

64500934

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts 1783-1865

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Kathryn Grover and Neil Larson, Preservation Consultants, with Betsy Friedberg and Michael Steinitz, MHC, Paul Weinbaum and Tara Morrison, NPS
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2005
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director 7/17/05
Signature and title of certifying official for Cara H. Metz, State Historic Preservation Officer Date

Massachusetts Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Patricia W. Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

9/2/2005
Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheet in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

Page Numbers

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.) **pp. 1-91**

F. Associated Property Types

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

pp. 92-112

G. Geographical Data

p. 113

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

pp. 114-117

I. Major Bibliographical References

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

pp. 118-122

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other

Name of repository:

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 1

Section E

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN MASSACHUSETTS:
STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT*Purpose*

This context statement aims to assist in identifying extant historic resources associated with the presence, movement, and assistance of fugitives from American slavery in Massachusetts and in understanding them in historical, social, and cultural context. It is also designed to help individuals preparing nominations of Underground Railroad resources to the National Register of Historic Places and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Scope

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program defines the Underground Railroad as the efforts of enslaved African Americans to gain their freedom by escaping bondage. Although generalizations are risky because local studies are few and narratives exist for only a handful of fugitives, the narratives of fugitives and fugitive assistants appear to indicate great variability in these efforts. Some fugitives accomplished their flight from slavery largely or entirely without assistance; others received assistance from people of color and whites both in the South and in the North. In addition, the efforts of enslaved persons to escape were sometimes highly orchestrated, developed over months or even years; in other instances they were spontaneous decisions taken in response to events in their lives over which they had no control.

In this context the term "*fugitive*," used often in the antebellum period, denotes any enslaved person of color who sought to escape from slavery to the free states of the northern states of the United States or in Canada. The term "*fugitive assistant*" designates any person, North or South, who willingly helped fugitives in any way—by transporting them in vessels, wagons, or other conveyances; by sheltering them in homes or outbuildings; by providing them employment; by providing food, clothing, or medical aid; by helping to fund their journeys; by providing directions and/or letters of introduction to other fugitive assistants; or by accompanying them in some part of their flight.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number E Page 2

This context also discusses two Federal laws that were designed to curb the escape of fugitives and circumscribe the actions of those who assisted them. The first was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, which was based on Section 2 of Article 4 of the U.S. Constitution and was superseded by the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. It stated, "No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due." In practice, any claimant of a fugitive or agent of a claimant had only to testify that the person apprehended was the person sought; alleged fugitives were denied the right to a jury trial, and anyone who harbored those persons were obliged to pay a fine of five hundred dollars. Nothing in the law, however, prohibited such states as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania from attempting to countermand the edict by passing what were termed "personal liberty laws," which in some instances mandated trial by jury and required written documentation of enslaved status and ownership.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was far more coercive and punitive. Signed by President Millard Fillmore as part of the Compromise of 1850 on 18 September 1850, it required state and federal officials to play a role in enforcing the law. Fugitive claimants and agents did have to secure an affidavit attesting their ownership and to seek a warrant from a federal commissioner for their arrest and rendition. However, these commissioners were authorized to enlist the aid of anyone to enforce the law; fugitives were still denied the right of trial by jury and could not testify in their own behalf. Any law officer who failed to cooperate with Federal officials and any citizen who obstructed a fugitive arrest or concealed a fugitive were liable to heavy fines as well as imprisonment. A Federal hearing in which a commissioner presided determined the validity of ownership, and no appeal of the ruling was permitted.

