

Date: 8-11-11

## Historic Marker Inspection Report

Marker Name and Number: Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House NC-90

Location: 16 Main St. Odessa 19730

GPS Coordinates: 39.45744722 - 75.66349167

General Overall Conditions: Good for marker, Pole heavily damaged

Wear/Damage on Marker: None

Wear/Damage on Pole: Metal Sheeting gone from bottom half, concrete damaged at bottom, iron support rods exposed

Any Active Verdigris Visible on Marker: None

Additional Notes:

APPOQUINIMINK FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Believed to be one of the smallest Quaker Meeting Houses in the nation, the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built in 1785 by David Wilson and presented to the Friends as a gift. Local tradition identifies this structure as a stop on the Underground Railroad during the years preceding the Civil War. While enroute to destinations north of Delaware, runaway slaves would hide in the loft of the church in order to escape capture. Prominent local Quakers who served as agents on the Railroad included John Alston and John Hunn. The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Delaware State Archives 1993

NC 90

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Text as approved

by sponsor

P.O. 943000

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Tom Sumner  
11/22/93

The State of Delaware Division of Historical  
and Cultural Affairs,  
The Harriet Tubman Historical Society  
and

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting  
cordially invite you to attend the  
dedication ceremony of the

**Historical Marker for  
Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House,  
a Station on the Underground Railroad,**

**Monday, February 14, 1994**

**at 12:00 Noon**



Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House  
is located on Main Street,  
in Odessa, Delaware.



RSVP

February 10, 1994

The Harriet Tubman Historical Society

(302) 762-8010

*Tom Summers*

# NEWS RELEASE

## The Harriet Tubman Historical Society, Inc.

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### RESCHEDULED

FOR RELEASE: FEBRUARY 28, 1994

Contact: Vivian Abdur-Rahim (302) 762-8010

**The State of Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs,  
The Harriet Tubman Historical Society and Appoquinimink Friends Meeting Announce  
The Dedication Ceremony of an Historical Marker for the Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House  
on Thursday, March 10, 1994, (Harriet Tubman Day) at 12 Noon.**

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House is located on Main Street, Odessa, Delaware.

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House - Resting Place. Native American Minquas Used This Area  
In Their Travels and Commerce.

One of the smallest Quaker Meeting Houses in the nation, Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built in 1785. Quakers, or Friends, were known for their strong feelings against slavery. Local Quakers used the Meeting as a station on the Underground Railroad. Free Africans and abolitionists of many faiths cooperated to make the Underground Railroad a safe passageway to freedom for people enslaved. Among the station masters, conductors and helpers were Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, John Alston, William Still, Samuel D. Burris, John Hunn and Patrick Holland.

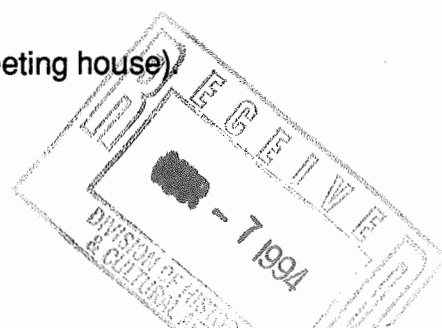
The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1972.

The Middletown High School Band will perform "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" under the direction of David Harris.

Seating available at the Zoar United Methodist Church (next to the meeting house)

**PUBLIC INVITED**

###



**P.O. Box 146 • Wilmington, Delaware • 19899 • 302/762-8010**

Dedication Ceremony For Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House

Directions: From Wilmington / New Castle take US Highway 13 South to Odessa. At the Odessa traffic light turn right and go 1/16th of a mile and the Church and marker will be on your left.

Time of Ceremony: 12:00 Noon

Marker Text: Attached

Contacts: Vivian Raheim Wilmington 762-8010

Howard Parker Dover 734-7929

Tom Summers Dover 739-5318

Tom Summers and Vivian Raheim will be in attendance.

*faxed to Jullen 2/10/94*

*2/15*

*Bobby-*  
*Have Tom Summers*  
*at our know when*  
*this is rescheduled*  
*Tam*

THE  
**UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD.**

A RECORD

OF

FACTS, AUTHENTIC NARRATIVES, LETTERS, &c.,  
Narrating the Hardships, Hair-breadth Escapes, and Death Struggles

OF THE

Slaves in their Efforts for Freedom,

AS RELATED

BY THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, OR WITNESSED BY THE AUTHOR,

TOGETHER WITH

SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE LARGEST STOCKHOLDERS, AND  
MOST LIBERAL AIDERS AND ADVISERS,  
OF THE ROAD.

BY

**WILLIAM STILL,**

For many years connected with the Anti-Slavery Office in Philadelphia, and Chairman of the  
Acting Vigilant Committee of the Philadelphia Branch of  
the Underground Rail Road.

ILLUSTRATED WITH 70 FINE ENGRAVINGS BY BENSELL, SCHILL AND OTHERS,  
AND PORTRAITS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LIFE.

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PHILADELPHIA:

PORTER & COATES, PUBLISHERS,

No. 822 CHESTNUT STREET.

THE  
UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD and

J O H N H U N N

1814- 1894

QUAKER ABOLITIONIST

"Chief engineer of the underground rail road in the State of Del."; and the richest man in Del.; he was convicted and fined in 1848 by the U.S. Dist. Court. Later he was fined twice for \$10,000.00 each by Del., but was advised the fines wouldn't be imposed if he'd promise not to continue his efforts to aid fugitives in their escape from slavery. Instead, "Hunn avowed never to withhold a helping hand from the down-trodden in their hour of distress." His great land holdings and all his possessions were sold at sheriff's sale, his family was left utterly destitute," but he continued his efforts to abolish slavery "until the great proclamation by Abraham Lincoln."

"I ask no other reward for my efforts than to feel that I have been of service to my fellow-men. No other course would have brought peace to my mind."

His grave is adjacent to this Meeting House and this was his stepping stone and hitching post.

His son, "honest" John Hunn Jr., while Gov. of Del. 1901-05, was the first to advocate that women be admitted to the Univ. of Del., and that a paved highway be constructed the entire length of Del. He is also buried here.

## JOHN HUNN.

Almost within the lions' den, in daily sight of the enemy, in the little slave-holding State of Delaware, lived and labored the freedom-loving, earnest and whole-souled Quaker abolitionist, John Hunn. His headquarters were at Cantwell's Bridge, but, as an engineer of the Underground Rail Road, his duties, like those of his fellow-laborer Thomas Garrett, were not confined to that section, but embraced other places, and were attended with great peril, constant care and expense. He was well-known to the colored people far and near, and was especially sought with regard to business pertaining to the Underground Rail Road, as a friend who would never fail to assist as far as possible in every time of need. Through his agency many found their way to freedom, both by land and water.

The slave-holders regarding him with much suspicion, watched him closely, and were in the habit of "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" very fiercely at times. But Hunn was too plucky to be frightened by their threats and menaces, and as one, commissioned by a higher power to remember those in bonds as bound with them he remained faithful to the slave. Men, women or children seeking to be unloosed from the fetters of Slavery, could not make their grievances known to John Hunn without calling forth his warmest sympathies. His house and heart were always open to all such. The slave-holders evidently concluded that Hunn could not longer be tolerated, consequently devised a plan to capture him, on the charge of aiding off a woman with her children.

[John Hunn and Thomas Garrett were conjointly prosecuted in this case, and in the sketch of the latter, the trial, conviction, etc., are so fully referred to, that it is unnecessary to do more than allude to it here].

These noted Underground Rail Road offenders being duly brought before the United States District Court, in May, 1848, Judge Taney, presiding, backed by a thoroughly pro-slavery sentiment, obviously found it a very easy matter to convict them, and a still easier matter to find them to the extent of every dollar they possessed in the world. Thousands of dollars were swept from Hunn in an instant, and his family left utterly destitute; but he was by no means conquered, as he deliberately gave the court to understand in a manly speech, delivered while standing to receive his sentence. There and then he avowed his entire sympathy with the slave, and declared that in the future, as in the past, by the help of God, he would never withhold a helping hand from the down-trodden in the hour of distress. That this pledge was faithfully kept by Hunn, there can be no question, as he continued steadfast at his post until the last fetter was broken by the great proclamation of Abraham Lincoln.

He was not without friends, however, for even near by, dwelt a few well-tried Abolitionists. Ezekiel Jenkins, Mifflin Warner, and one or two others,

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JOHN HUNN.

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whole-souled workers in the same cause with Hunn; he was therefore not forgotten in the hour of his extremity.

Wishing to produce a sketch worthy of this veteran, we addressed him on the subject, but failed to obtain all the desired material. His reasons, however, for withholding the information which we desired were furnished, and, in connection therewith, a few anecdotes touching Underground Rail Road matters coming under his immediate notice, which we here take great pleasure in transcribing.

BEAUFORT, S. C. 11th.mo. 7th, 1871.

WM. STILL, DEAR FRIEND:—In thy first letter thee asked for my photograph as well as for an opinion of the book about to be edited by thyself. I returned a favorable answer and sent likeness, as requested. I incidentally mentioned that, probably some of my papers might be of service to thee. The papers alluded to had no reference to myself; but consisted of anecdotes and short histories of some of the fugitives from the hell of American Slavery, who gave me a call, as engineer of the Underground Rail Road in the State of Delaware, and received the benefit of my advice and assistance.

I was twenty-seven years-old when I engaged in the Underground Rail Road business, and I continued therein diligently until the breaking up of that business by the Great Rebellion. I then came to South Carolina to witness the uprising of a nation of slaves into the dignity and privileges of mankind.

Nothing can possibly have the same interest to me. Therefore, I propose to remain where this great problem is in the process of solution; and to give my best efforts to its successful accomplishment. In this matter the course that I have pursued thus far through life has given me solid satisfaction. I ask no other reward for any efforts made by me in the cause, than to feel that I have been of use to my fellow-men.

No other course would have brought peace to my mind; then why should any credit be awarded to me; or how can I count any circumstance that may have occurred to me, in the light of a sacrifice? If a man pursues the only course that will bring peace to his own mind, is he deserving of any credit therefor? Is not the reward worth striving for at any cost? Indeed it is, as I well know.

Would it be well for me, entertaining such sentiments, to sit down and write an account of my sacrifices? I think not. Therefore please hold me excused. I am anxious to see thy book, and will forward the price of one as soon as I can ascertain what it is.

Please accept my thanks for thy kind remembrance of me. I am now fifty-three years old, but I well remember thy face in the Anti-slavery Office in Fifth street, when I called on business of the Underground Rail Road. Our mutual friend, S. D. Burris, was the cause of much uneasiness to us in

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those times. It required much trouble, as well as expense to save him from the slave-traders. I stood by him on the auction-block; and when I stepped down, they thought they had him sure. Indeed he thought so himself for a little while. But we outwitted them at last, to their great chagrin. Those were stirring times, and the people of Dover, Delaware, will long remember the time when S. D. Burris was sold at public sale for aiding slaves to escape from their masters, and was bought by the Pennsylvania Anti-slavery Society. I remain very truly thy friend,

JOHN HUNN.

THE CASE OF MOLLY, A SLAVE, BELONGING TO R— D—, OF SMYRNA, DELAWARE.  
BY JOHN HUNN, ENGINEER OF THE UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD.

Molly escaped from her master's farm, in Cecil county, Maryland, and found a place of refuge in the house of my cousin, John Alston, near Middletown, Delaware. The man-hunters, headed by a constable with a search warrant, took her thence and lodged her in New Castle Jail. This fact was duly published in the county papers, and her master went after his chattel, and having paid the expenses of her capture took immediate possession thereof.

She was hand-cuffed, and, her feet being tied together, she was placed in the wagon. Before she left the jail, the wife of the sheriff gave her a piece of bread and butter, which her master kicked out of her hand, and swore that bread and butter was too good for her. After this act her master took a drink of brandy and drove off.

He stopped at a tavern about four miles from New Castle and took another drink of brandy. He then proceeded to Odessa, then called Cantwell's Bridge, and got his dinner and more brandy, for the day was a cold one. He had his horse fed, but gave no food to his human chattel, who remained in the wagon cold and hungry. After sufficient rest for himself and horse he started again. He was now twelve miles from home, on a good road, his horse was gentle, and he himself in a genial mood at the recovery of his bond-woman. He yielded to the influence of the liquor he had imbibed and fell into a sound sleep. Molly now determined to make another effort for her freedom. She accordingly worked herself gradually over the tail board of the wagon, and fell heavily upon the frozen ground. The horse and wagon passed on, and she rolled into the bushes, and waited for deliverance from her bonds. This came from a colored man who was passing that way. As he was neither a priest nor a Levite, he took the rope from her feet, and guided her to a cabin near at hand, where she was kindly received. Her deliverer could not take the hand-cuffs off, but promised to bring a person, during the evening, who could perform that operation. He fulfilled his promise, and brought her that night to my house, which was in sight of the one whence she had been taken to New Castle Jail.

