

# STATE OF DELAWARE



## **STATEMENT IN OBSERVANCE OF THOMAS GARRETT DAY**

*Whereas*, Thomas Garrett was born in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania on August 21, 1789; and in 1822 Thomas Garrett moved to Wilmington, Delaware with his wife and children; and

*Whereas*, Thomas Garrett was a prominent merchant with his home and business located at 227 Shipley Street, Wilmington, Delaware; and

*Whereas*, Thomas Garrett was committed to the anti-slavery efforts of his Quaker faith assisting more than 2,700 slaves escape slavery through the secret network known as the Underground Railroad; and

*Whereas*, Thomas Garrett refused to abandon the fight to abolish slavery even though he was convicted and fined by the U.S. District Court in 1848 for aiding slaves; and

*Whereas*, upon Thomas Garrett's death on January 25, 1871, black Wilmingtonians carried him to the Quaker Cemetery at 4th and West Streets in appreciation of his unwavering commitment to the emancipation of slaves.

*Now, Therefore, We, Thomas R. Carper, Governor, and Ruth Ann Minner, Lieutenant Governor, of the State of Delaware, do hereby declare Saturday, August 21, 1993, as:*

## **THOMAS GARRETT DAY**

in the State of Delaware, and urge all Delawareans to recognize the significant contributions made by Thomas Garrett, Stationmaster of the Underground Railroad, to the State of Delaware and America alike.



*Thomas R. Carper*  
Thomas R. Carper, Governor

*Ruth Ann Minner*  
Ruth Ann Minner, Lieutenant Governor

RECEIVED

THOMAS GARRETT (1789-1871)

AUG 2 1993

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
WILMINGTON

In order to be listed in the Dictionary of American Biography, a man must make a significant contribution to American life. Thomas Garrett, member of Wilmington Monthly Meeting at Fourth and West Streets, is given a full column in the Dictionary and this is the information that you will find there:

Thomas Garrett was born in 1789 in Upper Darby, Pa. His parents, Thomas and Sarah Price Garrett, were farmers. In 1818, at the age of 29, Thomas joined the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. In 1822, he and his wife, Mary Sharpless, and their children came to Wilmington, where he established a successful business as a hardware merchant and toolmaker. In 1827, his wife Mary died, and later Thomas Garrett married Rachel Mendenhall.

Delaware was a slave state, and a man who helped runaway slaves was guilty before the law. His activities were severely criticized by many people: furthermore, angry slave-owners frequently threatened violence to those who assisted their property to escape. The Garrett house at 227 Shipley Street was frequently under surveillance; at one time a \$10,000 reward was posted for him in Maryland, he was attacked in the newspapers for engaging in practices that were dangerous to the community and subversive to the Union; his life was threatened. Finally, in 1848 he was prosecuted for helping a Negro couple and their six children to flee the New Castle jail. John Hunn of Middletown was also sued by the Maryland slave-owners and the trial was held in the United States Circuit Court at New Castle before Justice Hall and Chief Justice Taney who later became famous in the Dred Scott case. Hunn was assessed damages of \$2500 and Garrett \$5400. The court's judgment was punitive, for the fine was much greater than the amount sued for by the plaintiffs. Thomas Garrett's property was sold by the sheriff to pay the fine and he was left bankrupt at the age of 60.

Friends, both Negro and white, came to his rescue and he was able to rebuild his business. He continued his activities in the Underground Railroad and during the next twelve years he helped more than 900 slaves and freedmen to make their way to freedom. The records show that he assisted about 2700 individuals over a period of more than 35 years. Only one was ever recaptured-- a man who insisted on returning from Canada to preach in Wilmington.

In April, 1870, the Negroes celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation and drew Thomas Garrett through the streets of Wilmington in an open barouche with a sign that proclaimed him "OUR MOSES". When he died in 1871 at the age of 81, the pallbearers at his funeral were Negroes, and the funeral service was a public event of importance.

The article goes on to say that he was a man of many interests. For instance, his last public appearance was as the presiding officer of a suffrage meeting. He was recognized as a man of great character and the Dictionary of American Biography concludes by praising him for the following traits:

- first, utter fearlessness which overawed the slave-owners;
- second, honesty so upright that he refused to allow his lawyer to misrepresent him for the sake of a lenient verdict;
- third, great ingenuity and resourcefulness which contributed to the success of his efforts in the Underground Railroad;
- fourth, love for his fellow men.

What manner of man was Thomas Garrett? These are the bare facts of his life and there are very few written records that one can go to in developing the history and personality of the man who, according to the Wilmington Daily (Jan. 25, 1871), was more widely known outside the city than any other citizen of the community. For obvious reasons, he kept no records of his transactions nor of the names of the people whom he helped. A few letters survive as part of the records kept by William Still of Philadelphia during the 1850's. Information must be gleaned from the comments of other Friends who knew him and worked with him over the years.

Historians have been able to identify only eight operators of the Underground Railroad in Delaware besides Thomas Garrett. Most of these were Quakers.<sup>1</sup> Delaware is a small state but it was part of the major eastern route up from Virginia and Maryland, and the hazards of official supervision were far greater than they were in Pennsylvania and the mid-West. Pennsylvania Quakers maintained an active and efficient system of transport northward to Canada. In fact, soon after the Revolution, Pennsylvania Quakers are said to have begun the operations which were later to be called the Underground Railroad. As early as 1794, George Washington complained that the Quakers in Philadelphia had helped one of his slaves but did not think it worth his while to press the matter.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Garrett usually sent his charges on to Kennett Square, which was the next major station on the eastern route.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Garrett lacked the united support of his Monthly and Yearly Meetings, for during the 1830's and '40's many Friends advocated a policy of patient waiting and compliance with the law. Abolitionists were very unpopular in the North until the climate of public opinion shifted during the '50's as a result of the Fugitive Slave Law and the Dred Scott case.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Monthly Meeting was opposed officially to Thomas Garrett's activities and would not lend its Meeting House for anti-slavery meetings and speeches, in 1848 the membership took up a collection so that he could continue his business after he lost the court case. His friends in the community came to the public auction for bankruptcy and bought his possessions, which he then kept for his family's use, paying back his friends as he was able. When he was threatened by angry crowds, grateful Negroes hid in his yard at night to protect him, but fortunately open violence never actually occurred.<sup>5</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that there must have been many dedicated individuals who gave their help secretly and preferred to remain anonymous.

He was called "dear Thomas Garrett", "gentle", "placid", "loving". But he was also fearless. When irate slave-owners challenged him, he met them calmly, never denied that he had helped "God's poor", and quietly pushed aside their guns and knives, saying that none but cowards resorted to such ways to achieve their ends and that Quakers were not afraid of such

things.<sup>6</sup> At his trial, the judge made him a proposal: "Mr. Garrett, if you will never touch this business again, I will let you go free." The response was a quiet: "Friend, thee better proceed with thy business." And after the packed jury had imposed damages of almost \$8,000 on Thomas Garrett and John Hunn, Garrett addressed the court: "Now, Judge, I do not think that I have always done my duty, being fearful of losing what little I possessed; but now that you have relieved me, I will go home and put another story on my house, so that I can accommodate more of God's poor." And he did.<sup>8</sup>

Friends in Pennsylvania had good reason to be grateful to him for his efficiency, resourcefulness, and thoughtfulness in caring for those who passed through his hands and for the Friends who would be receiving them at their risk. Clear directions, ingenious devices for secrecy, bravery in wading the Christiana and Brandywine Rivers--sometimes in the dead of winter, money as it was needed to give to the runaways or to those who were willing to assist if there were a little profit involved--Thomas Garrett was a sympathetic and dependable operator. In addition, he seems to have had a keen sense of humor. The following story is usually told as an illustration of his boldness but it is also an example of genuine Quaker wit and self-confidence while doing the work of the Lord. When the Legislature in Maryland offered a reward of \$10,000 for his capture, he wrote an open letter to the newspapers in Baltimore to tell them that their price was not high enough. If they were to raise the offer to \$20,000, he would appear in person to claim it. Maryland did not accept the offer.<sup>9</sup>

Another incident tells us a good deal about his ingenuity and helps explain his popularity with all kinds of people who were glad to help when it could be so much fun to defy the establishment. Harriet Tubman had brought a large group of runaway slaves as far as Wilmington and sent word to Thomas Garrett that the bridge was being watched. He hired two wagons and filled them with a noisy crowd who were supposed to be bricklayers going out on a spree. They were so convivial and jolly that their party attracted notice in the town. They drove across the river, spent the day, and returned after dark, still singing and shouting in a most unseemly manner. The "bricklayers" sat on the parallel outboard seats and Harriet Tubman and the fugitives lay close together on the floor in the center of the wagons. The guards on the bridge did not even bother to challenge the party. Thomas Garrett took the runaways to his iron-yard, fed them, and sent them on as the way opened.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas Garrett was a man of great intelligence and he had a clear understanding of the deep implications of the slavery issue for the nation as well as for the individuals involved in it. He could see twelve years before it broke out that civil war would be the price that the nation would have to pay for its divided opinions. And when war came, he recognized that for many a slave service in the Union Army was the key to freedom and economic independence; if a man wanted to enlist, he helped him to do so.<sup>11</sup> He had the ability to distinguish between his own Quaker principles and those of other men who are not called to pacifism and who must survive in the world.

He was willing to risk all that he had in order to help those who needed assistance. At the time of his trial, he accepted personal defeat, knowing that his troubles would help others to strengthen their convictions. His efforts made him famous. Lucretia Mott attended his funeral and had this to say about it:

...I was in town at a meeting at the Old Colored Home on First-day, and told them of the funeral of Thomas Garrett the day before, which Edward Davis and myself attended. Aaron Powell was there. and spoke admirably well; also a Methodist minister of repute, and a fine, intelligent colored man. Such a concourse of all sects and colors we never before saw! The street lined for half a mile to the Meeting-House, and as many outside as in. Six colored men bore him that distance, and then into the graveyard adjoining. He was universally respected, and well-beloved by many, even though his name was cast out as evil in Anti-Slavery days.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Garrett did indeed make a significant contribution to American life. Wilmington Monthly Meeting is in his debt, for he gives us much to think about. Fearlessness, honesty, resourcefulness, and love for his fellow men--these are high praise. He was a man of action, not a theologian. Once when he was asked if he really believed "something", he replied:

"Oh, yes, I do believe something. I believe in doing my duty. A man's duty is shown to him, and I believe in doing it, the first duty first and so on right along every time."<sup>13</sup>

Well done, good and faithful servant!

Marlette P. Petze (Sawyer)

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Wilbur H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1898), p. 79

<sup>2</sup>William Breyfogle, Make Free: The Story of the Underground Railroad (Philadelphia and New York, 1958), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>R.C. Smedley, M.D., History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania (Lancaster, Pa., 1883), p. 239.

<sup>4</sup>Levi Coffin, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin (Cincinnati, Ohio) 1876), pp.223-247.

<sup>5</sup>Smedley, pp. 240-241.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>7</sup>Irvin C. Poley and Ruth Verlenden Poley, editors, Friendly Anecdotes (New York, 1950), p. 116.

<sup>8</sup>Smedley, p. 240.

<sup>9</sup>Smedley, p. 241.

Letter from Thomas Garrett to the Mendenhalls and Dugdales (1860), cited by Thomas E. Drake, "Thomas Garrett: Quaker Abolitionist", Friends in Wilmington: 1738-1938 (Wilmington, Delaware, 1938), p. 80.

<sup>10</sup>Breyfogle, p. 176.

<sup>11</sup>William Still, Underground Railroad Records (Philadelphia, Pa., 1872 edition), p. 641.

<sup>12</sup>Anna Davis Hallowell, ed., James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters (Boston and Cambridge, 1884), p. 455.

<sup>13</sup>William P. Tilden, Thomas Garrett, A Memorial Address, 1889, cited in Friends in Wilmington, p. 79.

Delaware's Greatest  
Stationmaster:  
Thomas Garrett  
and  
The Underground Railroad



Thomas Garrett  
devout Quaker,  
and Abolitionist.

