

Stories of Flight from Maryland



FLEE!

"In every man's mind the good seeds of liberty are planted." - Henry Highland Garnett

This document packet explores previously unknown stories of slaveowners, fugitives, and accomplices to show how slavery and flights to freedom shaped the lives of all Marylanders. The Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses emerged as a clandestine, organized system to assist runaway slaves in their escape from slavery. Abolitionists and allies sympathetic to the anti-slavery cause often aided fugitives on their flight to freedom. Thus, the Underground Railroad influenced many individuals: enslaved and free, and black and white. Runaway slaves looked to friends, family, and strangers for assistance. Simultaneously though, slaveowners and pro-slavery advocates worked to capture escapees for financial gain and to preserve the institution they knew.

Maryland's economy was dependent on slavery. Slaveholders in Maryland used slaves to cultivate wheat and tobacco, or to perform domestic work and skilled labor. Slaveowners saw their slaves as property, sources of revenue, status symbols, and important investments. They also viewed slaves as dangerous threats who

needed to be controlled. Owners feared that escaped slaves would encourage others to rebel or runaway. When slaves escaped, slaveowners often ran advertisements in the local paper to alert the authorities and slaveowners occasionally punished the slaves left behind.

Fugitive slaves in Maryland often fled without knowing whom they could trust. Runaway slaves sometimes received help from relatives and friends, and they sought shelter in cities like Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Some escapes were timed with holidays or periods when absences were more likely to go unnoticed, and some slaves fled multiple times. They could be captured by slave catchers for large rewards, and the risk of escape was grave. Free and enslaved blacks, as well as sympathetic whites assisted runaway slaves by offering refuge - a place to stay, sustenance, money, travel advice, and legal assistance. Accomplices risked ostracism, imprisonment, and death. Fugitive slave laws required all citizens to report runaways to authorities. People who "enticed" slaves to escape or aided fugitives could receive years in prison or crippling fines.

All slaves in Maryland were freed by the state's Constitution of 1864 and a new chapter opened for African Americans. The fate of many fugitives and former slaves is unknown. Some fugitives settled in the North, while others returned to Maryland to live near family members or to find work. A few, like Harriet Tubman and sisters Emily and Mary Edmonson, remain well-known today. Some stories of fugitive slaves were published in narratives, which give a more intimate account of the experience of enslavement, the details of flight, and life after slavery.

U.S. History Content Standards

Materials compiled in this document can be used by educators to fulfill the following [United States History Content Standards](#)

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1864)

Standard 2: *How the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.*

Standard 2b: *The student understands the first era of American urbanization.*

7-12 - Explain the growth of free African American communities in the cities and account for the rise of racial hostility.

Standard 2d: *The student understands the first era of American urbanization.*

5-12 - Explain the growth of free African American communities in the cities and account for the rise of racial hostility.

5-12 - Identify the various ways in which African Americans resisted the conditions of their enslavement and analyze the consequences of violent uprisings

Standard 4: *The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period*

Standard 4a: *The student understands the abolitionist movement.*

7-12 - Analyze changing ideas about race and assess the reception of proslavery and antislavery ideologies in the North and South

9-12 - Compare the positions of African American and white abolitionists on the issue of the African American's place in society.

Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)

Standard 1: *The causes of the Civil War*

Standard 1a: *The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.*

5-12 - Explain the causes of the Civil War and evaluate the importance of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict

Standard 2: *The course and character of the Civil War and its effects on the American people.*

Standard 2b: *The student understands the social experience of the war on the battlefield and homefront.*

7-12 - Compare the motives for fighting and the daily life experiences of Confederate with those of white and African American Union soldiers

Standard 3: *How various reconstruction plans succeeded or failed*

Standard 3b: *The student understands the Reconstruction programs to transform social relations in the South*

7-12 - Describe the ways in which African Americans laid foundations for modern black communities during Reconstruction

Maryland State Content Standards

Materials compiled in this document can be used by educators to fulfill the following [Maryland Social Studies Standards](#) for Grades 4 and 8.

Grade 4 - Standard 5.0

Topic C. Conflict between ideas and institutions

Indicator 4. Analyze how the institution of slavery impacted individuals and groups in Maryland.

Objective b. Describe the anti-slavery movement in Maryland

Objective c. Describe the growth of the Underground Railroad

Grade 8 - Standard 5.0


Topic C. Conflict between ideas and institutions

Indicator 4. Analyze the institution of slavery and its influence on societies in the United States

Objective a. Describe pro-slavery and anti-slavery positions and explain how debates over slavery influenced politics and sectionalism

Objective b. Analyze the experiences of African-American slaves, and free blacks

Maryland State Common Core Reading Standards

Materials compiled in this document can be used by educators to fulfill the following [Maryland Common Core Reading Standards](#)  for Grades 6-8:

CCR Anchor Standard #1 - Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

RH.6-8.1 - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources

CCR Anchor Standard #2 - Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

RH.6-8.2- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge of opinions

CCR Anchor Standard #3 - Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of text.