I had no fear for her safety, as I believed that her master would not think

of looking for her so near to the place where she had been arrested. Molly remained with us nearly a month; but, seeing fugitives coming and going continually, she finally concluded to go further North. I wrote to my friend, Thomas Garrett, desiring him to get a good home for Molly. This he succeeded in doing, and a friend from Chester county, Pennsylvania, came to my house and took Molly with him. She remained in his family more than six months.

In the mean time the Fugitive Slave Law was passed by Congress, and several fugitives were arrested in Philadelphia and sent back to their masters. Molly, hearing of these doings, became uneasy, and finally determined to go to Canada. She arrived safely in the Queen's Dominions, and felt at last that she had escaped from the hell of American Slavery.

Molly described her master as an indulgent one when sober, but when he was on a "sprees" he seemed to take great delight in tormenting her. He would have her beaten unmercifully without cause, and then have her stripes washed in salt water, then he would have her dragged through the horse pond until she was nearly dead. This last operation seemed to afford him much pleasure. When he became sober he would express regret at having treated her so cruelly. I frequently saw this master of Molly's, and was always treated respectfully by him. He would have his "sprees" after Molly left him.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ESCAPE FROM SLAVERY OF SAMUEL HAWKINS AND FAMILY,  
OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND, ON THE UNDERGROUND RAIL ROAD,  
IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE. BY JOHN HUNN.

On the morning of the 27th of 12th month (December), 1845, as I was washing my hands at the yard pump of my residence, near Middletown, New Castle county, Delaware, I looked down the lane, and saw a covered wagon slowly approaching my house. The sun had just risen, and was shining brightly (after a stormy night) on the snow which covered the ground to the depth of six inches. My house was situated three quarters of a mile from the road leading from Middletown to Odessa, (then called Cantwell's Bridge.) On a closer inspection I noticed several men walking beside the wagon. This seemed rather an early hour for visitors, and I could not account for the circumstance. When they reached the yard fence I met them, and a colored man handed me a letter addressed to Daniel Corbit, John Alston or John Hunn; I asked the man if he had presented the letter to either of the others to whom it was addressed; he said, no, that he had not been able to see either of them. The letter was from my cousin, Ezekiel Jenkins, of Camden, Delaware, and stated that the travelers were fugitive slaves, under the direction of Samuel D. Burris (who handed me the note). The party consisted of a man and his wife, with their six children, and four fine-looking colored men, without counting the pilot, S. D. Burris, who was a free man, from Kent county, Delaware.

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This was the first time that I ever saw Burris, and also the first time that I had ever been called upon to assist fugitives from the hell of American Slavery. The wanderers were gladly welcomed, and made as comfortable as possible until breakfast was ready for them. One man, in trying to pull his boots off, found they were frozen to his feet; he went to the pump and filled them with water, thus he was able to get them off in a few minutes.

This increase of thirteen in the family was a little embarrassing, but after breakfast they all retired to the barn to sleep on the hay, except the woman and four children, who remained in the house. They were all very weary, as they had traveled from Camden (twenty-seven miles), through a snow-storm; the woman and four children in the wagon with the driver, the others walking all the way. Most of them were badly frost-bitten, before they arrived at my house. In Camden, they were sheltered in the houses of their colored friends. Although this was my first acquaintance with S. D. Burris, it was not my last, as he afterwards piloted them himself, or was instrumental in directing hundreds of fugitives to me for shelter.

About two o'clock of the day on which these fugitives arrived at my house, a neighbor drove up with his daughter in a sleigh, apparently on a friendly visit. I noticed his restlessness and frequent looking out of the window fronting the road; but did not suppose, that he had come "to spy out the land."

The wagon and the persons walking with it, had been observed from his house, and he had reported the fact in Middletown. Accordingly, in half an hour, another sleigh came up, containing a constable of Middletown, William Hardcastle, of Queen Ann's county, Maryland, and William Chesnut, of the same neighborhood. I met them at the gate, and the constable handed me an advertisement, wherein one thousand dollars reward was offered for the recovery of three runaway slaves, therein described.

The constable asked me if they were in my house? I said they were not! He then asked me if he might search the house? I declined to allow him this privilege, unless he had a warrant for that purpose. While we stood thus conversing, the husband of the woman with the six children, came out of a house near the barn, and ran into the woods. The constable and his two companions immediately gave chase, with many halloos! After running more than a mile through the snow, the fugitive came toward the house; I went to meet him, and found him with his back against the barn-yard fence, with a butcher's knife in his hand. The man hunters soon came up, and the constable asked me to get the knife from the fugitive. This I declined, unless the constable should first give me his pistol, with which he was threatening to shoot the man. He complied with my request, and the fugitive handed me the knife. Then he produced a pass, properly authenticated, and signed by a magistrate of Queen Ann's county, Maryland, certifying that this man was free! and that his name was Samuel Hawkins.

William Hardcastle now advanced, and said that he knew the man to be free; but that he was accused of running away with his wife and children who were slaves. He also said, that this man had two boys with him, who belonged to a neighbor of his, named Charles Wesley Glanding, and that the four other children and mother belonged to Catharine Turner, of Queen Ann's county, Maryland. Hardcastle further expressed his belief, that this man knew where his wife and children were at that time, and insisted that he should go before a magistrate in Middletown, and be examined in regard thereto. He also expressed doubts as to the genuineness of this pass, and wished the man to go to Middletown on that account also. As there was no other course to pursue under the circumstances, I had my sleigh brought out, and we all went to Middletown, before my friend, William Streets, who was then in commission as a magistrate. It was now after dark of this short winter's day. Soon after our arrival at the office of William Streets, Hardcastle put his arm very lovingly around the neck of the colored man, Samuel Hawkins, and drew him into another room. In a short time, Samuel came out, and told me that Hardcastle had agreed, that if he, Hawkins, would give up his two older boys, who belonged to Charles Wesley Glanding; then he might pursue his journey with his wife and four children. I asked him if he believed Hardcastle would keep his promise? He replied: "Yes! I do not think master William would cheat me." I assured him that he would cheat him, and that the offer was made for the purpose of not only getting the two older boys (fourteen and sixteen years of age), but his wife and other children to the office, when all of them would be taken together to the jail, in New Castle. Samuel thought differently, and at his request, I wrote to my wife for the delivery of the family of Samuel Hawkins to the constable. They were soon forthcoming, and on their arrival at the office, a commitment was made out for the whole party. Samuel and his two older sons were hand-cuffed, amidst many tears and lamentations, and they all went off under charge of the man-hunters, to New Castle jail, a distance of eighteen miles.

William Streets committed the whole party as fugitives from Slavery, while the husband (Samuel), was a free man. This was done on account of the detestation of the wicked business, as much as on account of his friendship for me.

On their arrival at the jail, about midnight, the sheriff was aroused, and the commitment shown to him; after reading it, he asked Samuel if he was a slave? He said no, and showed his pass (which had been pronounced genuine by the magistrate). The sheriff hereupon told them, that the commitment was not legal, and would not hold them lawfully. It was now first day (Sunday), and the man-hunters were in a quandary.

The constable finally agreed to go back, and get another commitment, if the sheriff would take the party into the jail until his return; Hardcastle

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also urged the sheriff to adopt this plan. Accordingly they were taken into the jail.

The sheriff's daughter had heard her father's conversation with the constable, accordingly she sent word on First-day morning, to my revered friend, Thomas Garrett, of Wilmington, five miles distant, in regard to the matter, inviting him to see the fugitives. Early on Second day morning (Monday), Thomas went over with John Wales, attorney at law. The latter soon obtained a writ of habeas corpus from Judge Booth of New Castle, which was served upon the sheriff; who, therefore, brought the whole party before Judge Booth, who discharged them at once, as being illegally detained by the sheriff. Thomas Garrett, with the consent of the judge, then hired a carriage to take the woman and four children over to Wilmington, Samuel and the two older boys walked, so they all escaped from the man-hunters. They went from Wilmington to Byberry, and settled near the farm of Robert Purvis. Samuel Hawkins and wife have since died, but their descendants still live in that neighborhood, under the name of Hackett.

Soon after the departure of the fugitives from New Castle jail, the constable arrived with new commitments from William Streets, and presented them in due form to the sheriff; who informed him that they had been liberated by order of Judge Booth! A few hours after, William Hardcastle arrived from Philadelphia, expecting to take Samuel Hawkins and his family to Queen Ann's county, Maryland. Judge of his disappointment at finding they were beyond his control—absolutely gone! They returned to Middletown in great anger, and threatened to prosecute William Streets for his participation in the affair.

After the departure of the Hawkins family from Middletown, I returned home to see what had become of S. D. Burris and his four men. I found them taking some solid refreshment, preparatory to taking a long walk in the snow. They left about nine P. M., for Wilmington. I sent by S. D. Burris a letter to Thomas Garrett, detailing the arrest and commitment of S. Hawkins and family to New Castle jail. They all arrived safely in Wilmington before daylight next morning. Burris waited to hear the result of the expedition to New Castle; and actually had the pleasure of seeing S. Hawkins and family arrive in Wilmington.

Samuel Burris returned to my house early on Third day morning, with a letter from Thomas Garrett, giving me a description of the whole transaction. My joy on this occasion was great! and I returned thanks to God for this wonderful escape of so many human beings from the charnel-house of Slavery.

Of course, this circumstance excited the ire of many pro-slavery editors in Maryland. I had copies of several papers sent me, wherein I was described as a man unfit to live in a civilized community, and calling upon

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the inhabitants of Middletown to expel such a dangerous person from that neighborhood! They also told exactly where I lived, which enabled many a poor fugitive escaping from the house of bondage, to find a hearty welcome and a resting-place on the road to liberty. Thanks be to God! for His goodness to me in this respect.

The trial which ensued from the above, came off before Chief Justice Taney, at New Castle. My revered friend, Thomas Garrett, and myself, were there convicted of harboring fugitive slaves, and were fined accordingly, to the extent of the law; Judge Taney delivering the sentence. A detailed account of said trial, will fully appear in the memoirs of our deceased friend, Thomas Garrett.



JOHN HUNN,  
CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE SOUTHERN END. See p. 712



Brief  
HISTORICAL SKETCHES  
concerning  
FRIENDS' MEETINGS

of the Past and Present  
with special reference  
to

PHILADELPHIA

YEARLY MEETING

\*\*\*\*\*

The work compiled by

T. CHALKLEY MATLACK

Moorestown, N. J.

1938

## APPOQUINIMINK.

Meeting early established as .....George's Creek.  
 George's Creek Meeting organized before.....1703.  
 Meeting established.....1707.  
 First Preparative Meeting laid down.....1772.  
 Meeting removed to Appoquinimink.....1783.  
 Meeting House built.....1785.  
 Meeting discontinued about.....1874.  
 Meeting in late years sometimes called ...Odessa.  
 Location.....Odessa, Del.

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Odessa is the more recent name given to the ancient Meeting called, for most of its existence, Appoquinimink, and in its earliest days termed George's Creek. As George's Creek Preparative Meeting it was laid down in 1772, and as Appoquinimink Preparative Meeting it belonged to Southern Quarter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, being a constituent of the Duck Creek Monthly Meeting. In "A Retrospect of Early Quakerism," Ezra Michener of New Garden, Chester County, Pa., states of this Meeting:-

"1703.- 'Friends of George's Creek had a meeting among them at times, for many years, before 1703.' -(S. Smith.)

"1703.- 'John Ashton being present, and laying before this meeting the request of Friends of George's Creek, concerning settling a meeting thereaway, we find nothing to the contrary but it may be convenient; therefore refer it to the consideration of the Quarterly Meeting.' -(Kennet Monthly Meeting.)

"1707.- The meeting at George's Creek was established in 1707.'

"1762.- 'Several of the Friends nominated to visit the Preparative Meeting of George's Creek, report, they have complied therewith; and likewise some Friends visited the Monthly Meeting at Duck Creek, and recommended them to comply with the advice heretofore given by this meeting, with respect to visiting the Preparative Meetings belonging thereto; which, with hopes it may tend to some advantage, is left at present.' -(Western Quarterly Meeting.)

"1772.- 'The Friends appointed to visit George's Creek Preparative Meeting, &c. It is their sense and judgment that some circumstances which appear, do render them incapable of holding a Preparative Meeting to reputation; on consideration of which, this meeting concurs with their report. Men Friends have discontinued the Preparative Meeting accordingly.' -(Western Quarterly Meeting of Women.)