# The Underground Railroad

by Ellen Peterson, with closing by  
Jim McGowan

Perhaps unequalled in American History is the powerful impact that the *Underground Railroad* and its seemingly ordinary citizens working as conductors and masters, had in changing society.

In Delaware, a few very effective abolitionists worked for many years sending fugitive slaves along the road to freedom. There were *Underground Railroad* stations throughout the state....in Blackbird, Camden, Middletown, New Castle, Hockessin and Wilmington.

As a border state, Delaware had citizens who felt strongly both for and against slavery. But in spite of strong opposition, men like Isaac Flint, John Hunn, Joseph Walker, and Thomas Garrett, worked to provide a safe journey for the slaves they met.

It is difficult to imagine the courage, determination, strength, ingenuity and fear that the station masters, conductors and fleeing slaves faced as the *Underground Railroad* performed its miracles.

Thomas Garrett (1789-1871), who lived at 227 Shipley Street in Wilmington, was Delaware's greatest station master. He is credited with helping 2700 slaves reach freedom. A brave, big-hearted man, he opened his heart and home each time he was called upon. He was a friend found equal to the task each time he was called upon. Garrett lived his Quaker faith and its main precept that God resides within a person's soul, leading him in his work.

Beginning near the end of the 1820s, Garrett devoted most of his lifetime to the *Underground Railroad*, serving until 1864. Except when threatened by police capture, Garrett worked "without concealment and without compromise." Because of this, his reputation spread quickly among both slaves and whites.

With increasing numbers of slaves coming to him, by the late 1830s he could no longer accommodate everyone and enlisted several local assistants. He also found outside sources of financial support. Many of the fugitives he saw needed clothing, shoes, money for transportation and help getting started.

Garrett helped as he was able. On one occasion Harriet Tubman, who had become a close friend, asked him for nearly \$25 for slaves she was leading. Garrett replied by asking how she thought he could possibly supply her with such a large sum. Tubman replied that God had sent her to him. Garrett could only respond that indeed He had, having just returned from the bank where he had converted an English 5 pound note (a gift) into \$25! Groups from as far away as Edinburgh, Scotland sent gifts for Garrett's cause.

Not everything went as smoothly for Garrett. At the age of 60, in 1848, he and John Hunn from Middletown, were brought to trial for aiding fugitive slaves. Both men were found guilty and fined severely. Garrett was forced to sell his iron and hardware business along with his personal property at auction to pay the fine. Friends purchased Garrett's property, allowing him to use it, and buy it back when he could.

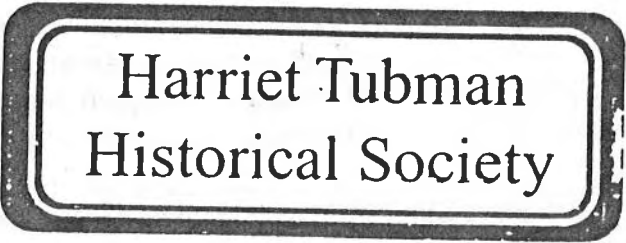
In 1850 the Fugitive Slave Act passed, intending to deter slaves from attempting to escape as well as anyone who wanted to help them. Although it was more dangerous, the Underground Railroad continued, becoming more successful. By the end of 1857, Garrett had helped a total of 2152 slaves.

In January, 1871, an estimated 1500 people overflowed the **Quaker Meeting House on West 4th Street** awaiting the arrival of several young black men. These men carried Garrett's last remains on their shoulders, up the steep hill from his house on Shipley Street. The inspiring voice of abolitionist Lucretia Mott, another well-known Quaker, rang out over the wooden benches of the Meeting House--in praise of the man they all came to know as "unrelenting" in his willingness to help the runaway slave. Those who heard her wept. It was called "the most moving funeral in the history of Wilmington."

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*Harriet Tubman Historical Society, Vivian Abdur-Rahim, Director*



For More Information on  
*Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett*  
or the *Underground Railroad*,  
contact the



Harriet Tubman  
Historical Society

P.O. Box 146,  
Wilmington, Delaware 19899  
or call,  
762-8727

# TAKING THE TRAIN TO FREEDOM



## U N D E R G R O U N D R A I L R O A D S T U D Y

As early as the 16th century, western European nations constructed a uniform slavery system in the Western Hemisphere. This process was composed mainly of people of African origins. Through the notorious slave trade, Africans were dispersed and forced to labor on sugar, tobacco and rice plantations throughout the Americas and Caribbean. In the 1600s and 1700s, slave labor played a vital role in the history of the British North American colonies. Beginning with Massachusetts and Virginia colonies in 1641 and 1660 respectively, slavery was legalized and regarded as essential to the colonial economy. As white colonists began to petition for freedom and human rights from the British government, this same sentiment was echoed by enslaved blacks. Those who voiced strong opposition to slavery campaigned for the destruction of the system. Although some blacks received liberation through legal suits, those who remained in bondage took considerable risks to gain freedom by escaping from their masters. This method, known as the "Underground Railroad," became a major impetus leading to the eradication of the "peculiar institution" – Slavery.

The Underground Railroad originated during the colonial era as slaves sought ways to escape the inhumane treatment of bondage. Neither "underground" nor a "railroad," this secretive system was not initially organized, but arose when escaped slaves sought refuge in unclaimed territories and newly settled colonies. With the assistance of agents such as the Quakers, free blacks and Native Americans, bondsmen were able to gain their freedom. The efforts of the "underground" promoted the enactment of local fugitive slave laws which were a response to the growing concerns of slaveholders who had lost numerous servants. But as the nation continued to struggle over the morality of slavery, the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 accorded the South justification to perpetuate slavery since it was

viewed imperative to its economy.

The abolition movement of the early 1800s set its goal on exterminating slavery. To do so, abolitionists designed the "underground" into a well-organized system. Through the use of secret codes, "stations," "conductors," and "railways," runaway slaves usually travelled to their destinations by night either alone or in small groups. Guided by the North Star, their plans did not entail standard routes since it was necessary to prevent capture; thus waterways, back roads, swamps, forests, mountains, and fields were used to escape. While in flight, slaves hid in barns, caves, cellars, and even boxes or wagons and aboard ships. Food and shelter were provided at "stations" which were maintained by noted "conductors" such as William Still, Levi Coffin and Frederick Douglass. Moreover, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and the United Methodist churches gave refuge to escapees. Once runaways achieved their freedom, a few like Harriet Tubman, known as a "Moses" to her people, returned to assist fellow slaves and loved ones to liberty. Single-handedly, Tubman made 19 trips to the South and led more than 300 slaves out of bondage.

By the 1850s, anti-slavery sentiment had reached its peak, and the "underground" program was challenged by slaveholders through a revised Fugitive Slave Act. This law, which called for the return of runaways, jeopardized the status of freedmen, especially those who resided in northern states. Escape routes thus were no longer limited to northern, mid-western regions and the federal territories of the United States. More than 100,000 American slaves sought freedom in these areas as well as in Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. The Underground Railroad remained active until the end of the Civil War as black bondsmen continued to use the system to flee the horrors of slavery.



## Study Process

On November 28, 1990, Congress authorized the National Park Service to conduct a study of the Underground Railroad, its routes and operations in order to preserve and interpret this aspect of United States history.

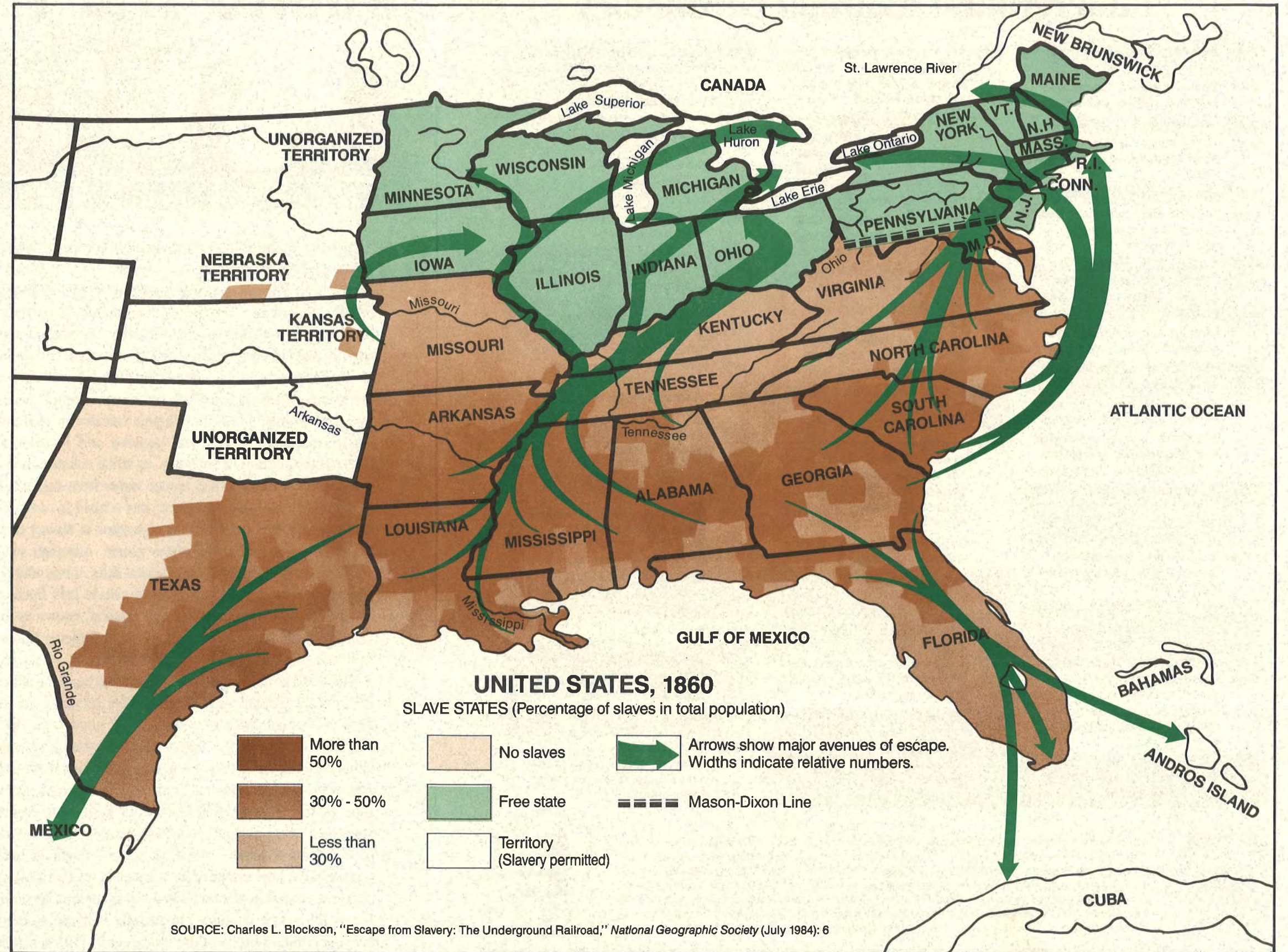
The Underground Railroad, which reached its zenith during the first half of the 19th century, was a response to the slavery system in North America. Emphasis, therefore, will be placed on the peak years, 1830-1865. The study will include a general overview of the Underground Railroad, with a brief discussion of slavery and abolitionism, escape routes used by slaves, and alternatives to commemorate and interpret the significance of the phenomenon.

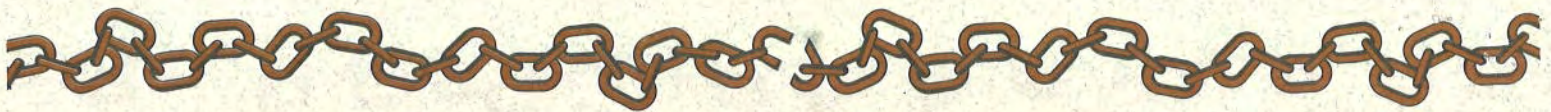
Presently, there are a few sites, such as the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (District of Columbia), Levi Coffin (Indiana), Harriet Tubman (New York) homes, and Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Philadelphia), that have been recognized as National Historic Landmarks important for their association with the Underground Railroad. A comprehensive report on other sites is underway, along with this study, to determine the most appropriate ways to commemorate and interpret the Underground Railroad. Since this event was not concentrated in one area of the nation, the National Park Service will make every effort to involve state and local governments as well as organizations and private citizens in the study process. A final report containing recommendations, alternatives and cost estimates will be available to the public.