RH.6-8.3- Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCR Anchor Standard #4 - Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

RH.6-8.4- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies



CCR Anchor Standard #6 - Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

RH.6-8.6- Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)

CCR Anchor Standard #8 - Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

RH.6-8.8- Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text

Primary Resources

1. Title: [Twenty-eight fugitives escaping from the Eastern Shore of Maryland](#)
Creator: William Still, 1872.
Description: A print of fugitives escaping from Maryland in William Still's book *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts...*
Source: New York Public Library, Digital Gallery
Repository: New York Public Library, New York.
2. Title: ["\\$50 Reward."](#) 
Description: Runaway Advertisement for Benjamin Duckett
Notes: Zachariah Berry owned Benjamin Duckett, a 25-year-old black man along with other slaves that labored on his plantation. As he developed his property, "Bellmont," Berry dealt with numerous flight attempts by his slaves; Benjamin Duckett escaped in September 1856. Shortly after, Berry placed an advertisement in a local paper, describing Duckett's appearance vividly.
Source: *Planters Advocate*, October 1, 1856.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
3. Title: [Rixom Webb](#) 

Description: A tax list recorded in 1846 lists the property owned by an African American man, Rixom Webb; strikingly it includes one slave, a young girl.

Notes: [View Transcription](#) 

Source: Caroline County Levy Court (Tax List), 1846.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

4. Title: ["\\$5 Reward."](#)

Description: Runaway advertisement for negro boy, Alfred.

Notes: Rixom Webb placed an advertisement in a local paper for a slave boy who had escaped from his farm on April 24, 1844. Webb offered a description and said there was a possibility the boy would be fleeing to Cambridge to his mother.

Source: *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 27, 1844.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

5. Title: ["Sixteen Dollars Reward."](#)

Description: Runaway advertisement for Charles and Patrick Mahoney.

Notes: John Ashton submitted an advertisement to the paper to run for 3 weeks in search of his runaway slaves, Charles and Patrick Mahoney. He described them as two mulatto fellows pretending to be set free.

Source: *Maryland Gazette*, January 8, 1798.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

6. Title: ["Twelve Pounds Reward."](#)

Description: Runaway advertisement for Simon, Billy, Jack, Lewis, Isaac, Paul, Matthew and Tom, very black negroes, Tom, Billy, Nick, and Fanny of a brown complexion.

Notes: John Ashton ran an advertisement for twelve slaves who escaped from his possession. He lists each slave's name individually, but also refers to them as the "Queens." Ashton offered a reward of twenty shillings for each slave.

Source: *Maryland Gazette*, May 7, 1795.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

7. Title: ["Fifty Dollars Reward."](#)

Description: Runaway advertisement for Ben, a mulatto boy about 18 years old.

Notes: Tilghman Hilliary ran an advertisement for his escaped slave, Ben. Hilliary highlights that their home was just six miles from Bladensburg, in Prince George's County and he states that Ben's countenance changes when spoken to.

Source: *Frederick Town Herald*, July 18, 1812.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

8. Title: ["\\$100 Dollars Reward."](#)

Description: Runaway advertisement for Tilghman Hilleary's escaped slave, Ben Orme.

Notes: Hillery placed an advertisement in a local paper for a slave that had escaped from his property. He describes "Ben" as a young mulatto, 5'6 or 5'7, with striped pantaloons. Hilleary believes Ben may have changed and that he generally goes by the full name Ben Orme, claiming to be the son of a white man named William.

Source: *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 28, 1815.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

9. Title: [Cochrane Proclamation](#)







Creator: Vice Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane

Description: Broadside released on April 2, 1814 offering immediate emancipation to any person willing to take up arms and join the colonial marines.

Notes: The proclamation also included the families of any person who joined the colonial marines and settled in British colonies. Upwards of 700 slaves from Maryland took this opportunity to seek freedom, including a group of 21 slaves that fled from Annapolis.

Source: ADM/1/508/folio 579

Repository: National Archives, London, England.