"1783.- 'We, of the committee to take into consideration the report from Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, for the removal of George's Creek Meeting to a place near Appoquinimink Bridge for trial, have attended to the appointment, and agree to report, that we think they may be indulged with their request, when they may procure a place for holding said meeting, &c. (Signed by nine men and three women.) Which, being considered, is approved, and the proposal of that meeting concurred with.' -(Western Quarterly Meeting of Women.)

"1830.- In 1830, Appoquinimink Preparative Meeting was united to that of Duck Creek."

In the "History of Delaware," 1868, by Thomas Scharf, is the following concerning the Appoquinimink Meeting:- "On the 13th of Eleventh Month, 1703, there was warranted to Joseph England, William Horn and others, by the commissioners of property, ten acres of land 'enclosing their meeting-house for a burying place.' It was for the use of the people called 'Quakers'. It was situated near the road leading from Port Penn to the state road, on the left of the Friends' burying-ground, now known as Hickory Grove. Monthly Meetings were held alternately at this place and Duck Creek.

"At a Monthly Meeting held at Duck Creek, 23d of Sixth Month, 1781, the meeting informed that 'Friends of George's Creek' request the indulgence of this meeting to remove their present place of meeting to Appoquinimink Bridge (Odessa), as being much more convenient to those who attend.' The records of the Monthly Meeting held at Duck Creek, Sixth Month 20, 1783, state that the 'Friends of George's Creek Meeting having now erected a House near Appoquinimink Bridge suitable to their situation and accommodation wherein they meet agreeable to the indulgence of the meeting.' In 1828 there was a division in the church, and the property was held by the Hicksite branch. The church never prospered from this time and was abandoned about seven years ago. The Alstons were the last family to worship here."

In the Friends' Intelligencer, First Mo. 2, 1892, Joseph M. Truman Jr. of Philadelphia, a man greatly interested in Friends and their meetings, wrote the following article:-

"Recently a Friend inquired concerning an old meeting-house near Cantwell's Bridge, Del., which he had been informed by one of another profession seemed to be deserted and going to decay; and who presented him with an old candlestick found on the premises. Writing to S. H. Mifflin, he informs me that it is the old Appoquinimink meeting-house, near Odessa, formerly Cantwell's Bridge, which used to be attended by the Alston, Thomas, Corbit, Herons, and Wilson families, and others.

"John Alston, who died 25th of Ninth month, 1874, for a long while attended it regularly, mostly alone, and since his death no meetings have been held, but as far as appears, report of that fact has not been made to the yearly meeting. John Alston was one of the old-time Friends, faithful in his convictions, though he might stand alone. He was a devoted friend of the slave, and an agent on the 'Underground Railroad.' For a number of years he was a member of the Representative Committee, and very useful in his quarterly meeting and neighborhood.

"Dr. Michener, in his 'Retrospect of Early Quakerism,' quoting from Samuel Smith, says Friends of George's Creek had a meeting at times many years before 1703. The minutes of Kennett Monthly Meeting show that the establishing of a meeting at George's Creek was referred in that year to the quarterly meeting, but other records say it was not established till 1707. In 1783 Duck Creek Monthly Meeting proposed its removal to near Appoquinimink Bridge for trial, which was approved, and the first representative from there attended Duck Creek Monthly Meeting in 1788. In 1800 a deed was given to the property trustees for a small sum of money by David Wilson, but the date of erecting the house is not certainly known. There is a graveyard attached, and it is under the care of Camden Monthly Meeting. The fencing is in good order, but the house is in a dilapidated condition, and the floors not safe to walk on.

"A brick meeting-house at Camden, Del., was erected in 1805, and the preparative meeting was a branch of Murderkill Monthly Meeting. In 1830 Duck Creek and Murderkill Monthly Meetings were united as Camden Monthly Meeting.

"In the account being published in the Friend (Philadelphia) regarding the Eastern Shore of Maryland, it is stated that the Southern Quarter's report in 1795 mentions a new meeting-house at Greensborough, in Carolina county, in place of one at Nine Bridges, one at Duck Creek Cross Roads, in place of that at Duck Creek town, and one at Milford, in place of that at Three Runs. These places may not have been very distant, but it seems to me are desirable to be known in addition to what Michener gives."

A few years later, Fourth Month 4, 1896, another note appeared in the Friends' Intelligencer, stating:-

"Note -- Since the meetings in Southern Quarter were spoken of, we have been informed that Appoquinimink meeting-house is still standing, but much out of repair. It is now called Odessa, which is about three miles' drive from Middletown station, on the Delaware Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This meeting was for many years kept up by the late John Alston, who mostly attended alone."

The following minutes from the records of Camden Monthly Meeting have some bearing upon the Appoquinimink's hold on the property at the earlier location at George's Creek:-

"Camden Monthly meeting held at Little Creek 10th mo 12th 1846 Appoquinimink meeting informs us through one of its members of the refusal of said meeting to give up any part of the Georges Creek meeting property-- after some consideration (the meeting being small) the subject is referred to our next meeting."

"Camden Monthly meeting held at Little Creek 10mo 11th 1847 The Subject of George Creek Meeting property and the condition thereof having been introduced and considered it was concluded to direct the Trustees of this meeting to wit Michael Offley, Charles Cowgill, Thomas Mifflin, and Isaac Dolby to collect the rents due and accruing, and to dispose of the property at public sale or otherwise as they may think best, availing themselves of Legal advice if circumstances require it, and report their proceedings to a future meeting "

The compiler of these historical notes concerning Friends' Meeting localities, visited the Appoquinimink Meeting House at Odessa, Delaware, on August 8, 1930, being taken to the place by Thomas H. Strain of Merchantville, N. J. The old Meeting House is yet standing on the outskirts of the village and a little back from the road, is well cared-for by the Friends' meeting, and is now in a good condition. There are no meetings held there, but a colored woman living nearby, who has the key of the house in her keeping, states it is often visited by people interested in the little brick building. Over the front door of the little House, for it is a very small building, is a marble date-stone bearing the inscription, "Friends Meeting House Erected and Presented by David Wilson 1785." The Meeting House is now well covered with ivy and other creeping vines, which, though not genuine English ivy, beautify the place, lending it a charming effect.

Viewed from within, the white walls, the plain unpainted wood-work, and the modest supply of ten short benches, four facing the other six,

two of the latter being secured so as to use the wall of the House for backing, give it a delightful quaintness, not a whit detracted by the steep narrow series of steps leading to the loft. Between the facing benches is the outline of a door now bricked-up and closed, having been formerly used, possibly, for ventilation. The little iron stove in the middle of the room bears the lettering on each side, "Foering & Thudum No. N. 2nd St. Philade." The small size of this Meeting House quite readily proves the limited congregation that owned it.

In the Burial Ground, still used, at the back of the Meeting House, may be seen the family names of Allston, Alston, Ashcraft, Bonehill, Bouchell, Bowes, Brinton, David, Derricksen, Dunn, Fell, Hall, Hand, Johnson, Liston, Maily, Silcox, Thomas and Townsend. Most of the memorial stones are kept within the restriction of Friends' Discipline, and none greatly overstep the bounds. In the middle of the yard is the grave of John Alston with marble headstone and footstone. The stone is of soft material and has been much worn by time and weather. The inscription appears to be, - "JOHN ALSTON Born 10th Mo. 31st, 1797 Died 9th Mo. 25th 1874 aged 79yrs & 10mo. 23 days, which on examination, is inaccurate."

The Burial Ground at George's Creek, now called Hickory Grove, the early location of Appoquinimink Meeting, is a handsome cemetery that in 1930 shows no noticeable traces of its Quaker beginning.

NOTE. There was a grove of fine trees on the grounds of the Appoquinimink Meeting House, between the graveyard and the public road. A later visit to the place on December 19, 1937, finds many of the trees being removed.

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#### BAYSIDE.

"The small meeting-house at Ralph Fishbourne's."  
 Meeting established before.....1696.  
 Preparative Meeting established.....  
 Preparative Meeting discontinued.....1826.  
 Meeting for worship laid down.....1841.  
 Location.....McDaniel, Md.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bayside was an old Meeting of the Society of Friends, of which Dr. Ezra Michener evidently failed to secure any of its interesting early history, or even to locate the Meeting House, beyond the simple fact that it was on the historic Eastern Shore of Maryland. Some rather vague references to Bayside are made in the "History of Talbot County, Md.," by Oswald Tighe, 1915. Regarding the early Friends' location in the county limits, it is there stated:-

**AMIMENIPATJ.** Name of a district which lay between the Delaware River and Shellpot Creek, and which had an unnamed creek or inlet on the south and Stony Creek on the north. The given form is from Lindeström's Map A (1654-55); on Map B (1654-55) the name is spelled Amomeppati. The location is clearer on Map B than on Map A. It cannot be stated with certainty that the name referred to an Indian village, as some have supposed. However, since Indian artifacts have been found within this area, particularly in the vicinity of present-day Edgemoor, we know that there was native occupation. Johnson derives the name from *amemi*, *amimi* "pigeon" and *nepodi*, *nipodi* "sleeping place," i. e., "the place where pigeons sleep or roost" (Appendix, p. 304). The "sleeping place" part of this interpretation we find far from convincing. An acceptable analysis of Amimenipatj is still to be made.

**APPACHAIHACKINGH.** See under HOPOKAHACKING.

**APPOQUENEME.** Name of a place "where the . . . Indians do use to hall ouer their canoos into . . . ducke Creeke" (*New Castle Court Records* 2.61: under the date 1680; cf. DeValinger, *Indian Land Sales*, p. 6). More precisely, Appoqueneme was the name of the marshy area along the Delaware River between Winsacco and Duck Creek (north-east of present Smyrna) through which, in 1682 (see the resurvey made for Ephraim Herrman, full reference to which is made under WINSACCO CIPUS), the outlet known as The Thorougfare was cut to save vessels the trip around Bombay Hook Island (Scharf, p. 1030). The meaning of this name is discussed under APPOQUINIMINK, although topographically the words apply to different features.

**\*APPOQUINIMINK Creek.** Name of an affluent of the Delaware River in southern New Castle Co. Also APPOQUINIMINK Hundred; APPOQUINIMINK (variant: Oppoquermin) Landing, or, as sometimes written, Landing Point (see *New Castle Court Records* 2.209; see also grants from Charles Calvert to Augustine Herrman dated Aug. 14, 1682, and Sept. 4, 1682, which are now among the Dulaney Papers, Maryland Hist. Soc., Baltimore); and APPOQUINIMINK Path (Cecil Co. Land Records, Liber C, folio, 154; Elkton Land Records 1.125). For APPOQUINIMINK as the name of a village, see especially *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts, 1679-1680* (ed. James and Jameson), p. 127, where Apoquemene is the form used.

Before the formation of APPOQUINIMINK Hundred the name of the creek was applied as an area name. Augustine Herrman, in a document dated 1682, refers to St. Augustine's Manor as being "upon Delaware, Appoquinimi and Blackbird Creeks; Antiently all taken for, or called by the Indian name appoquinimin" (see Penn MSS., Hist. Soc. of Pa., vol. 15, p. 61). "Old Appoquinimi" is referred to in a deed of 1708 transferring land from William Grant to John Damarcier (Conrad, p. 565). There is also a reference to a tract of land "lying in St. Jones Creeke in Apoquemini" in a document dated 1675 (NYCD 12.527), but, if this is not an error, it is certainly a very free use of the name under consideration, for the mouth of St. Jones Creek is some 25 miles south of the mouth of Appoquinimink Creek.

In addition to Appoquinimink and Appoqueneme (see the preceding entry) in Delaware, a similar name was once used in Maryland, and one in Pennsylvania as well. The Indian name of the Bohemia River—which form-

ed with Appoquinimink Creek (also named MINQUES Kil) an almost continuous water route for the Minquas Indians, as well as for other travelers, from Chesapeake Bay to the Delaware—was Appoquimimi (according to E. L. W. Heck, *Augustine Herrmann*, p. 74), or Oppoquermine (according to the map in George Johnston, *History of Cecil County*); and the Pennsylvania name, which is found on the Campanius version of Lindeström's Map B, entitled "Är denna Novæ Sveciæ Carta" (facsimile in Winsor, 4.481), at a point along the Delaware River just south of the mouth of the Schuylkill, was Apoquenema.