## Additional Information

The National Park Service welcomes comments, suggestions, and information relating to the Underground Railroad. Please write or call:

**Underground Railroad Study Project**  
**National Park Service**  
**Denver Service Center — Eastern Team**  
**P.O. Box 25287**  
**Denver, Colorado 80225**  
**1-800-524-6878 (Barbara Tagger, project historian)**





# Underground Railroad Chronology

- 1607** Jamestown, Virginia, settled by English colonists.
- 1619** Twenty Africans are shipped to Jamestown, Virginia, on Dutch ships.
- 1641** Massachusetts colony legalizes slavery.
- 1642** Virginia colony enacts law to fine those who harbor or assist runaway slaves.
- 1660** Virginia colony legalizes slavery.
- 1741** North Carolina colony enacts law to prosecute any person caught assisting runaways.
- 1775** The Pennsylvania Abolition Society is established to protect fugitives and freed blacks unlawfully held in bondage.
- 1776** North American colonies declare independence from Great Britain.
- 1777-1804** Northern states abolish slavery through state constitutions.
- 1787** Northwest Ordinance prevents slavery to exist in the new federal territories. Free African Society of Philadelphia, an abolitionist group, is organized by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones.
- 1793** Fugitive Slave Act becomes a federal law. Allows slaveowners, their agents or attorneys to seize fugitive slaves in free states and territories.
- 1794** Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is established in Philadelphia, PA.
- 1800** Nat Turner and John Brown are born. Gabriel Prosser stages an unsuccessful slave insurrection in Henrico County, VA.
- 1804** Underground Railroad is "incorporated" after slaveowner, Gen. Thomas Boudes of Columbia, PA, refuses to surrender escaped slave to authorities.
- 1816** Seminole Wars begin in Florida as a result of many slaves taking refuge with Seminole Indians.
- 1818** As a response to the Fugitive Slave Act (1793), abolitionists use the "underground" to assist slaves to escape into Ohio and Canada.
- 1820** Missouri Compromise admits Missouri and Maine as slave and free states, respectively. The measure establishes the 36° 30' parallel of latitude as a dividing line between free and slave areas of the territories.
- 1821** Kentucky representatives present resolution to Congress protesting Canada's reception of fugitive slaves.
- 1822** Former slave Denmark Vesey performs a slave uprising in Charleston, SC.
- 1829** Black abolitionist, David Walker issues **David Walker's Appeal**. Afterwards, several slave revolts occurred throughout the South.
- 1830** Levi Coffin leaves North Carolina, settles in Indiana and continues abolitionist activities.
- 1831** William Lloyd Garrison prints first issues of his anti-slavery newspaper, **The Liberator**. Black entrepreneur and abolitionist Robert Forten becomes chief financial supporter of the publication. Nat Turner stages insurrection in Southampton County, VA.
- 1832** Louisiana presents resolution requesting Federal Government to arrange with Mexico to permit runaway slaves from Louisiana to be reclaimed when found on foreign soil.
- 1834** National Antislavery Society organizes Underground Railroad as a response to pro-slavery argument.
- 1838** Underground Railroad is "formally organized". Black abolitionist, Robert Purvis, becomes chairman of the General Vigilance Committee and "president" of the Underground Railroad.
- 1842** Supreme Court rules in **Prigg v. Pennsylvania** that state officials are not required to assist in the return of fugitive slaves.
- 1845** Frederick Douglass prints **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass**, an account of his slave experience and escape to freedom.
- 1847** Douglass edits anti-slavery newspaper, the **North Star**.
- 1849** Harriet Tubman makes her escape from Maryland.
- 1850** Compromise of 1850 attempts to settle slavery issue. As part of the Compromise, a new Fugitive Slave Act is added to enforce the 1793 law and allows slaveholders to retrieve slaves in northern states and free territories.
- 1852** Harriet Beecher Stowe's **Uncle Tom's Cabin** is published as a response to the pro-slavery argument.
- 1857** Supreme Court declares in **Scott v. Sandford** that blacks are not U.S. citizens, and slaveholders have the right to take slaves in free areas of the country.
- 1859** John Brown's failed raid on federal arsenal and armory in Harper's Ferry, Virginia which was aimed at starting a general slave insurrection.
- 1860** Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln is elected President of the United States.
- 1861** Civil War begins.
- 1863** President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation which declares "all persons held as slaves within any state . . . be in rebellion against the United States shall be then . . . forever free."
- 1865** Civil War ends. Thirteenth Amendment is amended to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery permanently.



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under United States administration.



The National Park Service, Department of the Interior, is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or other nonmerit factors.





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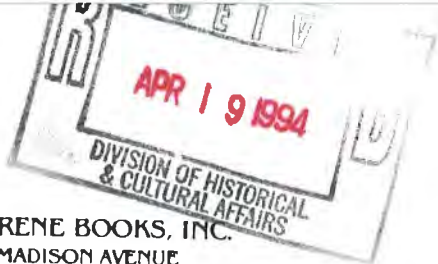


Exhibit Books

Author available for interview.  
Contact: Michelle R. Gagné  
(212) 685-4371

The Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad  
by Charles L. Blockson  
287 pages, over 70 b&w photos, illustrations & maps  
Publication Date: July 4, 1994  
\$22.95 cloth ISBN 0-7818-0253-9

**Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad  
Reveals Long-Kept Secrets and Little-Known Facts of History**

Charles L. Blockson, noted historian, genealogist and archivist, writer, and speaker has lifted another veil from African American history to tell the story of the Underground Railroad with the publication of **The Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad**. Illuminating the covert "salvation operation," which began around 1789, the guide follows the tracks of slaves and activists and stops at the historic "stations" that once transported a people from the shackles of slavery to sweet freedom in the north and in Canada.

The heroes of the Underground Railroad were not only the slaves who persisted and endured, but also its conductors, who were black and white and Native American, who represented every religion, who kept secret these subversive missions, and who could be found in the unlikeliest of places. Slaves would find refuge among Native American tribes like the Seminoles in Florida or the Ottawa in western Ohio, or by fleeing to the Bahamas or to the wilderness of The Great Dismal Swamp, The Everglades or the remote bayous of Louisiana.

The Underground Railroad usually traveled from the depths of the Old South moving to freedom north of the Mason-Dixon line. Especially detailed are the descriptions of historic sites of border states such as Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, West Virginia and Virginia, Kansas and Iowa, as well as controversial Missouri. These states felt the full fury of the northern abolitionists confronting the southern land owners.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, passed in an effort to appease the southerner, forced northern citizens to assist the slave-catchers. This served only to increase abolitionist and Underground Railroad activity. Canada, with its stubborn refusal to return slaves to owners, became the promised land. Along various U.S.A./Canadian borders, the historic towns, homes, churches and meetinghouses that acted as beacons of freedom to the escapees are described and preserved in **The Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad**.

The Guide highlights both well-known and little-known heroes in 25 Eastern, Southern and what are now Mid-Western states--Harriet Tubman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe, to name a few. Follow William Still, a freedman who toiled for the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia, and whose rare personal records were published in 1872. Discover that John Brown's escapades involved Kansas, John Todd's notorious Tabor, Iowa station, Philadelphia, and the fateful town in

West Virginia known as Harpers Ferry. In Detroit, discover that the Second Baptist Church was organized in 1836 by 13 ex-slaves, where some 5,000 slaves passed through--kept in the basement until they could safely move on to Canada. Currently the church is restoring its historic basement to its 19th century appearance and plans to have memorabilia on display.

Over 150 entries describe such events, places, people and landmarks, which, until now, have been obscure to the casual historian. For example, Oberlin, Ohio's unique contribution is memorialized by an Underground Railroad monument, located on the Oberlin College campus. But that hardly scratches the surface of the Oberlin community's commitment to abolition. When a fugitive slave named John Price was seized on the outskirts of town, hundreds of citizens, at great personal risk, followed him and his captors until they were able to liberate the slave--and eventually helped him in reaching Canada.

The secretive nature of the Underground Railroad confined much its history to oral tradition. On November 28, 1990, Congress authorized the National Park Service to conduct a study of the Underground Railroad, its routes and operations. The Park Service appointed Mr. Blockson chair of an advisory committee to create a National Trail of historical markers, which also verifies sites for historical accuracy. According to Mr. Blockson, this project will be completed in 1996.

Mr. Blockson is also the author of two previous books on the Underground Railroad, among other books of African American interest: *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*, and *The Underground Railroad: First Person Narratives*. His July, 1984 cover story for *National Geographic Magazine* brought unprecedented attention to the Underground Railroad, creating nationwide a new awareness of pre-Civil War history. Jerry Pinkney, the renowned artist who created the cover art for the *National Geographic* article, contributes two black and white illustrations to the over 75 photos and illustrations found in **The Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad**. Other photos and illustrations come from Blockson's 80,000-artifact Afro-American Collection at Temple University.

The first of its kind on the subject, **The Hippocrene Guide to the Underground Railroad** represents over 26 years of research, fact gathering, and collecting--and its scope reflects the effort. Alongside the 150 entries and over 75 illustrations are various local maps, and a mapped overview of the movement toward freedom; and:

- a chronology detailing the politics, policies, laws, and events yearly from 1789-1865 which shaped the nation and its citizens
- a glossary defining the jargon and phrases of the Underground Railroad
- an appendix regarding the subversive lyrics and music sung by 18th and 19th century Africans and African Americans, and a musical bibliography
- an annotated "Harriet Tubman Trail" which follows her well-traveled route from Maryland to Canada--a route she used to liberate her own family and over 300 slaves
- a bibliography recommending further reading
- a listing of travel specialists across the US and Canada who can organize individual and group Underground Railroad site tours; and
- an index.

### **THE HIPPOCRENE GUIDE TO THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

by Charles L. Blockson

287 pages, over 70 b&w photos, illustrations & maps

\$22.95 cloth ISBN 0-7818-0253-9

Publication Date: July 4, 1994

## To the friends of Oppressed Humanity.

“MAY a man of India change his skin, or a cat of the mountain her spots.” Those are impossibilities which our understanding acknowledges as soon as the query is suggested to us, and yet, because of those impossibilities a large mass of our fellow-beings are subjected to all the ignominy and injustice of slavery, because Supreme Wisdom has been pleased to permit the sun and air, of a particular portion of the earth, to darken the skins of its inhabitants, the lighter complexioned men of other districts, presume that He has marked them for bondage. If such reasoning were founded in truth, we should have the chain of slavery continued until it encircled the globe: The English would be the slaves of Russia, the Gauls of Britain, the proud Castilians the servants of France, the swarthy Moor the slave of the Spaniards, and so the business would go on, until all the inhabitants were bound in slavery, to the fairest skin on earth. The absurdity of this opinion is calculated to excite a smile of ridicule; but that emotion is instantly repressed by a recollection of the misery which it has created. It has violated that law of love, by which the Benevolent Parent of the world intended its inhabitants should be united---and covered some of the most beautiful and fertile portions of the earth with fraud, misery, and the blood of men!

Beholding those awful events, and being deeply sensible of the impolicy and injustice of the bondage in which our fellow-men are held, we are desirous of employing, and to excite others, to use all lawful means to lessen the evils, and finally to promote the total abolition of slavery.

How can Americans speak, or even think of the high privileges of liberty, with which Providence has condescended to bless them, while they are causing thousands of their fellow-men to groan under the heart-grinding oppressions of slavery? The appeal which they made to the world, when they were about breaking assunder the chains of their own bondage, is a severe condemnation of every species of slavery. It is there declared—“We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain *unalienable rights*; that among these are life, *liberty* and the pursuit of happiness.” After such a declaration, how can we presume, under what pretext shall we dare to hold our fellow-men in bondage? Let not this language, nor these appeals be heard in vain.

