101).

The route generally follows the one used by Harriet Tubman, who in 1897 gave an interview to Wilbur Siebert in which she explained her role in helping many enslaved people in their escape. Tubman retraced her route from

Maryland through Delaware, mentioning Sandtown, Willow Grove, Camden, Dover, Blackbird, New Castle, and Wilmington as sites where she found safe harbor. The proposed route also links a series of other sites mentioned in well-documented stories of escapes (Clinton 2005, 37; Williams 1996, 166). One of these told of the members of the Samuel Hawkins family, who escaped from Queen Anne’s County, Maryland, in 1845, and were captured in Middletown at the farm of John Hunn, brought to jail in New Castle, and finally released with the help of Thomas Garrett. In creating the route, these sites formed the basis of the historic byway; other sites were included as they were discovered.

Starting at Delaware State Route 10 at the Maryland border, the route of the proposed byway is a continuation of Maryland’s Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. The Delaware route is divided into five segments based on the story each tells about the Underground Railroad.

- Segment 1, from Sandtown on the border with Maryland east to Camden and Dover, is called “The Gauntlet” because it was the most dangerous part of the journey due to local proslavery sentiments and roving slave hunters. In addition, the flat, open fields were difficult to cross undetected, except at night. As an abolitionist center with neighboring free black communities, Camden was an area where freedom seekers could rest and replenish their provisions.
- Segment 2, from Camden and Dover to Odessa, is called “Making Choices,” because at this point freedom seekers had to choose between continuing north by land and on to Wilmington or traveling east some seven miles to the Delaware River and finding a boat to New Jersey. There was also a connection south to Lewes, Delaware, and from there to New Jersey.
- Segment 3, from Odessa to Wilmington, is called “The Bold Move,” because freedom seekers could choose, for example, a straight shot to Wilmington along the King’s Highway or a journey over to the coast, where it might be possible to find passage north in the port cities of Port Penn, Delaware City, or New Castle.

- Segment 4, Wilmington itself, is called “The Gateway to Freedom,” because it was from here that Thomas Garrett would arrange travel to Philadelphia and elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Wilmington has the greatest number of sites on the route.
- Segment 5, from Wilmington to the Pennsylvania border just north of Centreville, is called “On to Pennsylvania.”
- *Commemorative/Interpretive Sites (I)*: sites that commemorate specific Underground Railroad events or interpret the general history of the Underground Railroad, including museums and historical markers.
- *Evocative Landscape Sites (E)*: sites or areas that evokes the general undisturbed historic landscape of this part of Delaware, providing the traveler with an experience as removed as possible from contemporary intrusion.

The character of the land along the proposed route is an important aspect of the traveler’s experience. One goal of the proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is to give today’s traveler a sense of the experience of freedom seekers trying to find their way north through an unfamiliar Delaware landscape. Part of recreating that experience involved conducting a Historic Intrinsic Quality Survey, which identifies features associated with the Underground Railroad and stretches of the corridor where the landscape still resembles the period from 1840 to 1865, when the Underground Railroad was most heavily used.

TYPES OF UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HISTORIC INTRINSIC QUALITY SITES

A major challenge was evaluating the historic significance of sites identified as being associated with the Underground Railroad in Delaware. From the intrinsic quality inventory, evaluation, and research, four site types were identified. In addition to the route itself, there are forty-five local sites along the road.

Four Site Types

- *Underground Railroad Sites (U)*: sites that have verified association between individuals, events, and places with the network of people who assisted fugitive, enslaved people.
- *Cultural Context Sites (C)*: sites or areas related to broad themes of the Underground Railroad historic context, such as the growth of free black communities and churches, abolitionist Quaker families and meetinghouses, and African Americans in the Civil War.

Sample Sites

Underground Railroad Sites (U)

- Brinkley Hill (Free Black Settlement North of Camden) (U). During the mid-nineteenth century, there was a small, predominately African American community north of Camden called “Brinkley Hill.” This densely settled area was home to William Brinkley, a well-documented conductor on the Underground Railroad, and his brother Nathaniel.

Combined Underground Railroad Sites (U) and Commemorative/Interpretive Sites (I)

- Delaware State House (U)(I) (Fig. 3). The State House was the site of the 1847 trial of Samuel D. Burris, a well-documented conductor on the Underground Railroad. Burris was convicted of assisting Maria Matthews in an unsuccessful attempt to escape from bondage and sentenced to be sold into slavery. Luckily, Burris’s contract was purchased by Isaac Flint, a Wilmington merchant and abolitionist, who attended the auction in the guise of a slave trader, with funds raised for this purpose in the abolition community. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a designated Network to Freedom site.
- Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House (U)(I). The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built in 1785 and is one of the smallest meeting



Fig. 3. Delaware State House, The Green, Dover, Kent County (Photograph by David Ames).

houses in the nation. Strong, local, oral tradition says that freedom seekers may have used the upstairs eaves closet as a hiding place. Prominent abolitionist Quakers met here for weekly worship.