Appoquinimink was thought by Scharf (p. 1015) to mean "wounded duck," presumably from *poquiechen* "broken" and *quiquingus* "large wild duck" (Brinton, *Dict.*, pp. 119, 122). Johnson derived the name from *apokwe*, a Seminole (!) word meaning "settlement," and *nemen* "to see" (Appendix, p. 306). The first of these interpreters makes the mistake of ignoring important elements of the Indian place-name, and the second the mistake of going to another Indian language for the interpretation of a key element. The meaning of Appoquinimink is still to be determined; but we feel that the following hints for future interpreters are worthy of being set down:

Johnson suggested that, since Lindeström calls the stream the Minques Kijl as well as Apoquenema, the name had reference to a Minquas tribe (*ibid.*). (In connection with the Pa. Apoquenema, it might be observed that a Minquas trail terminated at nearby Kingsessing; see Donehoo, p. 80, and Johnson's edition of *The Instruction for Johan Printz*, p. 131.) Speck, on the other hand, gave us a verbal opinion that a personal, rather than a tribal, name was perhaps involved. There is also the possibility that, since the land at the mouth of the creek and for a considerable distance up and down the Delaware was swampy (see Kaert vande Suyd Rivier, 1643; Smyrna Quad., 1931), the Algonkian word *pakwa* "flag-reed" (William Jones, "Some Principles of Algonquian Word-formation," *American Anthropologist*, n. s., 6.411) is part of the synthesis; Tooker (pp. 14-15) gives Appaqu-, Appuqu- and Apoqu- as variants of *pakwa*. Finally, the first element may be *appo*, a shortening of *mattappu* "he sits down," with possible reference to the end of the portage between Bohemia River and Appoquinimink Creek (cf. Ruttenber, pp. 44, 60).

APOQUENEMA Kill 1654; Rising's Report (Myers, p. 140). APOQUE-NEMA 1654-55; Lindeström's Map A (Map B: APOQUEKEMA). APPQUAUMIN 1661: *Md. Archives* 3.431. APOQUENEMINGH 1661: NYCD 12.357. APOQUENAMINGH 1663: *ibid.* 12:437. Kil of APOQUENAMIN 1663: *ibid.* 12.450. APOQUENIMI 1669: *ibid.* 12.464. OPPOQUENMIN Cr. 1670: Augustine Herrman's Map. APPQUENEMINK Creek 1671: *DY Land Titles*, p. 34. OP-POQUENEMEN Creek 1673: *New Castle Court Records* 1.12. APPOQUEMINI Creeke 1675: *DY Land Titles*, p. 154. OPPEQUIMINA Creek 1681: Annapolis Patents, Liber XXI, folio 500 (BASD 2:3.21). OPOQUENIN Cr. 1681: Thornton and Seller map. APOQUINAMINK Landing 1694: *New Castle Court Records* 2.209. OPOQUIRAING Creek 1697: *Md. Archives* 23.87. APEQUINEMY-River 1698: Gabriel Thomas p. 10. For other occurrences of this name see NYCD 12.477, 495, 508, 511, 517, 520, 527, 539, 548, 613; *DY Land Titles*, pp. 32, 85, 101, 146, 147, 149, 151, 181, 185; *New Castle Court Records* 1.14, 19, 29, 43, 57, 68, 72, 114, 125, 159, 165, 166, 202, 255, 256, 267, 296, 298, 299, 310, 319, 335, 339, 354, 355, 364, 365; 2.8, 9, 19, 60, 100, 101, 110, 117, 124, 172, 179, 215, 216, 218; *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pa.* 1.156; *Pa. Archives* 1:1.82, 191, 424, 426, 433, 562, 563, 590; *Executive Council Minutes*, pp. 84, 85; *Burlington Court Record*, p. 36; *Laws of Delaware* 7.49; etc.

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# The Underground Railroad in Delaware

By James E. Newton\*



HARRIET TUBMAN THOMAS GARRETT

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

THOMAS GARRETT, JOHN L. LEWIS, and other prominent figures in the Underground Railroad movement in Delaware. The plaque commemorates their efforts in aiding fugitive slaves to freedom. The text on the plaque is a historical account of the Underground Railroad in Delaware, detailing the roles of various individuals and the challenges they faced. It highlights the bravery of those who risked their lives to help others escape slavery. The plaque is a testament to the courage and compassion of the people who participated in this secret network of escape routes.

On Wednesday, June 16, 1976 at Peter Spencer Plaza in Wilmington, Delaware a ceremony took place dedicating the erection of a memorial plaque - THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD - to pay tribute to the role Delawareans played in aiding and assisting fugitive slaves to freedom. The project was spearheaded by the Wilmington Branch of ASALH through the aid of many organizations and individuals, especially the Delaware American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, under the direction of Ms. Louise Prickett, for the initial grant for funding. The ceremony, led by Ms. Margaret Owen, Wilmington ASALH Branch President, was highlighted amidst an air of elegant singing by the Young Adult Choir of the Church of God and Christ of Wilmington and the moving remarks by Dr. J. Rupert Picott, Executive Director of ASALH, as Councilman James Baker unveiled the First State's tribute to the slaves' fight for freedom.

Charter members of the Wilmington Branch of ASALH included: President, Margaret Owens; Vice-President, Thomas Rawley; Recording Secretary, Cortez Rawley; Ronald Lewis; La Wanda Newton; Prentiss Owens; Kay Wilson; Louis L. Redding; and Percy Ricks.

The following account provides a brief historical note about Delaware's role in Underground Railroad activities.

The Underground Railroad was the term applied to designate the system of escape in which fugitive slaves gained their freedom. In actuality, it was neither "underground" or a "railroad," but was called the "Underground Railroad" because of the secretive way in which the activities were carried out, and because railway terms were used in describing the system. Various routes were known as "lines," stopping places were called "stations," those who aided along the stages of the route were "conductors" or "agents." The fugitive slaves were referred to as "packages" or "freight." Prior to the Civil War, the Underground Railroad had extended in all directions throughout fourteen Northern States and Canada. Northern philanthropists and abolitionists, free blacks, including former slaves, were instrumental in assisting between 40,000 and 100,000 slaves to their freedom.

*The Underground Railroad*, (1871) written by William Still, a black conductor and

\*Delaware State Director of ASALH, in conjunction with the Wilmington, Delaware Branch of the Association for the Study of Afro-American

Life and History. Black American Studies Dept, Univ. of Delaware, Newark, Delaware 1971





WILLIAM STILL



HARRIET "MOSES" TUBMAN



THOMAS GARRETT



SAMUEL D. BURRIS



JOHN HUNN

secretary of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, clearly illustrates Delaware's role in Underground Railroad activities. Thomas Garrett, John Hunn, Ezekiel Jenkins, Samuel D. Burris, Daniel Corbit, John Alston, Benjamin, William and Thomas Webb, and other Delawareans were instrumental in assisting and aiding numerous fugitive slaves to their freedom. The combination of Harriet "Moses" Tubman and Thomas Garrett, Quaker abolitionist, formed one of the most successful teams arranged throughout the entire network. The persistent and courageous efforts by Delaware abolitionists reflected the true spirit of comradeship and freedom, therefore, providing much of the light needed to remove the dark shadow of human bondage from the annals of American history.

#### AGENTS, CONDUCTORS AND STATION MASTERS

The assistance of dedicated and capable agents, conductors, engineers and station masters was vital to the success of the Underground Railroad. Outstanding contributors to Delaware's cause were such towering figures as Harriet Tubman, who provided her services as a "through conductor" and Thomas Garrett, Wilmington's "station master"....second to none. John Hunn served as "chief engineer" of the Southern end of Delaware, while Samuel D. Burris, a black Delawarean, proved his skills as a capable "conductor."

**HARRIET ROSS TUBMAN** (1821-1913), Black abolitionist known as the "Moses" of her people was the most eminent conductor on the Underground Railroad. Born in Dorchester County, Maryland, she was one of eleven children. In 1849 her escape from slavery inspired her to lead other fugitive slaves to freedom, forcing those too timid ahead with a loaded revolver. During her reign as a "through conductor" Harriet Tubman made nineteen secret trips below the Mason-Dixon line and brought over three hundred slaves to freedom. She became such a terror to slaveholders that amounts varying from \$12,000 to \$40,000 were posted for her capture. In the Civil War, Harriet Tubman served in the Union Army as a nurse, laundress, and a spy. She died in 1913 in Auburn, New York. The life of Harriet

Tubman serves as strong testimony dedicated to the cause of freedom.

**THOMAS GARRETT** is well-known for his labors on behalf of the abolition of slavery. A Quaker born in Pennsylvania in 1789, he became a member of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and began a lifelong mission in aiding slaves. After his move to Wilmington in 1822, Garrett's home at 227 Shipley Street, became a station on the Underground Railroad. The courageous team effort of Thomas Garrett and Harriet Tubman was instrumental in aiding many slaves to freedom. The heavy fine imposed during his conviction in 1848, for violating the Fugitive Slave Law of 1743 failed to alter Garrett's work as a fearless, uncompromising leader and advocate of emancipation. According to personal records, he had assisted 2,700 slaves in their plight from bondage to freedom. For many fugitive slaves the Garrett house became a password for freedom.

**SAMUEL D. BURRIS**, a native Black Delawarean and free man, did much to aid fugitives in their flight to freedom. During one of his brave escapades, Burris was caught by slave-holders and placed in jail at Dover, Delaware. For his southern ventures as an agent, Burris spent fourteen months in jail before his trial. The punishment was his sale as a slave to serve for seven years. Fortunately, however, fellow abolitionist arranged to plot whereby Burris would be purchased by Isaac A. Flint of Wilmington. The plot proved a success and Burris returned to Philadelphia with his family and friends. Although never risking to venture south again, Burris remained a staunch supporter of the Underground Railroad. In 1855, at the age of sixty, Samuel D. Burris died in the City of San Francisco.

**JOHN HUNN**, an earnest Delaware Quaker, was known as "chief engineer" of the Southern end of Delaware. An ardent foe of slave-holders Hunn, along with Garrett, was convicted of harboring fugitive slaves. Although the heavily imposed fine left him destitute, Hunn avowed his sympathy for the slave and pledged to continue the work until the chains of slavery were broken.

#### ROUTES

Delaware seems to have had a well-defined land route upon which the houses

of prominent abolitionist were situated. Slaves entering the Southern border of Delaware received little organized assistance until they reached the home of Ezekiel Jenkins in *Camden*, where an organized branch of Black conductors would take them through Dover and Smyrna to the station in *Blackbird*. Next stop would be John Hunn's headquarters in *Middletown*. From Middletown, the route led to *New Castle* or directly to the home of Thomas Garrett, the central receiving station in *Wilmington*. Historic reports indicate that no other point along the entire system handled as much human traffic as the Garrett House in Wilmington. For many slaves enroute to Philadelphia and other points North, the City of Wilmington became known as "A last Stop Before Freedom." Further North the Underground Railroad was linked to numerous stations operated by Quaker farmers living in Chester and Delaware County near the Delaware line. Although the dominant mode of travel was by foot or carriage, occasionally, water routes via Delaware Bay to New Jersey or Pennsylvania were also utilized. Through traffic on the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad also served in transporting fugitive slaves to safety.

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# DELAWARE HISTORY

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# Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, and the Underground Railroad

PRISCILLA THOMPSON\*

*I grew up like a neglected weed,—ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. Then I was not happy or contented; every time I saw a white man I was afraid of being carried away. I had two sisters carried away in a chain gang,—one of them left two children. We were always uneasy. Now I've been free, I know what a dreadful condition slavery is. I have seen hundreds of escaped slaves, but I never saw one who was willing to go back and be a slave. I have no opportunity to see my friends in my native land. We would rather stay in our native land, if we could be as free there as we are here. I think slavery is the next thing to hell. If a person would send another into bondage, he would, it appears to me, be bad enough to send him into hell, if he could.*

Harriet Tubman<sup>1</sup>

THIS is how Harriet Tubman, having escaped to Canada, reflected upon her former life as a slave. For more than a century stories about Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, a Wilmington Quaker, and the Underground Railroad have proliferated in the form of children's books, novels, biographies, television productions, and legends. Yet because secrecy was the most important element in the successful operation of the railroad, accurate records of underground activities are almost nonexistent. Only by piecing together information contained in letters, newspapers, and other records is it possible to discover at least a part of the story as it unfolded in Wilmington.

For the Underground Railroad, the story in Wilmington was one of cooperation among abolitionists, including Quakers and free blacks.

\* Priscilla Thompson received an M.A. in history from the University of Delaware and is a researcher for the History Store in Wilmington.

<sup>1</sup> Harriet Tubman in slave narrative (*Four Fugitive Slave Narratives* [Reading, Mass., 1969] combines four old publications of slave narratives including *The Refugee* by Benjamin Drew [Boston, 1856], 20).

These abolitionists provided runaway slaves with secure resting stations, guides, transportation, and even funds to replace worn-out shoes. For Thomas Garrett, it was a story of being a station master for thirty years, suffering adverse publicity and financial reverses, and working with the abolitionist group of Progressive Friends. For Harriet Tubman, it was a story of escape from slavery at age thirty and then numerous return trips to the South to rescue family and others—at least eight times encountering Thomas Garrett during her journey.