We most earnestly solicit the lovers of virtue and religion, the friends of oppressed humanity, to aid us in the good work in which we have engaged. Policy, justice, virtue, all that is approved by heaven, and dear to the heart of man, should make us zealous in the prosecution of this design; neither individuals nor nations, however they may hide their iniquity from men, can wind through the secret paths of wickedness unseen by Him to whose eye all things are present; and can we suppose that the crimes attendant on slavery, committed in the broad light of day, are unnoticed by perfect wisdom and goodness?—The justice of the Supreme Ruler, though slow and full of mercy, is nevertheless *sure*. Every nation that has pursued wickedness, to a certain degree, has sealed its own doom! Recollect the Jews, whose iniquity brought destruction on their heads; look at the records of history, and behold how certainly the displeasure of Providence has followed the crimes of nations! Let those recollections awaken us from our slumbers before the period for useful exertions pass away. Let us plead with our fellow-citizens in behalf of oppressed innocence, of the injured people of Africa, and persuade them to call down the mercy rather than the indignation of Supreme justice. For this purpose, let us form societies to detect and bring to just punishment, kidnappers and all other violators of those laws which favour persons of colour, and let us employ the eloquent language of truth mingled with gentleness, to promote the enactment of laws still more favourable to humanity and justice.

We hope this appeal to your hearts, and understandings, will not be fruitless, and are your friends.

Signed on behalf, and by the direction of the Abolition Society of Delaware,  
in Wilmington, held the 17th of the 7th mo. 1802.

CYRUS NEWLIN, *President*,  
ZACHARIAH JESS, *Secretary*.

Wilmington, 2mo 7th 1860

Dear Friends Joseph, Ruth, Isaac and Dinah,

As Benjamin Kent is going to your place today I write to say that I have not yet been kidnapped, by the Marylanders and I hope by this time my friends may breathe freer. I have had sundry letters from friends, some advising me to leave home for a few weeks, and one to go to England for a year or two, and take my wife along. I presume you have not been so much alarmed about me, it is true the papers have made very free with my name, but I have given myself no trouble about what has been said until yesterday. I wrote a Statement of my position respecting aiding Slaves and sent it to the Peninsular News for insertion. I will enclose a scurrilous piece out from the Pensylvanian of the 30th of last month, by which you will see that, they have placed me in good company, but the writer has stooped so low that it is not worthy of notice.

The meeting here on the mens side abandoned the case on music so long pending without disowning Elizabeth Grubb. My wife keeps quite smart this winter. The rest all well. Much love to you.

T and R. Garrett



1504 BROOM STREET  
WILMINGTON, DEL.

February 28, 1927.

Mr. Henry C. Conrad,

Dear Mr. Conrad:-

Thank you very much for your letter received on Saturday, together with copy of my Grandfather's letter written to Joseph and Ruth Dugdale and to Isaac and Dinah Mendinhall. I had never seen the letter before and I am certainly obliged to you for having made the copy and sending it to me. In fact, I have no letters of my Grandfather written to other than my Father, and as my Father and he lived in the same town near together it was only when they were separated that I have any letters, and they are very few and say nothing whatever about his work with the slaves. I only wish you might have received the clipping which he said he enclosed with his letter.

I have been told that Thomas Garrett was one of the few anti-slavery men who never received any personal violence. I think it comes from his great moral and physical courage. He was afraid of nothing and this feeling protected him. I know he was told once by some irate man from the lower part of the State that if he got down in their part of the world they would tar and feather him; to which he replied, "I am often down there and I will call and see thee the next time I come." Which he did, and went to the man's door and the man himself opened it and Grandfather said, "Thee said thee would like to see me the next time I came down, and here I am." The man replied, "Go away Mr. Garrett, we can't do anything to you."

If you come across anything else pertaining to my Grandfather, I should be very glad to have it, and if you send me the originals I will have them copied and return the originals to you if you so desire. One of my nephews is named for my Grandfather, Thomas Garrett Bradford, and I am preserving for him in a book (which was originally an anti-slavery minute book of the generation before my Grandfather) all data that I have with regard to Thomas Garrett. It consists principally of the notices in the various papers in Wilmington, Philadelphia, and New York that were published at the time of his death, and also copies of letters written about him which have been sent to me.

I thoroughly appreciate your thought of me in sending this copy.

Yours very truly,

*John S. Garrett*

Wilmington, 34 No. 23d, 1856.

Dear Friend, William Still:

Since I wrote thee this morning informing thee of the safe arrival of the eight from Norfolk, Harry Craig has informed me that he has a man from Delaware that he proposes to take along, who arrived since noon. He will take the man, woman and two children from here with him, and the four men will get in at Marcus Hook. Thee may take Harry Craig by the hand as a brother, true to the cause; he is one of the most efficient aids on the Railroad, and worthy of full confidence. May they all be favored to get on safe. The woman and three children are no common stock. I assure thee finer specimens of humanity are seldom met with. I hope herself and children may be enabled to find her husband who has been absent some years, and the rest of their days be happy together.

I am as ever, thy friend,

THOMAS GARRETT.

Wilmington, 10th Mo. 31st, 1857.

Esteemed Friend, William Still:

I write to inform thee that we have either seventeen or twenty-seven, I am not certain which, of that large gang of God's poor, and I hope they are safe. The man who has them in charge informed me there were twenty-seven safe, and one boy lost during the last night, about fourteen years of age, without shoes; we have felt some anxiety about him, for fear he may be taken up and betray the rest. I have since been informed there are but seventeen, so that at present I cannot tell which is correct. I have several looking out for the lad; they will be kept from Philadelphia for the present. My principal object in writing thee at this time is to inform thee of what one of our constables told me this morning; he told me that a colored man in Philadelphia, who professed to be a great friend of the colored people, was a traitor, that he had been written to by an abolitionist in Baltimore to keep a look out for those slaves that left Cambridge this night week; told him they would be likely to pass through Wilmington on Sixth-day or Seventh-day night, and the colored man in Philadelphia had written to the master of part of them telling him the above, and the master arrived here yesterday in consequence of the information, and told one of our constables the above. The man told the name of the Baltimore writer, which he had forgotten, but declined telling the name of the colored man in Philadelphia. I hope

you will be able to find out who he is, and should I be able to learn the name of the Baltimore friend, I will put him on his guard respecting his Philadelphia correspondents.

As ever thy friend, and the friend of humanity, without regard to color or crime.

THOMAS GARRETT.

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9th Mo. 26th, 1856.

Respected Friend, William Still:

I send on to thy care this evening by railroad, five able-bodied men, on their way North; receive them as the Good Samaritan of old, and oblige thy friend.

THOMAS GARRETT.

Respected Friend, William Still:

I now have the pleasure of consigning to thy care four able-bodied, human beings, from North Carolina, and five from Virginia--one of which is a girl twelve or thirteen years of age--the rest all men. After thee has seen and conversed with them, thee can determine what is best to be done with them. I am assured they are such as can take care of themselves. Elijah F. Pennypacker some time since informed me he could find employment in his neighborhood for two or three good hands. I should think those from Carolina would be about as safe in that neighborhood as any place this side of Canada. Wishing our friends a safe trip, I remain thy sincere friend.

THOMAS GARRETT.

After conferring with Harry Craig, we have concluded to send five or six in the cars to-night, and the balance, if those go safe, to-morrow night, or in the steam boat, Second-day morning, directed to the anti-slavery office.

Wilmington, 5th Mo. 11th, 1856.

Esteemed Friends, M'Kim and Still:

I propose sending to-morrow morning by the steam-boat, a woman and child whose husband, I think, went some nine months previous to New Bedford. She was furnished with a free passage by the same line her husband came in. She has been away from the person claiming to be her master some five months, we therefore think there cannot be much risk at present. Those four I wrote thee about, arrived safe up in the neighborhood of Longwood, and Harriett Tubman followed after in the stage yesterday. I shall expect five more from the same neighborhood next trip.

As ever your friend,

THOMAS GARRETT.

Wilmington, 12th Mo. 1st, 1860.

Respected Friend, William Still:

I write to let thee know that Harriet Tubman is again in these parts. She arrived last evening from one of the trips of mercy to God's poor, bringing two men with her as far as New Castle. I agreed to pay a man last evening to pilot them on their way to Chester county. The wife of one of the men, with two or three children, was left some thirty miles below, and I gave Harriet ten dollars to hire a man with carriage to take them to Chester county. She said a man had offered for that sum, to bring them on. I shall be very uneasy about them until I hear they are safe. There is now much more risk on the road, till they arrive here, than there has been for several months past, as we find that some poor worthless wretches are constantly on the look out on two roads, that they cannot well avoid, especially with carriage; yet as it is Harriet, who seemed to have had a special angel to guard her on her journey of mercy, I have hope.

Thy friend,

THOMAS GARRETT.

N.B.--We hope all will be in Chester county, tomorrow.

THOMAS GARRETT.  
(1789-1871.)

Thomas Garrett, the uncompromising advocate of the emancipation and education of the colored race, was born in Upper Darby, Delaware county, Pennsylvania, on Eighth mo. 21st, 1789; he was a son of Thomas and Sarah Garrett.

A member of the Society of Friends, he held to that faith which is one of their cardinal principles, that God moves and inspires men to fulfill the work which He requires at their hands; from this conviction he never swerved, no matter what labor it cost, nor what vicissitudes and trials might beset him. His motto was "Always do right at the time irrespective of consequences."

He was married twice. His first wife was Mary Sharpless, of Birmingham, Chester county, Pennsylvania, who died at Wilmington, Delaware, Seventh mo. 13th, 1827; his second, Rachel Mendenhall, who died Fourth mo. 20th, 1868. He survived them both. Whilst yet living at his father's house, on his return from a brief absence from home, he found the women in great distress, two men having kidnapped a colored woman in the employ of the family, and removed her in a wagon; mounting a horse, he followed them rapidly by means of a mark left by a broken tire. They went to the Navy Yard, Philadelphia, and thence to Kensington, where he saw the wagon. The men were in the bar-room-- the woman was in the kitchen and was taken home with him.



It was during this ride, while meditating upon the wrongs and oppressions of the colored race in bonds, that he felt the call to aid them in throwing off the yoke of slavery, as his special mission in life. He devoted himself there after fearlessly and faithfully to this work.

He removed to Wilmington, Del., in 1822.

It is a remarkable fact that, while living in a slave state, and in the largest city in that State, with a population hostile to abolitionists, and his house frequently under the rigid surveillance of police, that of the nearly twenty-nine hundred fugitives who passed through his hands, not one was ever recaptured, with the exception of a man who had lived some years in Canada and returned to Wilmington to preach. Remaining there some time, he was seized and returned to bondage.

He would never directly nor indirectly entice a slave to leave his master, but when one applied to him for aid in escaping from bondage, he never refused assistance, let the consequences be what they might.

Open assistance given at one time involved him in a law suit, an account of which we extract from William Still's "Underground Railroad."

"He met at New Castle a man, woman and six children, from down on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The man was free, the woman had been a slave, and whilst in slavery had had, by her husband, two children; she was then set free and afterwards had four children. The whole party ran away. They travelled at night, where they were taken in and cared for by John Mann, a wealthy Quaker.

ran away. They traveled several days and finally reached Middletown, Del., late at night, where they were taken in and cared for by John Hunn, a wealthy Quaker. They were watched by some persons in that section, who followed them to New Castle, arrested them and sent them to jail. The sheriff and his daughter were anti-slavery people and wrote to Mr. Garrett, who went over and had an interview; after finding that four of the party were undoubtedly free, he returned to Wilmington and, on the following day, he and United States Senator Wales went to New Castle and had the party taken before Judge Booth, on a writ of habeas corpus. Judge Booth decided that there was no evidence on which to hold them and that, in the absence of evidence, the presumption was always in favor of freedom, and discharged them.

Mr. Garrett then said, "Here is this woman with a babe at her breast, and the child suffering from white swelling on its leg; is there any impropriety in my getting a carriage and helping them over to Wilmington?" Judge Booth responded, "certainly not." Mr. Garrett then hired the carriage, but gave the driver distinctly to understand that he only paid for the woman and the young children; the rest might walk; they all got in, however, and finally escaped; of course the two children born in slavery among the rest.