- New Castle Court House (U)(I). The New Castle Court House was the site for the trial of Thomas Garrett and John Hunn in 1848. It was also where the Hawkins family was jailed after being captured in Middletown. It is designated a National Historic Landmark for its association with the Underground Railroad and is also designated on the Network to Freedom.
- Thomas Garrett Home Site (U)(I). The home and store of Thomas Garrett, one of the most important figures on the Underground Railroad in Delaware, was a destination for many freedom seekers. Demolished in the 1970s, the property is now the site of a parking garage and is designated as a Network to Freedom site.

Cultural Context Sites (C)

- Zion AME Church (C). An African Methodist Episcopal congregation has met on this site since 1845, but the surviving church building dates from 1889. The adjoining cemetery includes the burial plots and markers of United States Colored Troops Caleb Fisher and Abraham Gibbs, the son of Abel Gibbs (later Abraham), one of Harriet Tubman's Camden connections on the Underground Railroad.

Combined Cultural Context Sites (C) and Commemorative/ Interpretive Sites (I)

- Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and Market Street Bridge (C)(I) (Fig. 4). This commemorative park was dedicated in 1998 to the work of Harriet Tubman and Thomas Garrett. An earlier bridge at Market Street was used by Harriet Tubman. The park has been designated a Network to Freedom site.

Commemorative/Interpretive Sites (I)

- Star Hill AME Church and Museum (I). Originally built in 1866, the current church was rebuilt after a fire in 1905. Attached to the social hall of the church is a small museum, geared toward children, which is devoted to slave life and the accomplishments of African Americans. The church is on the Network to Freedom for its interpretive programs on the Underground Railroad.

Evocative Landscape Sites (E)

- Hawkins Route to Hunn Farm (E). In 1845, the family of African American Samuel Hawkins left Caroline County, Maryland, to seek freedom in the North. The family was able to secure the help of free African Americans. Underground Railroad conductor Samuel D. Burris led them through Camden and,



Figure 4. Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park, N. King Street, Wilmington, New Castle County (Photograph by David Ames).



Fig. 5. Delaware State Route 9 shoreline in New Castle County with a view to New Jersey (Photograph by David Ames).

with a letter from Ezekiel Jenkins, they continued to the farm of John Hunn near Middletown where, unfortunately, they were recognized as an unfamiliar group by a neighbor of Hunn.

- Delaware State Route 9 Landscape (E) (Fig. 5). The wetlands along Route 9 are an important part of the state's natural history and remain virtually unspoiled. Route 9 crosses the sea-level Chesapeake and Delaware Canal over the Reedy Point Bridge, and the 360-degree view of the marsh landscape is a highlight of the route. Several eighteenth-century houses remain on the landscape, adding to the evocative qualities.

THE FUTURE: A CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

The proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is a series of intrinsic quality sites tied together by several strains of the story of freedom seekers escaping to the North. The nomination described in this paper was submitted to the Scenic and Historic Highways Program of the Delaware Department of Transportation and designated as the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Historic Byway. The next stage will be to develop a corridor management plan for the byway, which is really a corridor preservation and implementation plan. Delaware has been coordinating its work with the state of Maryland,

which has already designated such a byway. It starts from Tubman's home in Cambridge County and connects with the proposed Delaware segment described in this article. Ultimately, a traveler may be able to follow the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Historic Byway from Cambridge, Maryland, through Delaware, Pennsylvania, and into New York.

DAVID L. AMES
University of Delaware
Delaware

David L. Ames, Ph.D., is a professor of urban affairs and public policy and geography and director of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design at the University of Delaware. He has been working on scenic and historic highway research and nomination for several years. Preparing the nomination of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Historic Byway has allowed him to combine his interest in African American history with historic byways. He is also the coordinator of the historic preservation concentration in the master's program in Urban Affairs and Public Policy.

DEBRA CAMPAGNARI MARTIN
Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware
Delaware

Debra Campagnari Martin is the historic preservation planner for the City of Wilmington, Delaware, and the appointed administrator of the Underground Railroad Coalition since 2006. She is also a historic preservation commissioner for the town of Delaware City, Delaware.

ROBIN KRAWITZ
Delaware State University
Delaware

Robin Krawitz is a historian, formerly with the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office. She is currently an associate professor at Delaware State University and executive director of Otsego 2000, a nonprofit preservation and conservation group in Cooperstown, New York. Her career-long interest in the preservation of African American historic resources led to her work on the Underground Railroad byway projects in Delaware.

SARAH BEETHAM, LAEL ENSOR,
ANN FANGMANN, and ERIN FERRITER
Center for Historic Architecture and Design
Delaware

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ENDNOTES

1. Route 9 has been named the Coastal Heritage Scenic Byway primarily on the basis of its natural qualities. The Kennett Pike leg from Wilmington to Pennsylvania is one spine of the Brandywine Valley National Scenic Byway.

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