Harriet Ross Tubman is one of the best known “conductors” on the Underground Railroad. She was born about 1820 near Bucktown in Dorchester County on the eastern shore of Maryland. Her mother, Harriet Green, and her father, Benjamin Ross, were both slaves and not permitted to marry.<sup>2</sup> All accounts of young Harriet Ross indicate that she displayed independence of thought and action at an early age. Her owner apparently did not consider Harriet cooperative enough to become a house slave, relegating her to the outdoor work she actually preferred. Despite a severe head injury, she became as strong as a man by doing heavy agricultural work.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps because of her injury, her owner did not expect her to produce children to enlarge his slave holdings. Instead, he allowed her to marry John Tubman, a free black.

John Tubman was free because of the earlier manumission of his parents. His wife's aspiration to freedom was something that John Tubman did not share. In fact, he apparently threatened to report her to her owner if she tried to run away. Harriet Ross Tubman had lived with John Tubman for about five years and was nearly thirty years old when she ran away from Dorchester County, Maryland, in about 1849. Surely Harriet knew that she risked recapture and punishment when she decided to run away. To minimize the dangers and enhance the chances for a successful escape Harriet must have used what she knew about the Underground Railroad in choosing a route and finding assistance along the way.

Earl Conrad's biography of Tubman includes a few details on her first journey.<sup>4</sup> Geography and other conditions in Maryland and southern Delaware suggest that Harriet walked most of the way from Buck Town to Philadelphia, but her precise route remains unknown. Undoubtedly she received help from Quakers. In 1849 there were Friends meetings

<sup>2</sup> Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* (Washington, 1943), 4. For the naming of slaves, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York, 1976), 444–50. Some books about Harriet say that her first name was Araminta and her nickname Minty. According to Tubman's biographer, Earl Conrad, Araminta was a name that slave owners frequently gave to slave girls. Although Araminta does not seem to have been a particularly common name, owners did indeed use any name of their choice for their slaves.

<sup>3</sup> This story or some variation of it appears in nearly every account of Harriet Tubman's life. For example, see Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* (Washington, 1943), 14–23 and Ann Petry, *Harriet Tubman*, 2d ed. (New York, 1971), 7–63.

<sup>4</sup> Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*, 38–9.

at Federalsburg and Preston, two towns about twenty miles from Buck Town. Another meeting in Concord was about ten miles further north, and there were three more meetings in Denton, Burrsville, and Greensboro. All of those meetings were in Maryland about half way up the Delmarva Peninsula near the boundary line with Delaware. In Easton, there was another meeting. Two other meetings further north in Maryland were at Cecilton and Millington. It is reasonable to think that Tubman crossed into Delaware just north of Sussex County. Because it had Delaware's largest concentration of slaveholders, Sussex County was an area to avoid, while northern Delaware had many Friends meetings and therefore more potential helpers to the escaping slave.<sup>5</sup> Most of the meetings in the area between the Chesapeake and the Delaware were a part of the Southern Quarter of Philadelphia Meeting. These were Hicksite meetings, which tended to have more abolitionists than did the Orthodox meetings.

Tubman could have stopped in Camden, either at the Cooper house, where Conrad says slaves would hide in a small bunk-lined room above the kitchen, or the house of Ezekiel Hunn, brother of John Hunn, a leader of the Underground Railroad in Delaware.<sup>6</sup> She might also have stopped at William Brinkly's since this black conductor wrote in 1857 that "Harrat . . . stops at my house when she passes. . . ."<sup>7</sup> An early chronicler of the Underground Railroad, Wilbur H. Siebert, who talked with Harriet Tubman while she was alive, reported that she said she used stations at Camden, Dover, Blackbird, Middletown, and New Castle en route to Wilmington and Philadelphia. The Appoquinimink Meeting-house in Odessa was yet another station. Although Appoquinimink Meeting had been united with Duck Creek Meeting, which in turn merged with Camden in 1830, John Alston of Odessa, an agent on the Underground Railroad, continued to attend the Appoquinimink Meeting almost alone. It was undoubtedly he who made the meetinghouse available to slaves.<sup>8</sup> John Hunn was also likely to have helped there.

The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal constituted a major barrier on the overland route for escaping slaves, especially in the daylight. Bridges crossed the canal in Delaware at Delaware City, Summit, and St. Georges, the preferred bridge for the most direct route to Wilmington. Continuing north from the canal to Wilmington, the Christina River presented

<sup>5</sup> Charles L. Blockson, "The Underground Railroad," *National Geographic*, vol. 166 (Jul. 1984): 28. Blockson states that Tubman usually followed the Choptank River toward Camden, which is near the meetings mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> William Still, *The Underground Railroad*, (Philadelphia, 1872), 74.

<sup>8</sup> Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1899), 118; Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*, 57; T. Chalkey Matlack, "Brief Historical Sketches concerning Friends Meetings of the Past and Present with Special Reference to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting," manuscript in Reference Section of Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa. (hereafter F.H.L.).

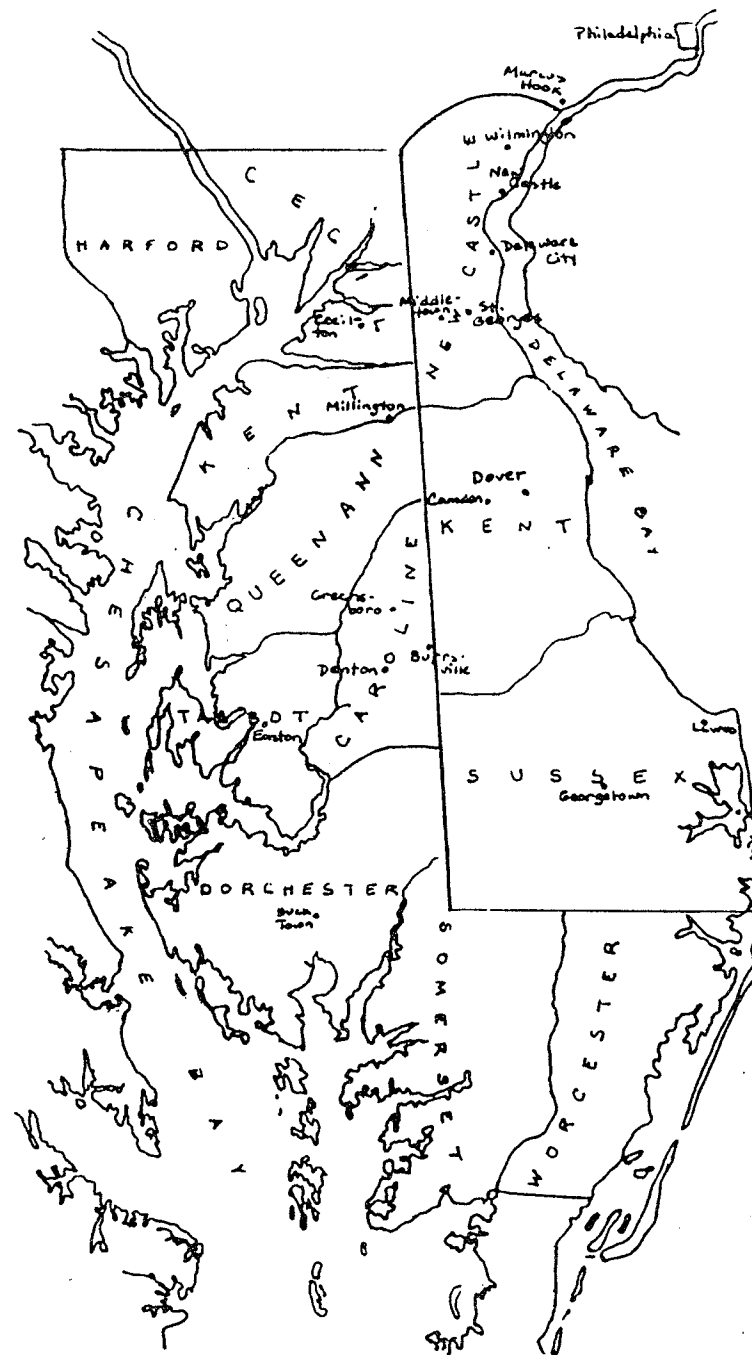


FIGURE 1. Map of Delaware and Eastern Shore Maryland shows some of the towns through which Harriet Tubman might have passed on her way to Philadelphia (map prepared by L. Ellen Peterson).



another obstacle. The Market Street Bridge, the only crossing in Wilmington, was a likely place to catch an escaping slave. Possibly through a local black "pilot" or "conductor" Harriet was escorted from Wilmington to Philadelphia over one of three routes: on foot or by carriage overland through Chester County; on foot or by carriage to Marcus Hook to board the train; or by boat from a port on the Delaware River.

Whichever of the possible routes she used Harriet realized she was free when she arrived in Philadelphia. As she recalled later:

When I found I had crossed that line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in Heaven.<sup>9</sup>

In Philadelphia, Harriet Tubman worked for the first time as a free woman. Eventually, she also went to the summer resort of Cape May, New Jersey, to work. The rescue of her family and the others she had left behind in slavery soon became her mission. She worked between her trips to the South in order to earn the money that she needed to carry out her rescues. Harriet's first mission seems to have been to Baltimore in December 1850 to rescue her sister and her sister's children.<sup>10</sup> Soon after rescuing her sister, Harriet Tubman apparently returned to Maryland for a brother and two others.<sup>11</sup>

By the time of her second trip in early 1851, Harriet had come to realize the impact of the Fugitive Slave Law that had been passed by Congress on September 18, 1850. This law strengthened a similar law of 1793 by adding several new provisions: fugitive cases came under federal jurisdiction; special United States commissioners could summon, possess, and receive \$10 for each arrest that sent a slave back to an owner; proof of ownership of a slave was simplified; and fines were imposed for those who aided fugitives. Under this law, blacks were no longer safe anywhere in the United States, not even in the North, because they could be arrested as suspected runaways by the accusation of any white person. The Fugitive Slave Law convinced Tubman that she had to escort the slaves she rescued all the way to Canada, specifically to Saint Catharines, Ontario, just beyond Niagara Falls. The long journey and the rescue of her people inspired others to give her the name of "Moses," a name that stayed with her during her years on the Underground Railroad.

Having rescued some members of her family, Harriet Tubman appar-

<sup>9</sup> Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (Auburn, 1869), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* 41-42. This author says they traveled on the Underground Railroad; Bradford says that they traveled by train.

<sup>11</sup> Conrad (*Harriet Tubman*, 44) mentions the conflicting stories about this trip, as does Siebert (*Underground Railroad*, 186). See also Bradford (*Scenes*, 73), who quotes an article in the *Boston Commonwealth*.



FIGURE 2. Engraving of Harriet Tubman showing her as a scout during the Civil War (from Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* [1869]).

ently thought she could convince her husband to accompany her. Returning to Dorchester County, Maryland, in 1851, Harriet found that her husband had taken another wife and did not wish to leave. That was the last Harriet saw of John Tubman. Instead of her husband, she escorted a group of slaves to Canada. She went back to the South again in December 1851, returning with eleven slaves, including one of her brothers and his wife.<sup>12</sup> In 1852 Harriet Tubman made yet another trip to Maryland and escorted nine more slaves to Canada. By the time she made this trip she was apparently working in Cape May, New Jersey. Cape May is located directly across the Delaware Bay from Lewes, Delaware, raising the possibility that she crossed the Bay by boat and then went overland directly west to Dorchester County, Maryland.

Tubman's routes on her first five trips put her in or near Wilmington, but no evidence exists to show that she had yet come in contact with Thomas Garrett, one of the area's most active and well-known "Station Masters" on the Underground Railroad.

Garrett had been actively helping runaway slaves as early as 1830, when Harriet was barely ten years old. A birthright Quaker, Garrett was born in Pennsylvania and moved to Wilmington in 1822 with his wife, Mary Sharpless Garrett, and two children. Three more children were born to the couple in Wilmington before Mary's death in 1828. Garrett married his second wife, Rachel Mendenhall, in 1830 and with her had one son. Garrett was an edge-tool maker engaged in the iron and hardware business, a prominent local citizen, and an active abolitionist.

At about the same time that Garrett started to help escaping slaves, The Society of Friends was experiencing a schism that divided adherents between the Orthodox, or more conservative branch, and the Hicksites, the more reformist-minded followers of Elias Hicks. The Hicksites were in the majority in Wilmington and retained the meetinghouse at Fourth and West streets. Garrett was a Hicksite but later joined with a third, more liberal, group, the Progressive Friends Meeting of Longwood in Pennsylvania.