10. Title: ["Twenty Dollars Reward"](#)
Description: Runaway advertisement placed in the newspaper for two indentured apprentices who escaped from their owner near Fell's Point, in Baltimore.
Notes: William Williams is searching for William Little, a 17-year-old white boy and Henry H. Smith, a 21-year-old bright mulatto. Both boys were indentured to him and he is afraid that Henry has enticed said William Little away. Williams describes their clothing and personalities.
Source: *Daily National Intelligencer*, September 20, 1832.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
11. Title: [Petition to Free Ann Matthews](#) 
Creator: Citizens of Baltimore City
Description: A petition written to Governor Thomas asking for the pardon of Ann Matthews. Those signing the petition ask for mercy despite the severe charge against Matthews because as they say she is "advanced in life," and imprisonment will be difficult for her physically. They also evoke emotion when mentioning Matthews' daughter.
Notes: [View Transcription](#) 
Source: Secretary of State (Pardon Papers), 1837-1947, MSA S1031-6.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
12. Title: [Petition Against Ann Matthews](#) 
Creator: Property holders and others of the city of Baltimore
Description: The undersigned citizens recommend to the governor that Ann Matthews not be pardoned. They state that she was a terror to her neighbors and of bad character. They ask that the governor allow the law to take its proper course with respect to Matthews.
Notes: [View Transcription](#) 
Source: Secretary of State (Pardon Papers), 1837-1947, MSA S1031-6.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
13. Title: [Pardon Note Signed by Governor Philip Francis Thomas](#) 
Creator: Governor Thomas
Description: Pardon for Ann Matthews.
Source: Secretary of State (Pardon Papers), 1837-1947, MSA S1031-6.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
14. Title: [Portrait of Governor Philip Francis Thomas](#)
Notes: Thomas was Governor of Maryland from 1848-1851. A local Marylander, born in Easton, he attended Dickinson College and practiced law. He was a Democrat and active in local politics. He was often supportive of slavery, believing that the states should manage the institution individually.
Source: Special Collections (Comptrollers of the Treasury Photographic Collection), MSA SC5161-1-1.
Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.
15. Title: ["One Hundred Dollars Reward."](#)
Description: Runaway advertisement for Cinderella who escaped from George F. Worthington.
Notes: Edward H. Brown, Worthington's overseer submits an advertisement for a 22 or 24-year-old negro girl named Cinderella who ran away. Brown described her physical condition and gives detail about her husband Abram Brogden, who lived in Baltimore.
Source: *Baltimore Sun*, December 23, 1848.
Repository: ProQuest Historical Newspaper: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988).
16. Title: ["Pardon Record for Abraham Brogden."](#) 
Creator: Governor E. Louis Lowe
Description: Governor Lowe issues a pardon for Abraham Brogden, calling for his immediate release from imprisonment.
Notes: Governor Lowe pardoned Brogden on May 23, 1851. He had received a petition from several citizens for the pardon of Abraham Brogden, a black man convicted in Anne Arundel County of enticing a slave to run away. (That slave was his wife, Cinderella).

Source: Secretary of State (Pardon Record), Abraham Brogden, May 23, 1851, folio 121, MSA S1108-2.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

17. Title: ["A Female Conductor of the Underground Railroad."](#)

Description: A brief article describing Harriet Tubman's appearance at a Woman's Rights Convention in Boston.

Notes: The note describes Tubman's travels South and her life as a conductor, bringing her parents and many others to freedom. They misspell her name as Tupman.

Source: Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, June 5, 1860.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

18. Title: [Photograph of Robert Riley.](#)

Description: Photograph of U.S. Colored Troop Veteran Robert Riley, around 1880.

Notes: Riley was born a slave in Queen Anne's County, Maryland around April 1837; he belonged to a man named Valentine B. Clements. Upon his service in the 7th U.S. Colored Troop Regiment, Riley was manumitted. After the war, Riley worked as a farm laborer, living in Centreville and around Baltimore. He eventually received a pension from the government for his military service and was an active member of a local Grand Army of the Republic Post.

Source: Carolyn C. Williams Collection of Robert Riley Papers.

Repository: Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

Secondary Resources

Brugger, Robert J. *Maryland: A Middle Temperament 1634-1980*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Fields, Barbara Jeanne. *Slavery and Freedom on Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Franklin, John Hope and Loren Schweninger. *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation, 1790-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Maryland State Archives. *A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland*. Annapolis, MD, 2007.

Phillips, Christopher. *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore 1790-1860*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

Ricks, Mary Kay. *Escape on the Pearl: The Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2007.

Whitman, Stephen. *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

Associated Heritage and Preservation Organizations

[National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom](#)

[Belvoir](#)

Copyright and Other Restrictions

Access to materials linked within these document packets is intended for educational and research purposes. The written permission of the copyright owners and/or holders of other rights (such as publicity and privacy rights) is required for distribution, reproduction, or other use beyond that allowed by fair use or other statutory exemptions. The responsibility for making an independent legal assessment and independently securing any necessary rights rests with persons desiring to use particular items in the context of the intended use.

Credits

Documents for the Classroom is a collaborative partnership of the Maryland State Archives and the Center for History Education (CHE), University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), and the following sponsoring school systems: Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Baltimore City Public School System, Baltimore County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools, Caroline County Public Schools and Howard County Public Schools.

Other program partners include the Maryland Historical Society, State Library Resource Center/Enoch Pratt Free Library, with assistance from the National Archives and Records Administration and the Library of Congress.

Research completed with funding from the National Park Service Network to Freedom grant program.

The document packet was researched and developed by Allison Seyler based on the Flee! Traveling Exhibit created by the Legacy of Slavery in Maryland Research team and accessible on the [Legacy of Slavery in Maryland website](#).

© Copyright Maryland State Archives