Defining the Underground Railroad

The term "*underground railroad*" was understood and used in its time, both by fugitives and fugitive assistants. Thomas Smallwood, an African American man who worked in Washington, D.C., with Massachusetts native Charles Turner Torrey to assist enslaved Virginians en route to freedom, wrote in his narrative, "The origin of this technicality, *underground railroad*, is supposed to be this,—a number of slaves would sometimes disappear from a neighbourhood in the course of a single night of whom no trace could be obtained until they were entirely out of the reach of their astonished owners, which

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 3

led them to exclaim, that, 'the Negroes had a railroad under the ground.'"¹ In 1869, fugitive assistant Samuel J. May described the Underground Railroad as persons opposed to slavery "scattered throughout all slaveholding states" who knew or had "taken pains to find" others "at convenient distances northward" who felt similarly; these persons were in turn connected to others "still further North" and on "to the very borders of Canada," May wrote. "Furnished at first with written 'passes,' as from their masters, and afterwards with letters of introduction from one friend to another, we had reason to believe that a large proportion of those who, in this way, attempted to escape from slavery were successful. Twenty thousand at least found homes in Canada, and hundreds ventured to remain this side of the Lakes." May had been the general agent and corresponding secretary for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in the mid- to late 1830s, and by his own testimony had sent fugitives from his Brooklyn, Connecticut, home to that of Effingham Capron in Uxbridge, Massachusetts (not extant), before moving his sphere of activity to Syracuse, New York, in 1845.²

The term also signified in its time that this loosely organized network of fugitive system was hidden from view and clandestine; the term "underground" had signified as much for centuries. While no one has ever defined the Underground Railroad in literal terms—that is, as fugitives escaping to the North on a subterranean railroad system—scholars over the past forty years have debated how analogous the overall mode of fugitive assistance was to the nation's railroad network. Was the Underground Railroad a system of regular routes that could be mapped, as Ohio State University historian Wilbur Siebert construed it in 1898 and in several state monographs in the 1930s? Or was it instead the case, as Larry Gara argued in 1961, that there was "no centralized organization" and "only a semblance of organized underground railroad activity in certain localities. . . . no 'deep-laid' scheme to run away the slaves. Rather it was a matter of a relatively small number of energetic individuals who organized vigilance committees and local underground railroad service."³ Primary sources, including many cited in this context statement, indicate that while the Underground Railroad was clearly not a centralized system, it does appear to have been more than "local underground railroad service." Recent scholarship has demonstrated that far-flung connections existed throughout the Atlantic coastal states, and, though they fell far short of forming a centralized operation, they may properly be understood as a extensive series of largely unconnected networks covering regions of varying extents and linked internally by like sociopolitical notions, kinship, friendship, religious affiliation, and/or other factors. However, the Underground Railroad did not operate entirely, or perhaps even mostly, in

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 4

this way: given the vast number of escapes that are wholly undocumented, it is possible that most occurred outside the knowledge and grasp of the networks, however formally or informally organized.

The railroad analogy has fostered the impression that the pattern of Underground Railroad activity was more regular and systematic—as well as more nationwide—than most recent research in the field has indicated. For that reason, this context uses the term “fugitive harbors” in preference to the term “stations.”⁴ The analogy has hindered Underground Railroad studies in two other respects. First, the use of the term “underground” has placed undue emphasis and interest on tunnels and cellar spaces as possible fugitive hiding spaces (Recent scholarship on this question will be presented in the architectural context of this statement.). Second, as John Vlach has pointed out, “The heroism of African Americans is diminished by the use of railroad metaphors which divert most of the attention to ‘conductors’ and their ‘stations.’” The tendency to emphasize those white abolitionists who assisted fugitives in their escapes has been overwhelming since the first secondary accounts of the Underground Railroad appeared in print after the Civil War, Siebert’s being the most influential among them.⁵ Larry Gara was the first to correct this trend in Underground Railroad research where the fugitives played “a secondary role” to the abolitionists. In the preface to the 1996 edition of his book, Gara has asserted that this “oversimplified picture of helpless fugitives being carried, literally, to freedom” persists. Vlach has argued that those who study the Underground Railroad must view it as “a user-determined system.”