Virtually all writings about Garrett mention that his bravery was so great as to ensure bringing trouble on himself. Yet Garrett's own perception was that his Underground Railroad activities created few problems for himself. Garrett wrote in 1853 that his assistance to blacks had never caused him any physical harm except when some Southerners tried to throw him off the train in Wilmington because he tried to save a free black from being taken to the South.<sup>13</sup> Contemporary records show that in spite of Garrett's own recollections, his activities did cause problems at times. In one instance Garrett had boasted publicly about

<sup>12</sup> Bradford, *Scenes*, 73.

<sup>13</sup> *The Liberator*, Oct. 14, 1853, in James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad, the Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Moylan, PA, 1977), 147.



FIGURE 3. Portrait of Thomas Garrett painted by Bass Otis in 1838. Fifty years of age, Garrett was already active in the Underground Railroad (from the collections of The Historical Society of Delaware).

having helped a slave whose master had left him in Norfolk, Virginia. He escaped serious court action only because the slave owner did not appear in court.<sup>14</sup>

In another instance, in 1846, Thomas Garrett faced more substantial legal problems in connection with his activities with the Underground

<sup>14</sup> James F. Conlin and Cornelius Desmond, "The Land of Boasted Freedom," manuscript, n.d., 45. Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington (hereafter H.S.D.)

Railroad. Garrett and John Hunn, another well-known Delaware abolitionist, were taken to court by two slave owners for assisting runaway slaves. The trial took place in the New Castle County Courthouse in 1848 and resulted in Garrett being fined over \$5,000. It was this fine that made Garrett declare many times in later life that he had had to start all over again at the age of sixty.

Apparently, however, Garrett's financial problems did not arise only from the fine levied for assisting runaway slaves. Even before Garrett stood trial in New Castle, the Friends Meeting was scrutinizing his financial affairs. On October 23, 1846, the Wilmington Preparative Meeting informed the Monthly Meeting that Thomas Garrett "had become embarrassed in his circumstances and was unable to pay his debts."<sup>15</sup> The Meeting appointed a committee to look into Garrett's affairs. In January 1847 the committee reported that they were "of the judgement that for want of attention to the recommendations of our discipline he has extended his business beyond his ability to manage and that he has paid some of his creditors in full to the dissatisfaction of others."<sup>16</sup> In July 1847, the committee decided to issue a testimony of disownment against Garrett. A month later the committee reported that it had visited Garrett, who then wrote to the Meeting explaining that the property of the Elk Iron Works, of which he was a partner, was taken over by trustees who sold it and distributed the proceeds to its creditors. Garrett expressed regret for the pain experienced by his family and his creditors and asked the Meeting to retain him as a member. His request was granted, and Garrett was not disowned.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the fine and other financial problems, Garrett seems to have had a fairly prosperous household. The federal census for 1850 listed him as a merchant with real estate worth \$32,000. Garrett lived with his wife, Rachel, one adult son, a daughter, and several other adults, including Jane Morris, a fifty-year-old black woman. Garrett's son Henry lived nearby with his wife and children. One of the members of Henry's household was Patrick Holland, a laborer who was born in Ireland and would figure in the operation of the Underground Railroad.<sup>18</sup>

When Tubman escaped from Maryland and Garrett was rebuilding his business after the trial, Wilmington was a small industrial city of under 14,000 inhabitants. The Quakers, many of whom could be counted upon to support abolitionist causes, exerted a strong influence. Despite the deaths of several Wilmington-area abolitionists active on the

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of Wilmington Monthly Meeting, p. 311, microfilm at Swarthmore College.

<sup>16</sup> Most stories about Garrett's activities on the Underground Railroad say that he lost all his money as a result of the trial for assisting runaways; however, meeting records suggest that his financial situation was more complex than originally thought.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of Wilmington Meeting, 326-27.

<sup>18</sup> U.S., Bureau of the Census, manuscript census of population for Wilmington, 1850, and Wilmington city directory, 1853.

Underground Railroad—Benjamin Webb in 1851 and Daniel Gibbons the following year—Thomas Garrett continued his activity. In September 1851 he published an article in *The Blue Hen's Chicken* in which he criticized William Hemphill Jones for performing his legal duty by imprisoning a Negro man named Stewart. Jones then charged Garrett with libel.<sup>19</sup>

Antislavery sentiment seems to have grown stronger, particularly among Quaker abolitionists, as feelings intensified on both sides with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act and the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In the autumn of 1852 a group of Quakers decided to organize The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends. This meeting invited everyone who recognized "the equal brotherhood of the human family without regard to sex, color, or condition" to join them.<sup>20</sup> The founding of the Progressive Friends Meeting was largely the outgrowth of agitation by activist abolitionist Friends who disrupted meetings in the Kennett Square area in an attempt to gain more support for the antislavery cause.

A substantial number of abolitionist Friends met at the Old Kennett Meeting House on May 22, 1853, to organize formally what is today commonly referred to as the Progressive Meeting at Longwood. Sojourner Truth, a former slave, attended that meeting and spoke and sang. The meeting of Progressive Friends lasted for four days and included discussion of other issues in addition to slavery. Garrett was one of the founders of this meeting and was on the committee that outlined the purposes of the new meeting. Friction between the group and the Old Kennett Meeting led the new group to build its own meetinghouse in 1855 on property purchased from John and Hannah Cox of Longwood Farm.<sup>21</sup> From the time of the founding of the Progressive Friends Meeting at Longwood until after the Civil War Garrett regularly attended the Progressive Friends meetings. His name did not appear in the minutes of the Wilmington Meeting during this period. Garrett was continually active in the Progressive Meeting, and much of his Underground Railroad activity centered around the Progressive Meeting at Longwood rather than the Meeting in Wilmington.<sup>22</sup>

The Progressive Meeting did not require its members to drop their membership in other meetings, nor was the membership exclusively Quaker. Therefore, many members returned to their former meeting or church after the Civil War. Garrett's funeral and burial were at the

<sup>19</sup> *Delaware Gazette*, Sept. 19, 1851.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends of Longwood, in printed form in F.H.L. The pages are not numbered; the printed minutes are bound in book form.

<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends of Longwood, and Norma Jacobs, ed., *Quaker Roots* (Kennett Square, 1980), 64-65.

<sup>22</sup> The author read the minutes of both the Wilmington Meeting and the Progressive Meeting for the period from 1845 to the end of the Civil War.

Wilmington Hicksite Meeting at Fourth and West streets, so he obviously returned to that meeting before his death. Garrett was not the only Quaker from Wilmington to join the Progressive Meeting. William and Edward Webb, ice merchants and sons of Benjamin Webb, were also there. The Webbs, abolitionists like their father, had already been disowned by other meetings before 1850.<sup>23</sup>

Isaac and Dinah Mendenhall also attended the first real meeting of the Progressive Friends. Although they were not from Wilmington, their house, located about ten minutes from Wilmington, was the closest Pennsylvania station to the Delaware border, and Thomas Garrett often took escaping slaves there.<sup>24</sup>

One scholar who has studied the Progressive Friends believes that although the group did not actually sponsor the Underground Railroad, they were one of the most important forces in it. They believed that a network of "stockholders," "station agents," "engineers," and "conductors" could create an effective escape route for runaway slaves. Although the Progressive Friends agitated on behalf of a number of causes and alienated many of their fellow Quakers, the Railroad was probably the one illegal activity in which they participated.<sup>25</sup> The small amount of evidence available indicates that the activities of the Underground Railroad did accelerate after the founding of the Progressive Friends Meeting.

The year in which the Progressive Meeting really began, 1853, was a year of personal sadness for Garrett. His daughter Anna, who had a few months earlier married James Edwards, died in California. Another daughter, Sarah Hewes, who lived in Wilmington, died in the same year.

Even in the face of personal tragedies Garrett carried on his work of helping runaway slaves. He wrote to a friend in England in August 1854 that he had already helped 1,853 slaves escape. If this number were accurate, it seems unlikely Tubman would have passed through Wilmington several times without coming in contact with him. Yet, the earliest meeting of the two that we can document was in late 1854.<sup>26</sup>

Tubman, three of her brothers, three other men, and one woman definitely passed through Garrett's station in December 1854. Tubman

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, 1853; Wilmington city directory, 1853. Other data is in "Delaware Quaker Records: Early members of Wilmington Meeting," comp. by Herbert Standing in 1980.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends; "Papers About Longwood," manuscript file, F.H.L.

<sup>25</sup> Albert John Wahl, "The Congregational or Progressive Friends in the Pre-Civil War Reform Movement," (Ph.D. diss., Teachers College, Temple University, 1951).

<sup>26</sup> However, much of the documentation we have on Tubman is in a secondary source, Still's *Underground Railroad*. In his book, Still tells the stories of many slaves who escaped while he was the chairman of the Vigilance Committee, an organization that helped runaways slaves in Philadelphia. Still did not become chairman of the Vigilance Committee until 1852, and most of his accounts of escapes date from later than that.

had returned to Dorchester County to take three of her brothers to Canada. This trip was one of her major adventures, and some version of it appears in most accounts of her life.<sup>27</sup>

Tubman met her brothers at her father's house. She did not see her father, and he in turn blindfolded his eyes when he said good-bye to his sons so that he could honestly say he had not "seen" them. The runaways then followed Tubman for the long journey north. When they arrived in South Wilmington Tubman found shelter with free blacks, who sent word to Garrett that the only bridge across the Christina was guarded by police looking for runaway slaves. Garrett then sent two wagons to pick up the runaways. The wagons carried a load of straw and a group of bricklayers who behaved as though they were headed for an outing. The wagons returned with the runaways hidden under the straw while the bricklayers acted as if they had been drinking all day. Their actions distracted the police, who did not bother to inspect the wagon for runaways. When the slaves arrived at Garrett's house, their shoes were worn out, so Garrett provided money for new ones. From this incident and other similar ones came the mistaken idea that Garrett was a shoemaker, as mentioned in several books.<sup>28</sup>

Garrett's own account of the incident was simple. He advised William Still in Philadelphia to expect the group, who would need assistance from the Vigilance Committee. In his letter of December 29, 1854, he wrote: "We made arrangements last night, and send away Harriet Tubman, with six men and one woman to Allen Agnew's (in Pennsylvania) to be forwarded across the country to the city. Harriet, and one of the men had worn their shoes off their feet, and I gave them two dollars to help fit them out, and directed a carriage to be hired at my expense, to take them out, but do not yet know the expense."<sup>29</sup> The group arrived in Philadelphia the same day, as Still acknowledged in his book. In his usual way, Still described the arrivals, extolling Tubman's bravery and calling her "Moses." Interestingly, Still did not mention the men's last names, nor did he say that they were Tubman's brothers. In her book about Tubman, Sarah Bradford described "Joe," the member of the group who broke down and cried when the train finally crossed the Canadian border to true freedom. The story of "Joe" is also repeated in numerous accounts of Tubman's rescues, but it is not a name that Still identifies as a member of the group.<sup>30</sup>

The entire escape could not have succeeded without the use of horses and wagons, which means that it probably involved one of Garrett's

<sup>27</sup> Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*, 49-55 and Still, *Underground Railroad*, 29, for letter of Dec. 29, 1854, from Garrett to Still.

<sup>28</sup> Bradford, *Scenes*, 27. The story of Harriet's father with a blindfold is in Conrad, *Tubman*, 53, and other accounts.

<sup>29</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 296.

<sup>30</sup> Bradford, *Scenes*, 27. Bradford also wrote that this was Tubman's 7th or 8th trip.