Six weeks afterwards the slaveholders followed them, and incited, it is said, by the Cochrans and James A. Bayard, commenced a suit against Mr. Garrett, claiming all the fugitives as slaves. Mr. Garrett's friends claim that the jury was packed to secure an adverse verdict. The trial came before Chief Justice Taney and Judge Hall in the May term, (1848) of the United States Court sitting at New Castle, Bayard representing the prosecution, Wales the defendant. There were four trials in all, lasting three days; we have not room here for the details of the trial, but the juries awarded even heavier damages than the

plaintiffs claimed and the judgments swept away every dollar of his property."

The amount taken was about \$8,000--all he was worth, but his spirits were not in the least affected; and after sentence, he arose in open court and said, "Now, Judge, I do not think that I have always done my duty, being fearful of losing what little I possessed; but now that you have relieved me, I will go home and put another story on my house, so that I can accommodate more of God's poor." Then turning to the large crowd in the court-room he addressed them. He was listened to throughout with the closest attention. Sometimes profound silence prevailed. Sometimes his bold assertions were applauded, while some who felt the keenness of his remarks tried to relieve their feelings by hissing.

But those who prosecuted him, were so impressed with his candor and honesty that one of them came forward and shook him by the hand, asked his forgiveness and desired his friendship, which was fully promised on condition of the person's "ceasing to be an advocate of the iniquitous system of slavery."

His household goods, along with his other property, were sold, but were purchased by his friends and were used by him until he was able to pay for them.

He was at that time keeping an iron store and coal yard. His friends volunteered all the means needed to continue the business, and even more than he required; they saw his faith, honesty and boldness put through a severe test in the crucible of a Southern court, and that these came out pure as gold.

He was then sixty years of age, but he applied himself assiduously to business, which vastly increased; he put the additional story on his house, as he promised the Judge; fugitives came to him in greater numbers, for his name became more known in the Southern States than ever before; he aided all who came, at the same time contributing to the relief of other suffering poor, regardless of color, and with all these acts of charity, he was enabled to repay all who had loaned him money, and amassed a competence within a few years.

Charitable friends in England had long assisted him with funds for the relief of the slave, and of later time they furnished more than he could advantageously use in the cause. This excess he returned to them.

In an obituary it is said of him that he seemed scarcely to know what fear was, and although irate slaveholders often called on him to know the whereabouts of their slaves, he met them placidly, and never denied having helped the fugitives on their way, but positively declined to give any information, and when they flourished pistols or bowie knives to force their demand, he calmly pushed the weapons aside and told them that none but cowards resorted to such means to carry out their ends, and that Quakers were not afraid of such things.

On one occasion \$10,000 were offered for him in Maryland; he wrote to the parties, that this was not enough; send \$20,000 and he would go himself. They did not send it, nor did they make any further efforts to be confronted by a man of such boldness.

For a long time when it was expected that he would be murdered for his avowed interest in the poor slave, many of the blacks would get into his yard by turns and stay there all night to protect him, against his positive orders, for he feared nothing except neglect of his duty to the cause which he had espoused.

He was fertile in plans for directing or conveying fugitives out of Wilmington to safer places. As the physician prescribes for each individual case according to conditions and symptoms, so did he promptly advise means to meet the necessities of each individual case that applied to him. Frequently he would give a man a scythe, hoe, rake or some other implement to carry on the shoulder through the town as if going to work, with directions that when a certain bridge was reached to hide the tool under it, then strictly follow directions to the next station.

These tools would find their way back and again be ready for similar duty.

He gave those he sent on foot such directions as enabled them readily to find the places of safety, and gave the fugitives papers by which the persons to whom they were sent would know from whom they came, and that they were neither impostors nor spies.

He wrote many letters to the managers of the anti-slavery office in Philadelphia, informing them of slaves enroute for their place, sometimes of single individuals, sometimes of parties of from two to thirty or more; if hunters were in close pursuit and large rewards offered, he apprised them of all danger and gave them such directions

as were necessary to secure protection and safety. These letters gave evidence of his ever-watchful mind, the secrecy, wisdom, discreetness and success of his plannings, his indefatigable labors and his liberality in paying money where needed for the assistance of "God's poor," as he was pleased to call them, out of slavery.

If he knew of a party coming who were in danger, he sent his agents to intercept them before entering the city, and have them ferried across the Christiana river, where a carriage would meet them, if they were women and children; if men, they were guided to some safe place on foot, and then directions were given them how to proceed.

Joseph G. Walker, now living, Tenth no. 1801, at the age of seventy-six years, was one of Thomas Garrett's principal assistants in the removal of fugitives out of Wilmington to safe routes northward. Though now quite crippled and nearly blind, he warms up with the animation of earlier days when he recounts the many exploits and the long journeys he frequently made to

"Point the bondman's way,  
And turn the spoiler from his prey."

During one fall he took away one hundred and thirty slaves; on one occasion he went with seven. From three o'clock in the afternoon until six o'clock next morning he walked over sixty miles; he did complain a little of this, however, and said he would not do it again in the same time. His father was a West Indian and his mother was English or Scotch; hence his inherited powers of locomotion and endurance.

Fugitives were frequently taken from Thomas Garrett's in carriages or on foot, while the reputed owners or their agents were watching his movements in other parts of the city were he was apparently engaged in his business pursuits.

Officers were sometimes stationed around the house to capture slaves who had been traced to Wilmington. At times it was necessary to wade the Brandywine in winter with fugitives; after which careful directions were given and the agents would return by the bridge, on seeing whom, the constables in waiting, on one occasion, said quietly, "it is all over, we may as well go home."

His house being a Southern station of the underground line was the scene of many startling and even amusing experiences. One summer evening when there was a collection of old plain Friends at the house, he was called to the kitchen where he found a greatly terrified poor woman who had run away, and from her statement it was evident that pursuers would be there in a few minutes to watch the house. He took her up stairs, dressed her in his wife's clothes, with plain handkerchief, bonnet and veil, and made her take his arm. They walked out of the front door where she recognized her master as she passed. He was eagerly watching the house at the time.

(There were several underground stations below Wilmington, nearly all Friends. Those who resided down the State could be depended upon for the service. John Hunn, spoken of in the extract from "William Still's Underground Railroad," was particularly active and was at one time fined very heavily, perhaps to the extent of his property).

Thomas Garrett, after the opening of the Rebellion, wrote several very strong letters to President Lincoln, urging the "Emancipation Proclamation." He lived to see his most earnest wish accomplished—that to which he had devoted the energies of a lifetime—viz.: the Emancipation of the Slaves of the United States of America. On the arrival of the glorious news he was waited upon by a delegation of his colored friends

requesting him to surrender himself to them for the day. He yielded to their wishes implicitly and the event was duly celebrated, without noise but with thankfulness and joy.

He expressed himself as entirely satisfied with his work and died calmly and peacefully on First mo. 25th, 1871, in the eighty-second year of his age.

He was interred in Friends' Grounds at Wilmington, Del.; a vigorous oak (now of good size) was planted between the head and foot stones of his grave.



DELAWARE - Negroes

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**NOT QUITE MEN: The Free Negroes  
in Delaware in the 1830's**

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*Harold B. Hancock*

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## NOT QUITE MEN: The Free Negroes in Delaware in the 1830's

Harold B. Hancock

FOR THE FREE NEGROES IN DELAWARE the 1830's were a significant decade. Their numbers had increased fourfold since 1790, and some persons predicted that slavery in this most northern slave state would soon be abolished. By 1830 Negroes in Delaware numbered 15,855, almost equally divided among the three counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex. They comprised 24.9 per cent of the population in 1830 and 25.0 per cent in 1840. Slavery was a dying institution in New Castle and Kent Counties, but Sussex County, surrounded on two sides by a southern slave state, contained almost two thousand slaves.<sup>1</sup>

Why had the number of free Negroes increased so rapidly since 1790? Humanitarian feeling was stirred by the Delaware Abolition Society, which, beginning in 1791, encouraged individuals to free slaves and included lists of manumissions in its minutes. The society also provided legal aid for free Negroes who might be kidnapped or kept illegally as slaves. Then, in 1823, a branch of the American Colonization Society was organized in Wilmington.<sup>2</sup>

Quakers were in the forefront of the abolition movement. Warner Mifflin, a Quaker from Camden, in Kent County, freed his own slaves and persuaded others to do so following the American Revolution.<sup>3</sup> John Hunn, another Quaker from Cantwell's Bridge, in New Castle County, later reputedly became the superintendent of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Fisher, a Philadelphia Quaker

<sup>1</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915* (Reprint, New York, 1968), p. 51.

Negro Population in Delaware in 1830			
	Slave	Free	Total
New Castle	786	5,708	6,494
Kent	588	5,671	6,259
Sussex	1,918	4,476	6,394
Total	3,292	15,855	19,147

Six Negroes in New Castle County and three in Sussex County owned slaves; presumably some of these slaves were members of their family. See Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830* (Washington, 1924), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes, Delaware Abolition Society, 1791-1819, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware*, (Philadelphia, 1888), II, 327.

<sup>3</sup> Hilda Justice (comp.), *Life and Ancestry of Warner Mifflin, Friend-Philanthropist-Patriot* (Philadelphia, 1905), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Henry C. Conrad, *History of Delaware*, (Wilmington, 1908), II, 557-558.

of Delaware antecedents, left money in his will to provide for the education of Negroes in Kent County.<sup>5</sup> In Wilmington, Quakers were the backbone of the Delaware Abolition Society and the Wilmington Union Colonization Society. Their best known leader was Thomas Garrett, who in 1850 was fined \$5400 for aiding a family of seven slaves to escape. In 1858, in a letter to Gerrit Smith, he boasted of having assisted 2152 slaves to escape, only two of whom had been returned to bondage.<sup>6</sup> The papers of William Still, a Philadelphia Negro abolitionist, are filled with instances in which slaves from Delaware were assisted in escaping by Garrett and other Quakers.<sup>7</sup>

Agriculture in Delaware faced difficult times at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1818, a well-informed speaker before the Agricultural Society of New Castle County stated that farming in the state netted landowners nothing, and predicted that the entire state would be deserted within a few years unless drastic improvements in the methods of cultivation and in fertilization occurred.<sup>8</sup> As a result of soil exhaustion, the population of the state remained virtually stationary in 1810, 1820, 1830 and 1840, and many persons emigrated to the West or moved to cities. The records of the tax collector of "Ceder Crick" in Sussex County in 1835 reflected this migration, as he listed many persons "in phila.," "In solv" (insolvent), "Run way West," and "up the cuncre."<sup>9</sup>

Under these circumstances, many farmers found it unprofitable to use slave labor. Legally, slaves could not be sold out of the state or imported, but figures concerning the declining number of slaves in the county and the increase in the number of free Negroes are often not parallel, leading to suspicions that in some instances slaves were smuggled out to southern markets. In any case, almost every census contained increasing numbers of free Negroes.<sup>10</sup>

The bustling commercial city of Wilmington, which was experiencing

<sup>5</sup> William D. Yates, "Slavery and Colored People in Delaware," *The Emancipator*, Aug. 5, 1837, and *The Colored American*, Aug. 12, 19, 1837.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Garrett to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 13, 1858, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University Library.

<sup>7</sup> William Still, *The Underground Rail Road* (Philadelphia, 1872), *passim*. Still's papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania are even more revealing than his book on how Garrett aided Delaware slaves to escape.

<sup>8</sup> H. S. Black, *Memoirs of the Agricultural Society of New Castle County*, (Wilmington, 1820), I, 77.

<sup>9</sup> United States Bureau of Census, *Compendium, 1840* (Washington, 1841), pp. 30, 371-374. Total population of Delaware: 1810, 72,674; 1820, 72,749; 1830, 76,748; 1840, 78,085. Also see the Sussex County Delinquent Returns, 1835, Delaware State Archives. After two names the collector added the words "Cabbage head" and "Rum."

