

MARYLAND
BYWAYS

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad

18



Along a secret network of trails, waterways and sanctuaries known as the Underground Railroad, enslaved people fled north out of Southern states to escape bondage. For them, the Civil War couldn't end quickly enough, and the thirst for freedom far outweighed the dangers involved with trudging across strange lands, trusting no one and yet often counting on the selfless kindness of strangers. Maryland is a state rich with African-American heritage but was often torn during the 19th century by divided opinions concerning the institution of slavery. Here you can learn more about these freedom seekers.

This Eastern Shore byway follows a mostly northern path across a landscape that has changed little in the last century and a half. It allows you

to better understand the stories of the Underground Railroad, many of them as told by local anti-slavery activists who risked their own lives to aid their fellow Americans.

Cambridge to East New Market – Maryland Avenue, Race Street (MD 341), MD 16, MD 335, Key Wallace Drive, Greenbrier Road, Bucktown Road, MD 16, US 50, MD 16

The starting point for your Underground Railroad journey is the Visitors Center at Sailwinds Park, found just off the east end of the U.S. 50 Bridge in Cambridge and remember to pick up a copy of the Finding a Way to Freedom brochure. Easily distinguishable by the large sail canopy stretched over the building, the visitor center is in the Heart of



144 miles from Cambridge to Greensboro

Chesapeake Country Heritage Area and a Chesapeake Bay Gateway, which provides information about, and ready access to, both the Choptank Riverfront and the history of Cambridge.



Travel across the Cambridge Creek to a courthouse building, constructed in 1854, that was the scene of slave auctions, escapes, trials and convictions, which are told on a large interpretive sign. Along a scenic walk

within the Cambridge National Historic District is the Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center. Nicknamed "The Moses of her People" for her courageous work as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, it has been documented that Tubman helped more than 70 enslaved people reach freedom. Follow MD 341 south to MD 16 west, where you will find the Stanley Institute, a one-room, African-American school established by the Freedmen's Bureau shortly after the Civil War. Continue out to Stewart's Canal,

which was dug by slaves to move timber to market. Next, enter Church Creek, which served as a major pre-Civil War shipbuilding center, employing both black and white workers. An interpretive marker is on the site.

A Taylors Island Branch of this byway runs west on MD 16 toward the Chesapeake Bay, passing the late-17th-century Old Trinity Church and the town of Madison, where Tubman labored for several years. Along the way, you will pass Stewart's canal that was laboriously dug by enslaved people to move timber to market. Returning east on 16, then south on MD 335, you link into the Chesapeake Country byway (page 139) while traveling beside the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Among Blackwater's many nature-viewing and outdoor recreational

opportunities is the two-mile Tubman Road Hiking Trail, which incorporates the remains of a homestead established in the 1600s.

Continue to Greenbrier Road and look for a roadside pull off where an interpretive marker notes the approximate location of Harriet Tubman's early life on the Brodess Farm. Then head for the Bucktown Village Store, which is where a teenaged Tubman was said to have been struck by an overseer while allowing a slave to avoid capture. As a result, she was disabled for months and suffered from spells of "unexpected sleep" for the rest of her life. Guided historic and nature tours are offered here, along with bike, canoe and kayak rentals. Nearby is Bazzel Methodist Episcopal Church, which has long celebrated Tubman's memory and serves



as a place where "pilgrims" congregate.

Branching south of Bucktown, drive to historic, single-lane Bestpitch Ferry Bridge and look out at a landscape that is mostly unchanged since the mid-19th century. A little farther along is the Fishing Bay Wildlife Management Area, with its many water trails and unspoiled scenery.

Now head north, having completed the Cambridge loop, before following US 50

and MD 16 into East New Market. Veer onto MD 14 to find Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. Located near an old train station, Mt. Zion was built in 1880 on land that had been deeded five decades earlier to a group of seven African-American trustees. Among these was Samuel Green, a free black farmer and Underground Railroad conductor.

East New Market to Goldsboro – MD 16, Grove Road, MD 578, MD 16, MD 331, MD 313, MD 287

Visit a historic gristmill at Linchester, east of Preston, where employed free and enslaved African Americans worked side by side. The roots of peace-loving Quakers also run deep in this area, as you can see the home of abolitionist Jacob Leverton and then visit the site of a Quaker meet-

ing house (now Mt. Pleasant Cemetery) that is believed to have been an Underground Railroad station. A subsequent sidetrack on this byway's Poplar Neck Loop, which was home to Tubman's parents, reveals stunning scenery, culminating in a view of the Choptank River from a small waterfront park. The story is told of a man named Josiah Bailey who rowed past this point to meet Harriet Tubman before fleeing into Canada.

Head north on MD 16, to Potters Landing, which served as a crossing place for slaves heading north. Your journey likewise continues north, taking you through Martinak State Park. Experience the excellent camping, fishing and boating here before entering Denton, which contains several relevant sites. There's the



Courthouse Square, former site of a slave market and jail where Underground Railroad conductors were held; the Tuckahoe Neck Meeting House, built in 1803 and linked to the Underground Railroad network; and the Museum of Rural Life, which includes an Underground Railroad exhibit.

Frederick Douglass, the famous orator and statesman, began his autobiography, "I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about 12 miles from Easton." From Denton, you can follow a western branch of this byway to the Tuckahoe River, and see where Douglass embarked on an amazing journey through Annapolis, Baltimore, St. Michaels and other points along the bay, finally escaping from slavery to become an abolitionist leader. Though Douglass wrote that he never approved

of the "very public manner" in which the Underground Railroad was run, he applauded the determination and "noble daring" displayed by its conductors.

At this point, you have the option of linking into the Chesapeake Country Byway. Otherwise, follow MD 313 into the historic towns of Greensboro and Goldsboro. Picking up MD 287 allows you to head east into Delaware, where other Underground Railroad sites await in rural villages like Sandtown, Willow Grove, Star Hill and Camden.

OLD LINE LORE: *Underground Railroad conductor Samuel Green was pastor of a church in East New Market through the 1850s until being imprisoned in 1857 for possessing a copy of the Harriet Beecher Stowe novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Stowe, in fact, based the character*

of Uncle Tom on Josiah Henson, a Southern Maryland man who himself became an author after escaping slavery.

Adkins Arboretum

12610 Eveland Rd
Ridgely, 21660
410-634-2847
www.adkinsarboretum.org

Bazzel Methodist Episcopal Church

Bestpitch Ferry Road
410-228-0401
Cambridge, 21613
www.intercom.net/npo/tubman/bazzel.htm

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

2145 Key Wallace Dr, 21613
410-228-2677
www.fws.gov/blackwater

Bucktown Village Store

4303 Bucktown Rd
Cambridge, 21613
410-228-7650

Fishing Bay Wildlife Management Area

4220 Steele Neck Rd
Vienna, 21869
410-376-3236
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/eastern/fishingbay.html

Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center

424 Race St
Cambridge, 21613
410-228-0401

Martinak State Park

137 Deep Shore Rd
Denton, 21629
410-479-1619
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/eastern/martinak.html

Museum of Rural Life

16 N 2nd St
Denton, 21629
410-479-2055
www.carolinehistory.org

Stanley Institute

2400 Church Creek Rd
Cambridge, 21613
410-228-6657

Visitors Center at Sailwinds Park

East end of U.S. 50 Bridge,
Cambridge
1-800-522-8687