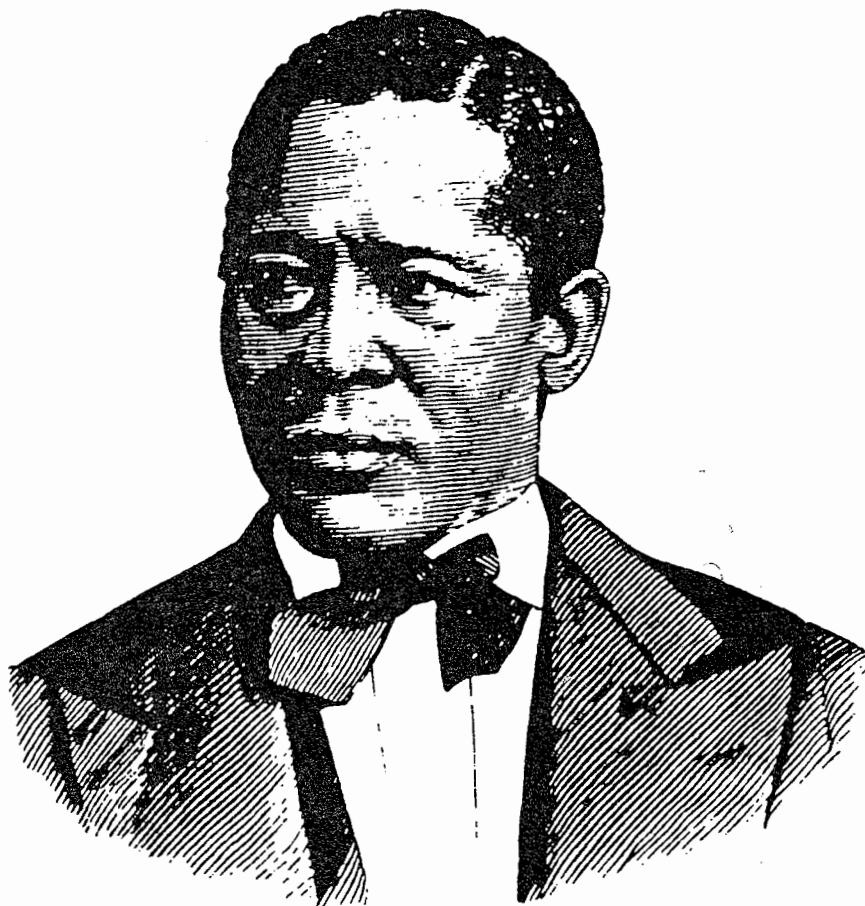


FIGURE 4. William Still was a leading member of the Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, an organization that helped runaway slaves (from William Still, *Underground Railroad* [1872]).

helpers who was neither black nor a Quaker. This was Patrick Holland, who, according to Garrett's granddaughter, worked with the Underground Railroad from the 1840s on. Born in Galway, Holland immigrated to America at an unknown date, and in 1850 was a laborer living with Henry Garrett, Thomas's son. He eventually owned a livery stable at 200 West Front Street and lived at the corner of Orange and Water streets, both locations very close to the bridge across the Christina River. By 1860, when Holland lived with his wife and several other Irish-born people, the census listed him as the owner of real estate worth \$3,000 and personal property worth \$4,000. Garrett himself mentioned the help he had received from some Irish Catholics, and his obituary further pointed out that help. Patrick Holland was undoubtedly one of those

Irish Catholics, and certainly his livery stable was involved in many slave escapes.<sup>31</sup>

Garrett remained an active member of the Progressive Friends as the group's abolitionist activities increased. In 1855 they moved into their own meetinghouse at Longwood, a building that definitely played a part in Underground Railroad activities. On October 28, 1855, shortly after it was built, G.A. Lewis of Kimberton wrote to Still that eleven runaways had arrived in Wilmington and had gone to Garrett's in broad daylight. They were then sent on and "reached Longwood meeting-house in the evening."<sup>32</sup>

Some of the runaways who passed through Garrett's hands came into Wilmington by ship. Ship captains who carried runaway slaves were in serious trouble in the South if they were discovered. Still described Captain F. as a man who risked the wrath of the mayor of Norfolk by carrying slaves from that city to the North. Garrett mentioned a Captain Fountain and worried about a Captain Lambson or Lambdin who was tried and found guilty of the same activity. In March 1856 Garrett wrote Still:

Captain Fountain has arrived all safe, with the human cargo thee was inquiring for, a few days since. I had men waiting till 12 o'clock till the captain arrived at his berth, ready to receive them; last night they then learned, that he had landed them at the rocks, near the old Swedes church, in the care of our efficient. Pilot, who is in the employ of my friend, John Hills, and he has them now in charge. As soon as my breakfast is over, I will see Hillis and determine what is best to be done in their case. My own opinion is, we had best send them to Hook and there put them in the cars to-night and send a pilot to take them to thy house. As Marcus Hook is in Pennsylvania, the agent of the cars runs no risk of the fine of five hundred dollars our State imposes for assisting on of God's poor out of the State by steamboat or cars."<sup>33</sup>

Later the same day Garrett wrote to Still again saying that Harry Craig would take some escaping slaves to Marcus Hook. Garrett advised Still to "take Harry Craige by the hand as a brother . . . he is one of our most efficient aids on the Rail Road."<sup>34</sup> Harry Craige was obviously a "pilot" or "conductor" who helped slaves make the trips between stations.

A black brickmaker named Henry Craig lived on East Eleventh Street

<sup>31</sup> Helen Garrett's Notebook, H.S.D.; manuscript census of population, Wilmington, 1850 and 1860 and Wilmington city directory, 1859-60.

<sup>32</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 39.

<sup>33</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 325.

<sup>34</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 39.

near Poplar Street in Wilmington is presumed to be the "Harry Craige" Garrett mentioned.<sup>35</sup> John Hillis operated a brickyard at Walnut and East Eleventh Street in Wilmington. The Captain Fountain whom Garrett mentioned numerous times was probably James Fountain, a Wilmington sea captain who lived on Sixth Street near Spruce. The only Lamdin or similar name listed in the Wilmington city directory during this period is Mary E. Lamdin of 607 Orange Street. She was very likely the unfortunate wife who was on her own while captain was jailed in Norfolk for his assistance to runaways.<sup>36</sup>

Garrett's correspondence with Still makes it obvious that many slaves were escorted to Marcus Hook to board the train, always referred to as "the cars" by those involved. Marcus Hook, described as a town of about 600 with a fine riverfront, was the first railroad station north of Delaware in Pennsylvania. Here slaves could board the train for the last few miles to Philadelphia.<sup>37</sup>

Tubman was evidently not in Wilmington when the ship carrying slaves arrived in March 1856. She seems to have spent the winter of 1855-56 in Saint Catherines, Canada, which had become her home, but not before stopping at Garrett's in December 1855. Tubman had been in Maryland and had brought one man out of slavery. She stopped at Garrett's, had tea, and left determined to return to Maryland for the last members of her family who were still in slavery. Garrett said Tubman had by that date made four trips and had brought away seventeen family members and friends. She travelled on foot and at night most of the time and hid during the day according to Garrett. She had made three trips to Canada to deliver her charges to freedom and told Garrett that if she could make one more trip, it would be her last. Garrett made no secret of his great admiration for Tubman.<sup>38</sup>

Garrett wrote to Still on May 11, 1856, to say: "those four I wrote thee about arrived safe up in the neighborhood of Longwood, and Harriet Tubman followed after in the stage yesterday."<sup>39</sup> It appears that Tubman continued on to Canada, became ill there, and did not return south until September 8.<sup>40</sup> Tubman suddenly appeared in Garrett's office on September 8, probably on her way to Baltimore. She had not recovered from the illness she contracted while in Canada. Tubman's plan was to bring two slave children north and then return to Dorchester

County for her sister and her sister's two children.<sup>41</sup> Tubman's shoes were worn through; she needed money to help slaves; and she told Garrett that God had sent her to him for what she needed. Eliza Wigham, secretary of the Abolition Society of Edinburgh, Scotland, had just sent a contribution, so Garrett was able to fulfill Tubman's request. The convenient timing of this gift seemed to support Tubman's belief that her needs would be supplied by God.<sup>42</sup>

It must have taken nearly a month for Tubman to accomplish her next trip to Maryland. She returned to Garrett's on about October 29, 1856. On November 29, Garrett wrote to his friend Joseph A. Dugdale, also an abolitionist and a member of the Progressive Meeting, that she was safely on her way to Canada with the four men and one woman that she had brought to Garrett's house in October. Tubman and the five escaped slaves had just left New York by train.<sup>43</sup> Tubman had apparently returned to Dorchester County on this trip to rescue a sister and the sister's children. She did not return with them, however, because the sister was unable to get the children and would not leave without them. Tubman, therefore, left with the four men and one woman mentioned above. It took the group six days to travel to Wilmington. Just before they arrived in Wilmington, the master of three of the slaves arrived there to put up handbills offering rewards for their capture. As soon as the handbills went up, blacks in Wilmington tore them down.<sup>44</sup>

Garrett apparently did not have any word of Tubman between the end of November 1856 and March 1857. Garrett expected her to return to Wilmington in December after delivering the four men and one woman to Canada. When she had not returned by March, Garrett thought she might be ill or in danger. Interrupted in the course of writing a letter expressing his concern, Garrett resumed it to add that he had just received word that Tubman had arrived in Philadelphia.<sup>45</sup>

Thomas Garrett continued to help escaping slaves and sometimes secreted them in his house on Shipley Street. He reputedly built an addition to his house in the 1850s to shelter more runaways. Garrett must also have developed a greater fear of using the Market Street Bridge to cross the Christina River because he arranged to help some

<sup>35</sup> Wilmington city directory, 1857.

<sup>36</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 131, 637, 325, for letters mentioning Fountain and Lambdon. Wilmington city directories give information on addresses.

<sup>37</sup> *Schedule of Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad and Guide*, 1856.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, Dec. 16, 1855 and Sept. 12, 1856, quoted in McGowan, *Station Master*, 129. Note that McGowan has counted seven trips so far, where Bradford had a higher number and Garrett counts only four.

<sup>39</sup> Still, *Underground Railroad*, 387.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, Sept. 12, 1856 and Oct. 24, 1856, originals at Haverford College, Haverford, Pa., full text in McGowan, *Station Master*.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, Sept. 12, 1856.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, Oct. 24, 1856.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Garrett to Joseph A. Dugdale, Nov. 29, 1856, original at Swarthmore College, full text in McGowan, *Station Master*.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Garrett to Eliza Wigham, Dec. 27, 1856, original at Haverford College, full text in McGowan, *Station Master*. There is some confusion on this trip because Garrett wrote that Harriet Tubman had waited until Christmas for her sister, which according to the dates on the letters could not have been the case.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Garrett to Mary Edmundson, Mar. 29, 1857, original at Haverford College, full text in McGowan, *Station Master*.

runaways cross the river by boat.<sup>46</sup> One Wilmingtonian who worked with Garrett to help escaping slaves was Joseph Walker, whose father was a black from the West Indies and whose mother was English or Scottish. Walker, who was in his fifties at the time, reputedly helped as many as 130 runaways out of Wilmington during one autumn. Walker was a laborer who lived at 827 Tatnall Street, near Girard.<sup>47</sup>

In May 1857 the Progressive Friends had their yearly meeting at Longwood, and Garrett was in attendance as usual. This meeting continued to emphasize the group's interest in the abolition of slavery, and its members continued to work toward that end. On June 4, 1857, shortly after this meeting, Tubman brought her parents to Garrett's house in Wilmington. At about the same time a group of slaves escaped from the jail in Dover, Delaware. Benjamin Ross, Tubman's father, assisted the slaves who escaped, and it may have been this event that finally persuaded him to seek his own freedom.<sup>48</sup> The story of this particular escape from slavery is a favorite one that appears in nearly all accounts of Tubman's life.

In his letter of August 11, 1857, to the Scottish benefactor Mary Edmundson, Garrett wrote that Tubman's father had to flee because he had sheltered the eight slaves who had earlier broken out of the Dover jail. The authorities were ready to arrest Ross when his own master secretly advised him of the danger. Ross's wife lived on another plantation, where Ross and Tubman went to get her. The parents were not able to walk long distances, so Tubman rigged a makeshift wagon by using a pair of wheels and an axle. She took them to the train, which by this time operated between southern Delaware and Wilmington. Tubman put her parents on the train and then made her own way to Wilmington on the makeshift wagon. When she and her parents met at Garrett's, he arranged for them to travel on to Canada together while he sold the horse and sent them the money. Garrett also provided them with additional money to help them make the rest of the trip.<sup>49</sup>

While Tubman is famous for this and other escapes, there were many other less well-known blacks who aided the escapes of slaves. In addition to Walker and Craig mentioned above, there were other free blacks who were important in the operations of the Underground Railroad. For example, only a few days after Tubman had left Wilmington with her

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Garrett to Mary Edmundson, Conlin and Desmond, "The Land of Boasted Freedom," makes reference to an addition to house.

<sup>47</sup> R. C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and Neighboring Counties of PA* (Lancaster, 1883), 243; Wilmington city directory, 1857.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Garrett to Mary Edmundson, Aug. 11, 1857, original at Haverford College, full text in McGowan, *Station Master*.

<sup>49</sup> This is probably the most repeated story of Harriet Tubman. It is documented in Garrett's letter to Mary Edmundson on Aug. 11, 1857, and in Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, 188.



FIGURE 5. John Hunn, a leading abolitionist in Delaware, helped runaway slaves from the South escape through Kent and lower New Castle counties (Still, *Underground Railroad*).

parents, Garrett wrote to Still that he had an old woman at Comegys Munson's. Munson was a black laborer who lived with Frisby Munson, another black laborer on French Street between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets. The escaped slave was to stay with Munson for a few days before he escorted her to Philadelphia.<sup>50</sup>

Severn Johnson was another free Wilmington black who assisted runaway slaves and worked with Garrett. Johnson, a laborer, lived on Buttonwood Street opposite Taylor Street. In September 1857 Johnson escorted a group of runaways from Wilmington to Philadelphia by train.