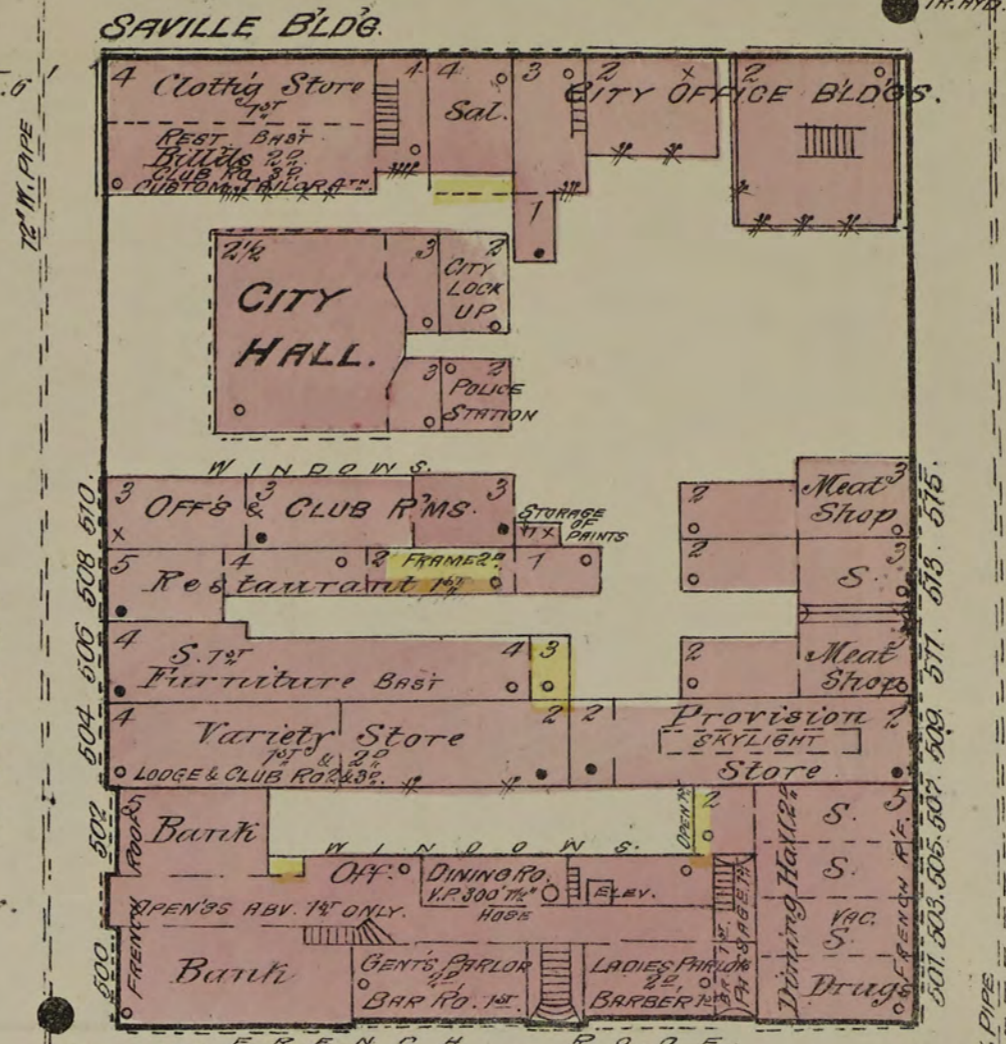
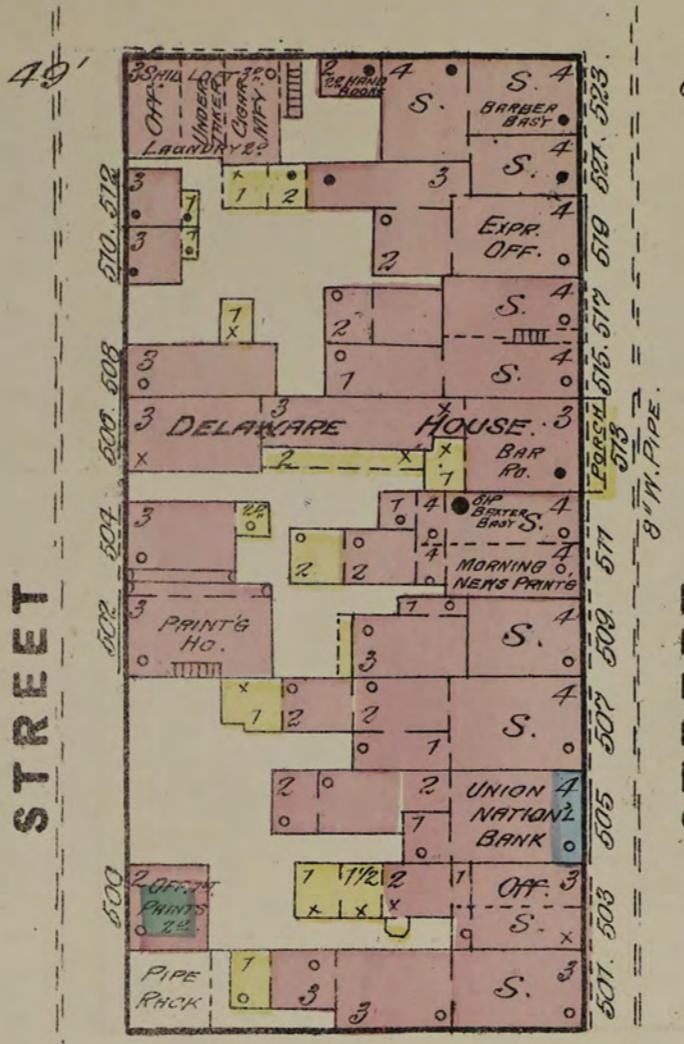
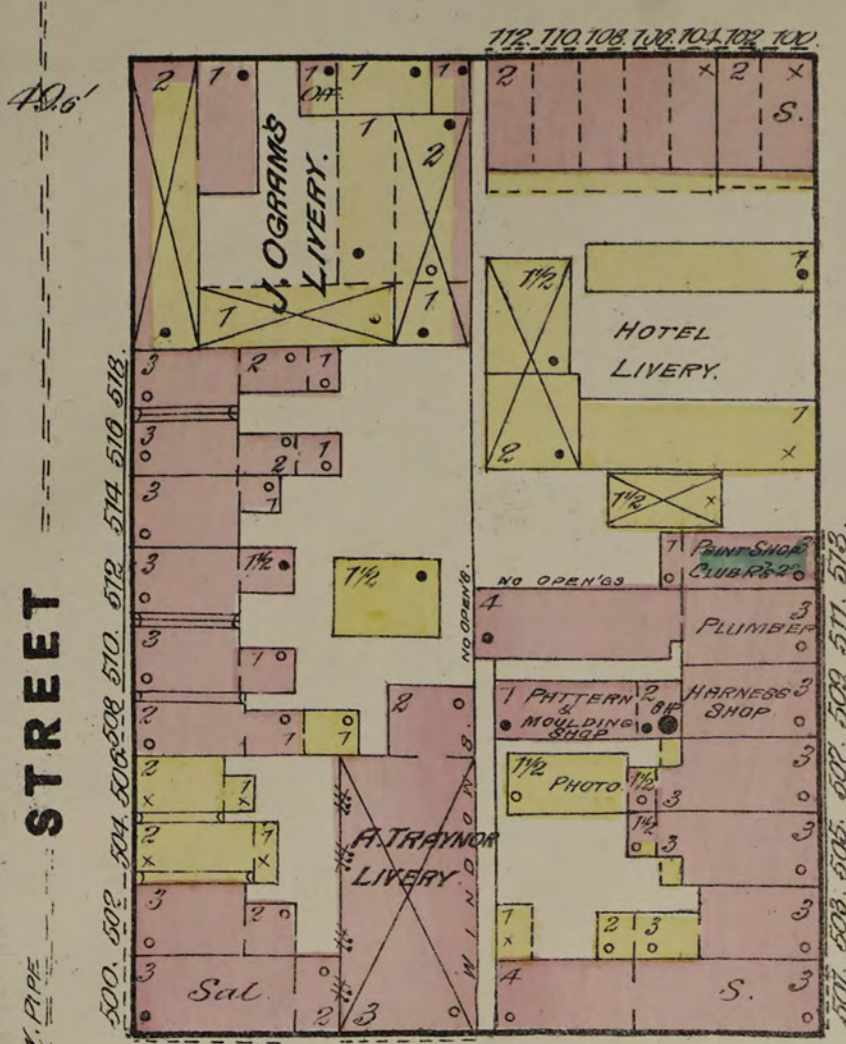
<sup>10</sup> Philanthropos, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the State of Delaware* (Wilmington, 1843), p. 20. As examples, he mentioned the census returns for 1830 for Kent County. There the number of slaves had decreased by almost 500 and the free Negro population had grown slightly more than 100. In the census returns for Sussex County for 1840, the slave population had decreased by almost 300, but the free Negro population increased by only about half that figure.

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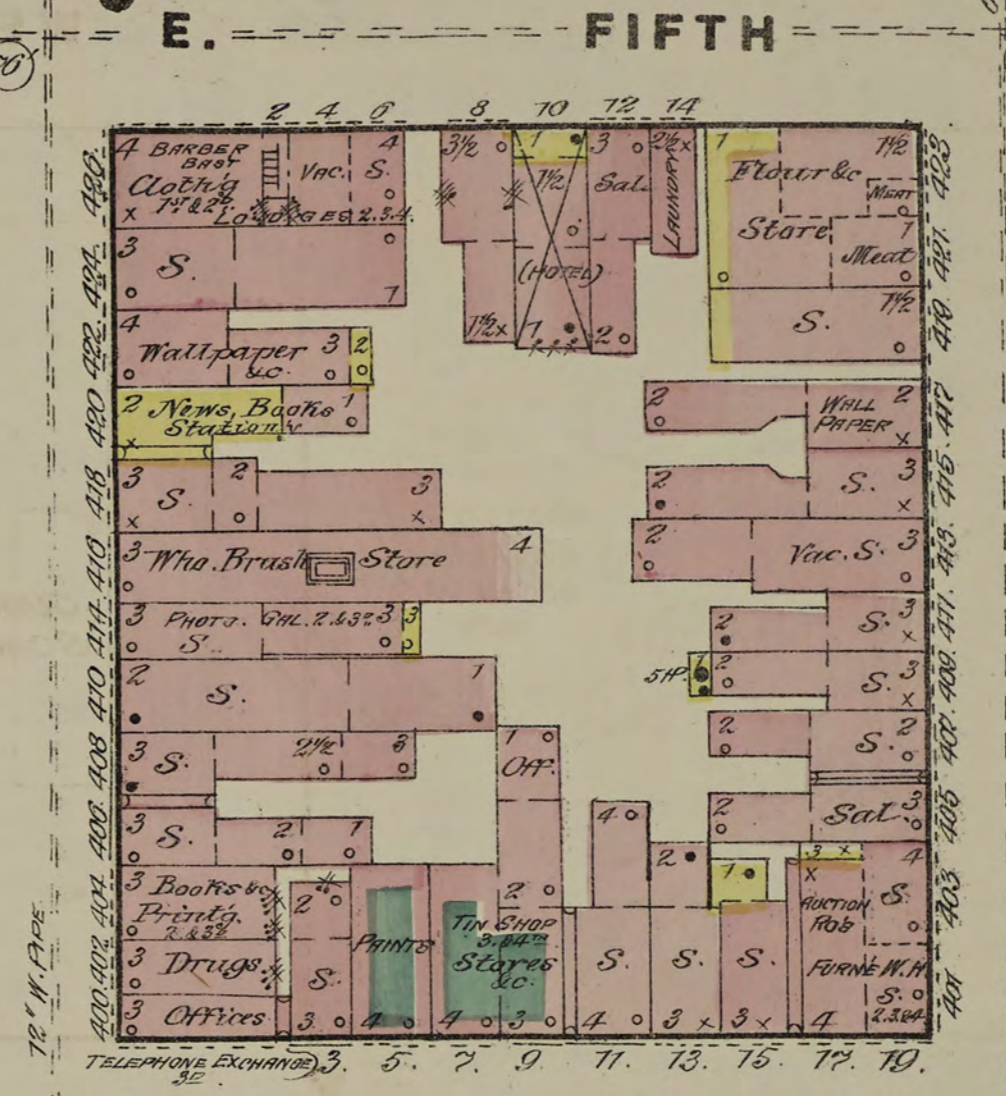
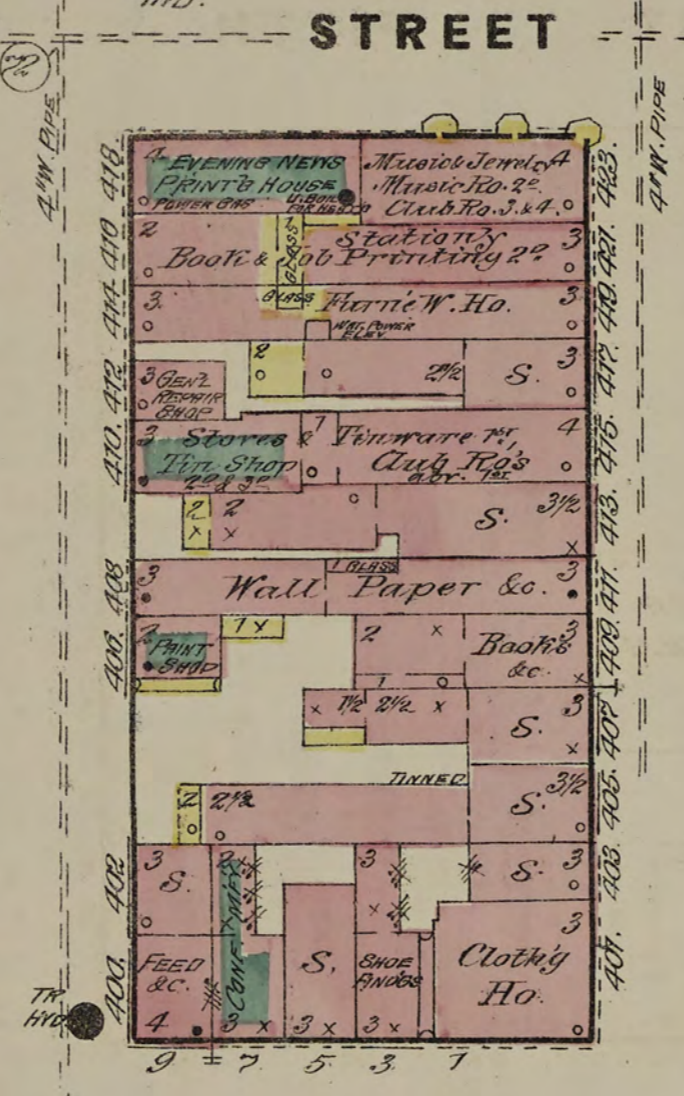
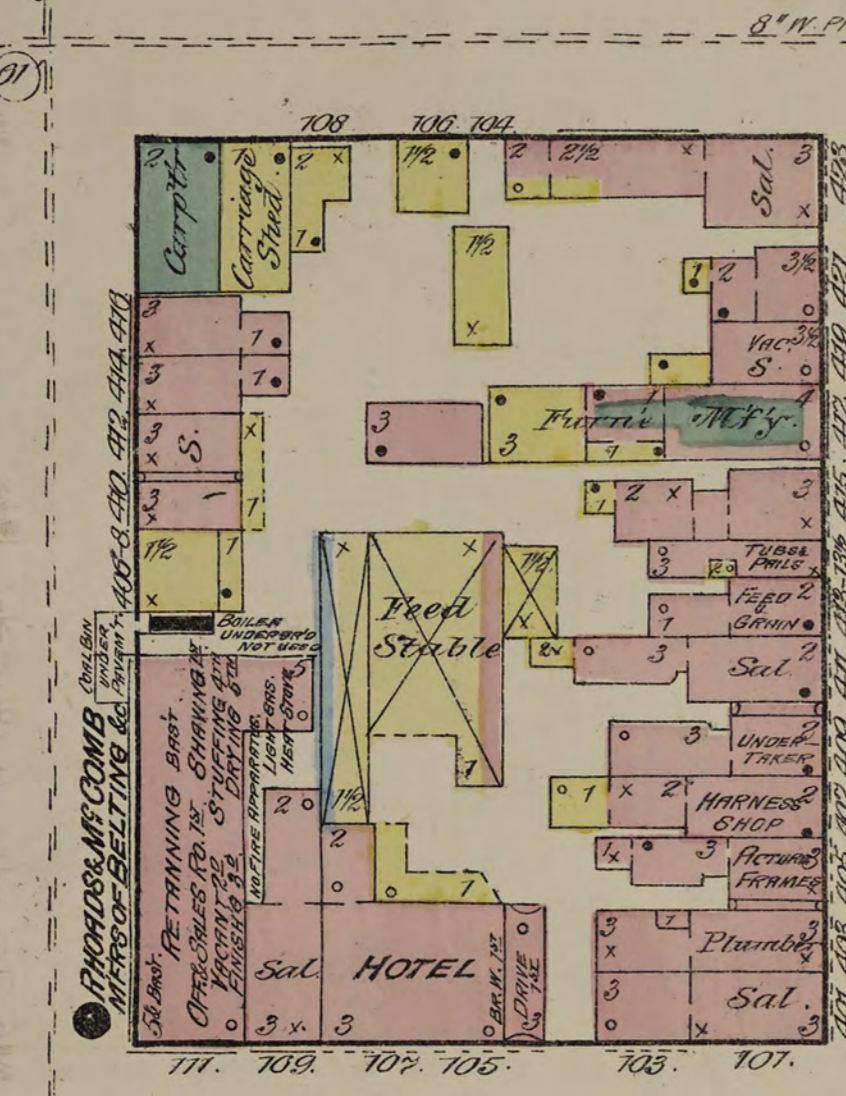
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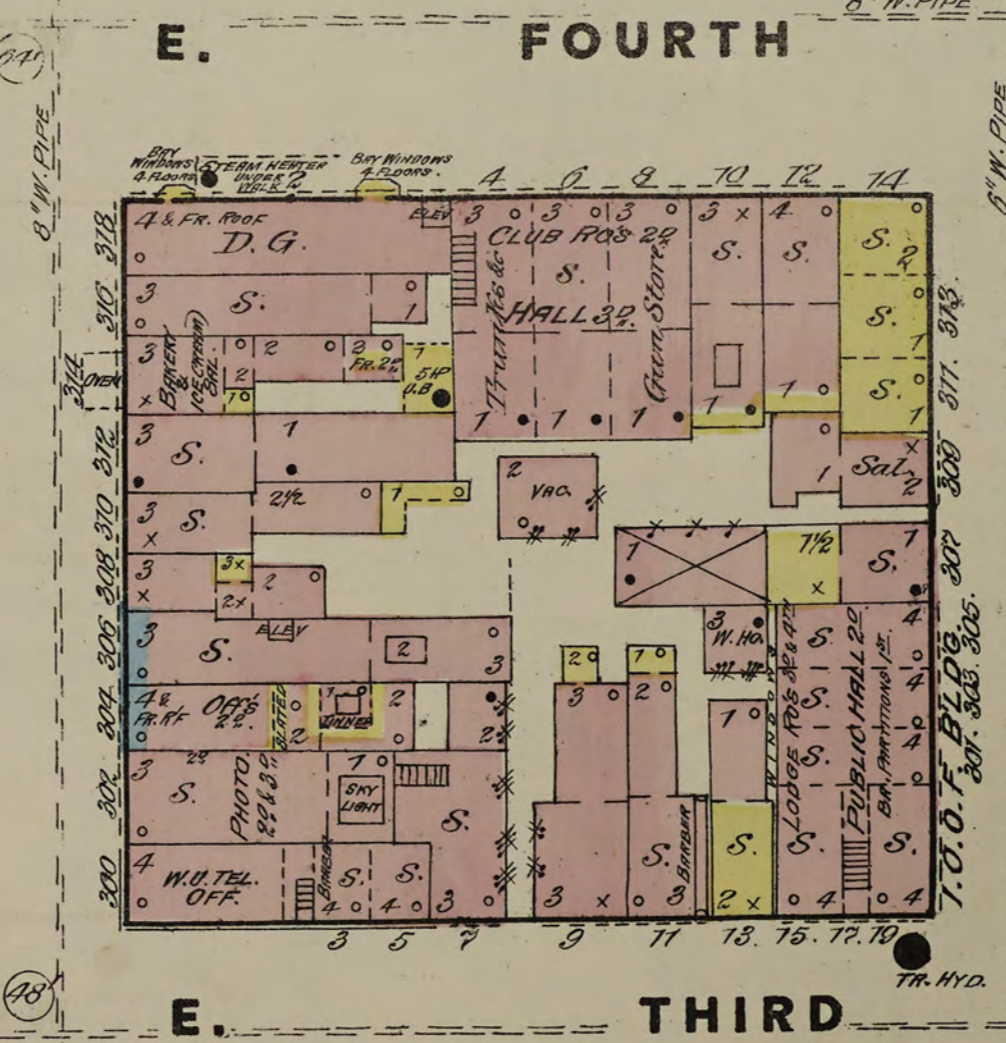
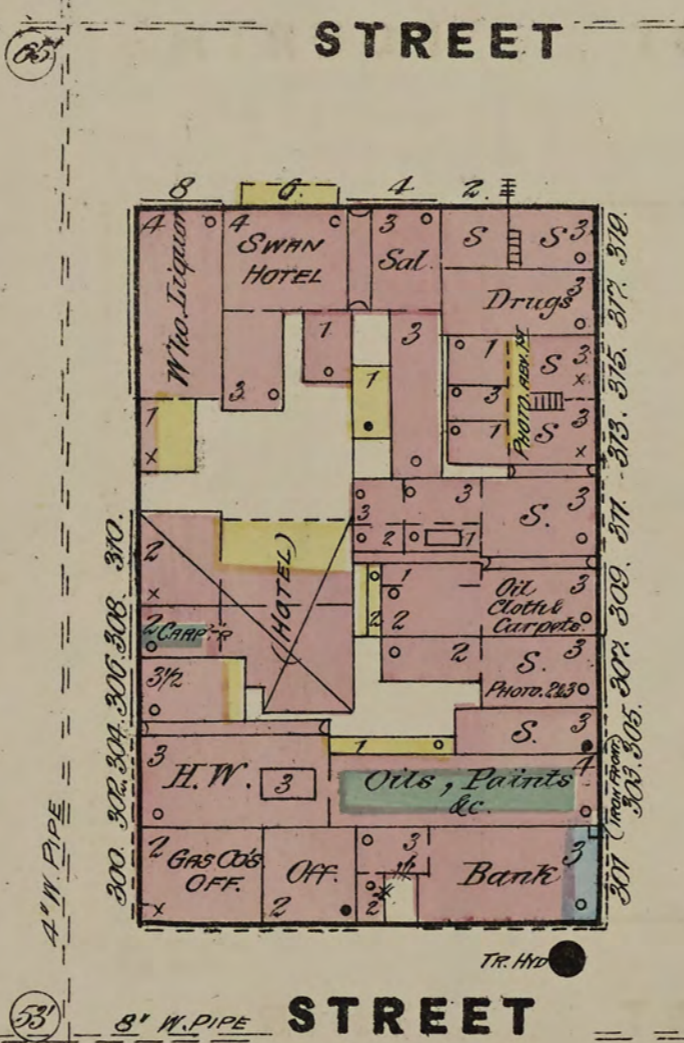
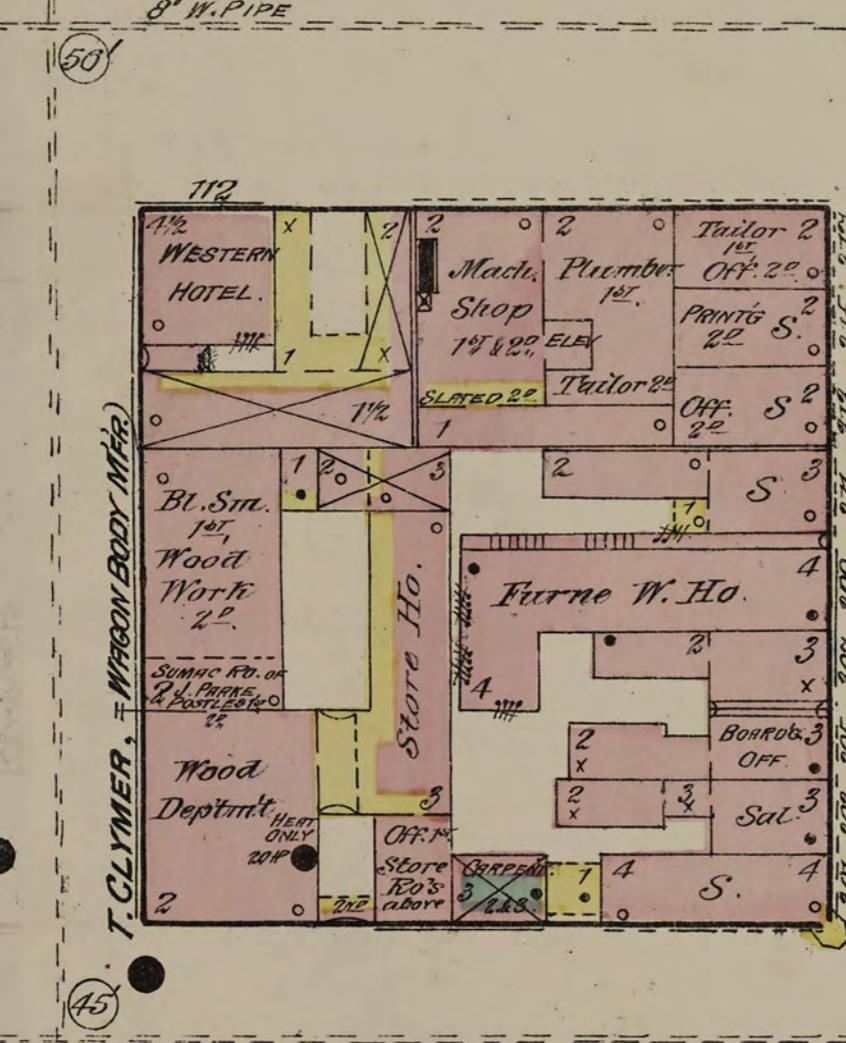