<sup>50</sup> Garrett mentioned Munson in his letter of Jun. 9, 1857, in Still, *Underground Railroad*, 394. See also Wilmington city directory, 1845.

These were evidently runaways brought by ship to Wilmington by Captain Fountain. Johnson lived conveniently close to the landing at Old Swedes, where Fountain was known to land.<sup>51</sup> Just a few months later Johnson is known to have escorted another group of runaways to Philadelphia by train, a trip he must have made many times.<sup>52</sup> Captain Fountain also made numerous deliveries of runaways to Wilmington.

Among the Quakers from Wilmington who, like the free blacks, aided runaways were two members of the Progressive Friends. The Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends at Longwood in 1858 found not only Garrett in attendance but also Edward Webb, mentioned above, and Isaac Flint. Flint regularly attended the Progressive Friends meetings and served on the committee on slavery. He was active in Underground Railroad activities in Wilmington and lived at 519 Market Street, where he had his greengrocer business.<sup>53</sup>

Garrett's correspondence indicates that he continued to be active in assisting runaways as they passed through Wilmington. There is no specific evidence that Tubman was in Wilmington between June 1857 and December 1860, but there has been some speculation that she collaborated with John Brown and participated in his famous raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859. There is no evidence that this was the case either. She was in Brown's confidence, however, and probably helped him with his plans.<sup>54</sup>

In late 1860 Harriet Tubman made her last rescue. She returned to Dorchester County to bring Stephen Ennets, his wife, Maria, and their three children out of slavery. On December 1, Garrett wrote to Still:

I write to let thee know that Harriet Tubman is again in these parts. She arrived last evening from one of her 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 a carriage to take them to Chester County. She said a man offered for the sum to bring them on. I shall be very uneasy about them, till 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

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Garrett to William Still, Sept. 6, 1857, in Still, *Underground Railroad*, 639. See also Wilmington city directory, 1857.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Garrett to William Still, Nov. 25, 1857, in Still, *Underground Railroad*, 640.

<sup>53</sup> Minutes of Progressive Friends Meeting; Wilmington city directory, 1859; and Siebert, *Underground Railroad*, list of people active in the Underground Railroad.

<sup>54</sup> Letter from F. B. Sanborn, quoted in Bradford, *Scenes*, 54.



FIGURE 6. Engraving from *Harper's Weekly* in 1864 of slaves escaping from Maryland's Eastern Shore (the collections of The Historical Society of Delaware).

two roads that they cannot well avoid more especially with carriages, yet as it is Harriet who seems to have had a special angel to guard her on her journey of mercy, I have hope.<sup>55</sup>

As the Civil War approached, the dangers increased for runaways and their rescuers. The fearless Garrett, now over seventy, persisted in his efforts, and the Maryland legislature proposed offering an award for his arrest for stealing slaves. Despite those pressures, the Progressive Meeting at Longwood continued its antislavery activities, with Garrett an active member. During the war Garrett continued to agitate against slavery and Tubman served as a scout and a nurse for the Union army. Garrett, by his own count, had assisted over 2,000 runaway slaves. Tubman may have made as many as nineteen journeys into the South. Thomas Garrett thought she had rescued 60 to 80 slaves, while Sarah Bradford thought the number was closer to 300. Bradford wrote that

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Garrett to William Still, Dec. 1, 1860, in Still, *Underground Railroad*, 530.

Tubman had made nineteen trips south, but Tubman herself could only recall eleven.<sup>56</sup>

Both Garrett and Tubman lived to see the abolition of slavery in the United States. Garrett died in 1871 and was carried to his burial at the Wilmington Friends Meeting by blacks who called him "Moses." Tubman, also called "Moses," died in 1913 in Auburn, New York, where she made her home. Their paths crossed at least eight times in Wilmington as they devoted themselves to their self-assigned mission of freeing slaves.

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<sup>56</sup> The accounts vary from one author to another and even from one witness to another. None of the accounts should be discredited. No contemporary account was written of the activities of the Underground Railroad and even after the Civil War the participants probably exercised some caution in discussing the subject.

Tom Sammes - Thought this article might  
help you with the Appoquinimink Meeting  
marker text - Madeline

# HISTORIC HOUSES AND BUILDINGS OF DELAWARE

*by*

HAROLD DONALDSON EBERLEIN

*and*

CORTLANDT V. D. HUBBARD

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Dover, Delaware, 1963

After William Corbit's death, his youngest son, Daniel, succeeded him in the ownership of the house. He gave up the tannery when tanbark gave out and turned his attention to the land, adding farm after farm to his estate. "It was a real joy to him," it was said, "to take a poor, untidy farm and by clearing, draining, hedging and fertilising, make it beautiful." His farm practice was an wholesome stimulus to Delaware agriculture as well as a source of wealth to himself.

The last member of the Corbit family to live in the house was Daniel Wheeler Corbit, "Mr. Dan," as he was popularly called, who died in 1922. In 1938 the property was sold to H. Rodney Sharp who punctiliously restored it, furnished the house with admirable eighteenth-century furniture, and preserved it as a small private museum. In 1958 Mr. Sharp presented the Corbit House to the Winterthur Corporation "to maintain as a house museum and to develop an educational programme centred around it." The Corbit House will thus afford future generations a picture of Delaware life in the eighteenth century.

Some years ago Mr. Sharp had already created a fine, appropriate garden south of the house. Now that all the neighbouring buildings have been restored and some additional landscaping carried out, the house "has a setting in keeping with its dignity and importance."\*

### APPOQUINIMINK MEETING HOUSE

*At west limits of Odessa on State Route 299.*

David Wilson built the little brick Odessa Meeting House in 1780, as testified by the inconspicuous marble tablet above the doorway. It is probably the smallest Meeting House ever built, it measures only about twenty by twenty feet. In the division between the Orthodox and Hicksite Friends in 1828, the Odessa Meeting House fell to the Hicksites, and the Orthodox Friends attended meeting elsewhere. There were very few Hicksites in Odessa and, at last, they were represented by only one old gentleman, John Alston.

Every First Day he would walk up the street, unlock the Meeting House door, go in and hold a "meeting" all by himself. After sitting for a while in meditation, he would come out, lock the door and go home. After his death, about 1880, the Meeting House was closed for a long time. It is now open again on Sunday mornings for worship.

The Hicksites at Odessa were ardent Abolitionists and used the little Meeting House as a station of the Underground Railroad. They hid runaway slaves from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia in the Meeting House loft, and fed them there until it seemed safe to send them on their way North.

### OLD DRAWYERS CHURCH

*On west side of U.S. Route 13, about a mile north of Odessa*

Old Drawyers Church, on an abrupt rise above the waters of Drawyers Creek, is a highly significant structure both historically and architecturally. The seventeenth-century beginnings of Old Drawyers' story are wrapped in the mists of uncertainty. A former pastor and historian of the church said "the field of this congregation began to be settled about 1671, and at various points and rapidly settled." He also wrote that "the Drawyers congregation was probably gathered by the Reverend Nathaniel Taylor, long previous to 1700.

We get away from all conjecture in 1708. In that year, the Presbytery at Philadelphia, in response to a letter from "some persons about Apoquinimy," directed the Reverend John Wilson, then the Minister at New Castle, to preach "once a month on a week day" to the "persons about Apoquinimy" who had written seeking pastoral ministrations. In 1709, the Reverend John Wilson was directed to add to the programme a sermon "once a quarter on Sunday."

\*In his book *Grandeur on the Appoquinimink; the House of William Corbit at Odessa, Delaware*, John A. H. Sweeney has fully treated the family history and relationships of William Corbit; he has also traced his business career and commercial connections. Along with this personal, biographical study of the builder of one of the two finest houses in Delaware, Mr. Sweeney has considered every stage in the evolution of the house from start to finish. In doing so, he has unearthed a store of hitherto unknown material about Robert May, to whose genius must be ascribed the creation of the Corbit House. Mr. Sweeney's book is a highly valuable contribution (1) to the records of eighteenth-century social history in Delaware and likewise (2) to the history of domestic architecture in America.



The State of Delaware  
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs,  
The Harriet Tubman Historical Society  
and

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting  
cordially invite you to attend the  
dedication ceremony of the

**Historical Marker for  
Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House,  
a Station on the Underground Railroad**



**Thursday, March 10, 1994**

**Harriet Tubman Day**

**at 12:00 Noon.**



Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House  
is located on Main Street,  
in Odessa, Delaware.



The Harriet Tubman Historical Society  
P.O. Box 146  
Wilmington, DE 19899  
(302) 762-8010



## Programme

Harriet Tubman Day, March 10, 1994  
Odessa, Delaware

Presentation of the Colors ..... *Delaware National Guard*  
Sgt. FFC James Lee

Selection: *Battle Hymn of the Republic* ..... *by Julia Ward Howe*  
Tune: *John Brown's Body*  
Middletown High School Band  
David Harris, Director

Greetings ..... *Vivian Abdur-Rahim*  
*Howard Parker*

Remarks ..... *Officials/Guests*  
Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

*Com. In dedication, this official State Historic Marker*  
**Unveiling Ceremony**  
Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House  
Odessa, Delaware, 1875  
*we are recognizing both our heritage & your sacrifice effort & courage*

"At Odessa, Delaware, the slaves often stayed at the Friends Meeting House on the south side of Main Street. It was a plain brick structure about twenty feet square, with a pitch roof and pent eaves across the gable ends. This roof covered a loft in which the blacks hid." (pg. 57, A Biography of Harriet Tubman by Earl Conrad)

"The Appoquinimink Meeting House is said to have been a station on the Underground Railroad. A member of the meeting, John Hunn, owned the farm to the west and was arrested with Thomas Garrett for harboring runaway slaves." (Friends in Odessa)

"John Alston, who died 25th of ninth month, 1874, for a long while attended it regularly, mostly alone. John Alston was a devoted friend of the slave, and an agent on the Underground Railroad." (T. Chalkley Matlack)

We commemorate the Underground Railroad participants throughout the State of Delaware.

Selection: *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* ..... in memory of Harriet Ross Tubman  
One of the most courageous women in history

Dedicatory Prayer ..... Silent Prayer  
"Those whom we honor today had to work in silence in order for their work to succeed. The conductors, and those who were conducted on the Underground Railroad both adults and children, learned to be silent for hours at a time, thus it seems fitting that the dedicatory prayer be after the manner of Friends or Quakers, to commemorate the silent work of the past."

Presentation of Marker ..... *Thomas Summers*  
Daniel Griffith, Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs  
State of Delaware

Closing Remarks ..... *Patricia A. Lewis*

### Thanks To:

James M. Baker, Wilmington Civil Rights Commission  
Dennis E. Greenhouse, New Castle County Executive  
Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Senator William Roth  
Charles L. Blockson, Consultant  
Dr. James E. Newton, Exhibit Display

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Howard Parker                  | Vivian Abdur-Rahim |
| Mr. & Mrs. Will Passmore       | Patricia A. Lewis  |
| Paulette de la Veaux           | Bilal Rahim        |
| Mayor James Martin, Odessa, DE | Ada Wanamaker      |
| Middletown High School Band    |                    |
| David Harris, Director         |                    |

Acknowledgments ..... *Telephone Messages*  
State Senator James Vaughn  
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Marquetta I. Goodwine, Vibes of Afrika, Brooklyn, NY

**Text of the Historical Marker for  
Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House,  
a Station on the Underground Railroad**

One of the smallest Quaker Meeting Houses in the nation, Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was built in 1785. Quakers, or Friends, were known for their strong feelings against slavery. Local Quakers used the Meeting as a station on the Underground Railroad. Free Africans and abolitionists of many faiths cooperated to make the Underground Railroad a safe passageway to freedom for people enslaved. Among the station masters, conductors, and helpers were Harrit Tubman, Thomas Garrett, John Alston, William Still, Samuel D. Burris, John Hunn and Patrick Holland.

The Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House was place on the National Register of Historical Places in 1972.

The State of Delaware Division of Historical  
and Cultural Affairs,

The Harriet Tubman Historical Society

and

Appoquinimink Friends Meeting

cordially invite you to attend the

dedication ceremony of the

**Historical Marker for**

**Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House,**

**a Station on the Underground Railroad,**

**Monday, February 14, 1994**

**at 12:00 Noon.**



Appoquinimink Friends Meeting House

is located on Main Street,

in Odessa, Delaware.



RSVP

The Harriet Tubman Historical Society

(302) 762-8010