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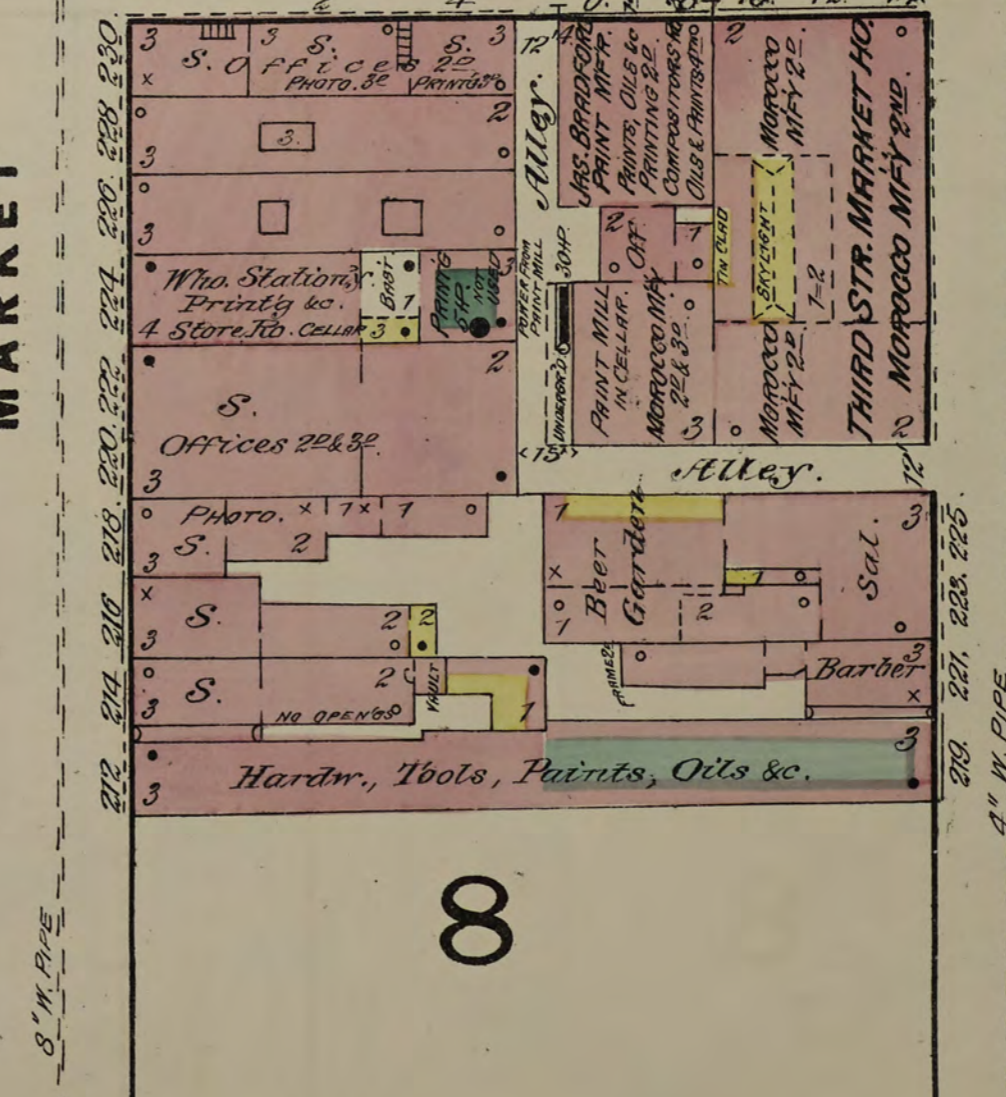
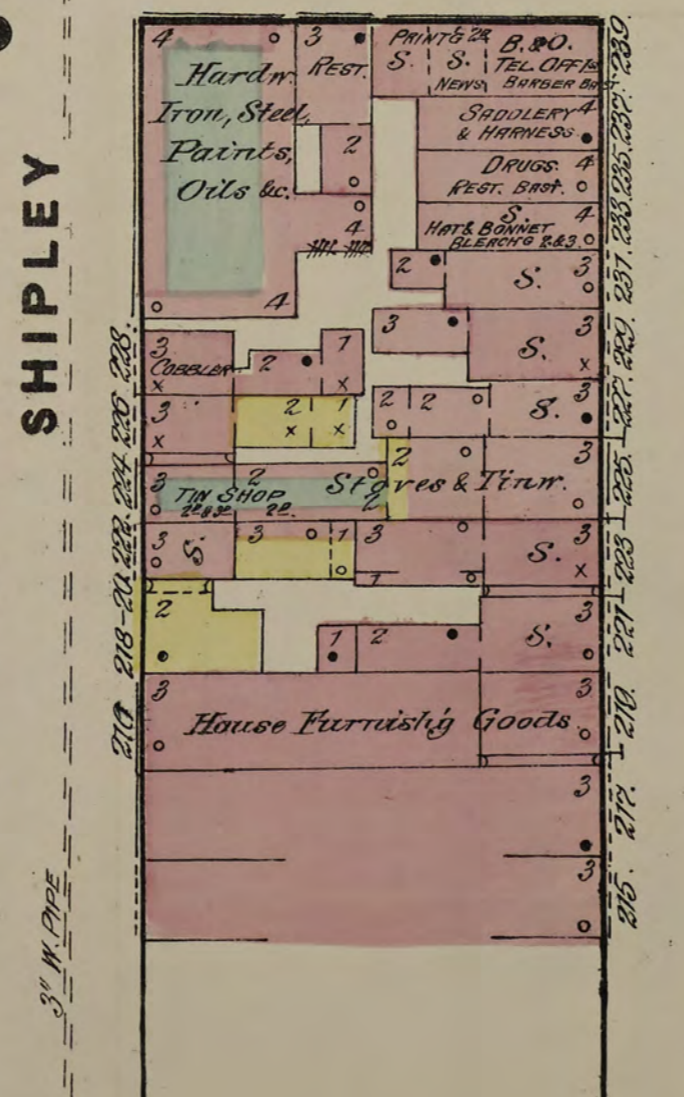
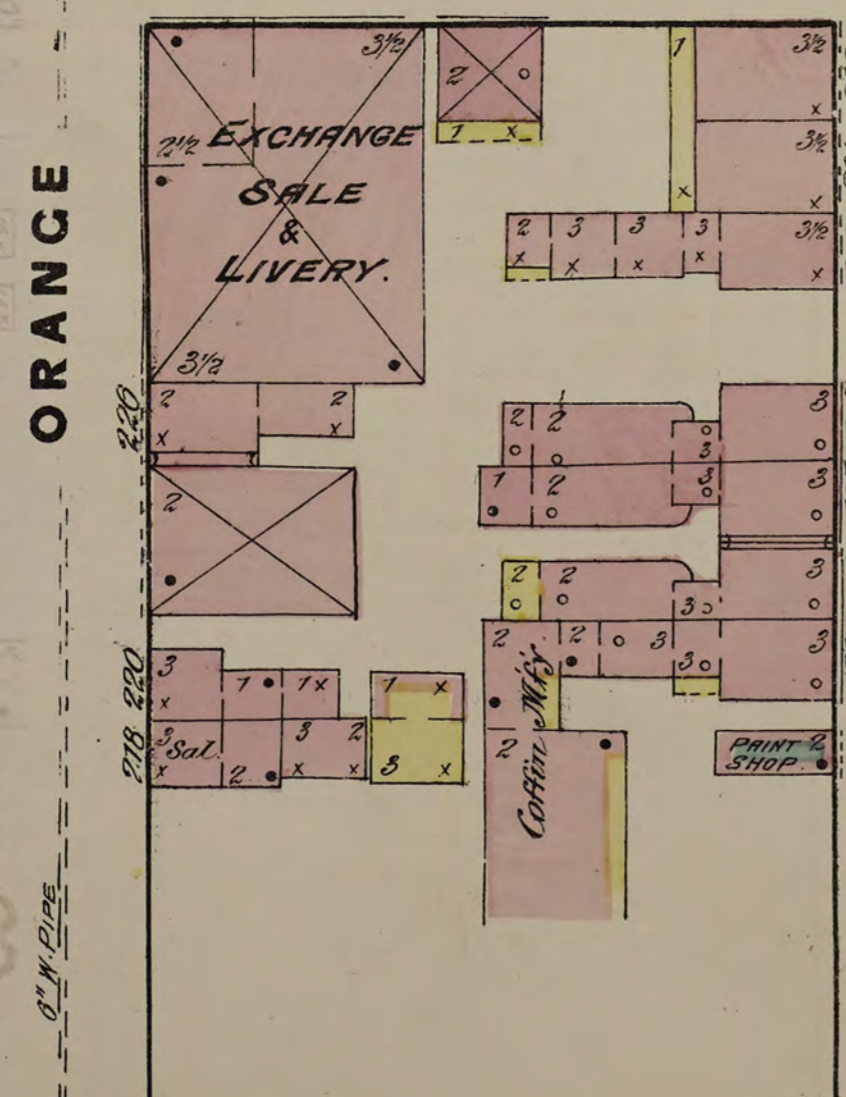
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11



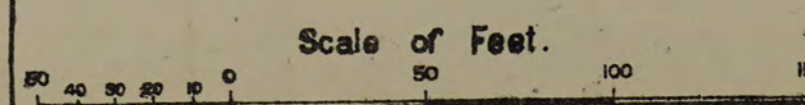
E. FOURTH STREET



11

ORANGE STREET SHIPLEY STREET MARKET STREET KING STREET

10



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