All those who took part in this lengthy and wide-spread expression of civil disobedience, both the runaways and their helpers, risked beatings, imprisonment, and other penalties. The Underground Railroad was, first of all, a community of conscience. While considerable courage was required of all who were involved, it was the runaway slaves who were most vulnerable and whose actions should be judged as the most valiant.⁶

Historians since Gara have also helped to revise two other earlier ideas about the Underground Railroad, both of which will be described in more detail in this study. First is the understanding of abolitionism, and more specifically fugitive assistance, as a minority reform movement in antebellum American society. Second, people of color in the South—both enslaved and free—and in the North—both fugitive and free—were critical assistants. Based on primary evidence known to date, it appears that people of

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 5

color were largely responsible for sheltering fugitives who came to Massachusetts and in many instances for finding work for them. The records of the Vigilance Committee of Boston amply document that fugitives were boarded in the homes of that city's community of color. With a letter of introduction from the New York Vigilance Committee's black secretary David Ruggles, New Bedford white abolitionists Joseph Ricketson and William C. Taber brought Frederick Douglass to the home of African Americans Nathan and Polly Johnson (**21 Seventh Street, MHC #2036, NR 1976, NHL 2000**). And George Teamoh, a fugitive who came to New Bedford in late 1853 or early 1854 from Norfolk, Virginia, was directed to the boardinghouse (not extant) of African American William Bush by another fugitive, James Pritlow, whom he knew from his native Norfolk, Virginia. "Quite a large number of fugitives for a time stayed at his house and received the same hospitalities as did his regular boarders, notwithstanding the former were not able to pay their way," Teamoh wrote. "If any reliance may be placed in the statement of many of the older citizens of N.B. Deacon Bush,—now deceased,—has been one of the most zealous, hard working and liberal friends the fugitive ever found."⁷

Period of Operation

The time frame of this context study ranges from 1783, when slavery was abolished in Massachusetts by judicial decree, to 1865, when the Civil War ended and the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery, was ratified.⁸ Before the case *Commonwealth v. Jennison*, in which Massachusetts Chief Justice William Cushing stated his view that slavery was "inconsistent" with the 1780 constitution of the Commonwealth and that "there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature," persons enslaved in Massachusetts had escaped from those who claimed ownership in them: Boston Massacre victim Crispus Attucks is the most famous case in point. However, this context statement applies to historical circumstance in which enslaved persons were able to escape from places in which slavery was legal to places in which slavery was banned. The Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect 1 January 1863, freed enslaved persons only in the southern states still in rebellion against the Union. Fugitives were remanded to claimants from the District of Columbia as late as June 1863, and technically persons who escaped from such border states as Maryland and Delaware were legally slaves until the act was repealed in 1864.⁹ The high likelihood of extralegal action suggests that the end of the war and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment form a more realistic end date.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 6

Evidence exists, in Massachusetts and elsewhere, of organized efforts to assist fugitive escapes almost immediately after the passage of the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law. In that year Josiah Quincy, later governor of Massachusetts, undertook the legal defense of a fugitive who had been apprehended. He later wrote that while in court he "heard a noise, and turning round he saw the constable lying on the floor, and a passage opening through the crowd, through which the fugitive was taking his departure without stopping to hear the opinion of the court."¹⁰ In New Bedford runaway notices document the landing of fugitives, both by captains who knowingly carried them and those who claimed to be unaware of their presence on board. In August 1794 Captain Noah Stoddard placed a notice in the village's *Medley* that Bob, who confessed that Molly Bird of Charles City, Virginia, claimed to own him, had stowed away on his schooner *Betsey*; Stoddard had discovered four days from Richmond and, "the wind being ahead," he felt it "inconsistent to return." Another *Medley* notice, this one placed by a Maryland claimant, claimed that the Thomas Wainer, the Afro-Indian captain of a Westport, Massachusetts, vessel, had willfully "carried off" an enslaved man and wife from two towns in Maryland in 1799.¹¹ Research would probably show similar instances in other Massachusetts port cities and towns.

Fugitives were present in Massachusetts throughout the period this context covers, and it appears that efforts to assist them became more systematic by the mid-1830s. A vital prerequisite was the formation of organizations devoted to antislavery and abolitionism. Though membership in such groups was far from coterminous with fugitive assistance, the networks of affiliation they established were critical in forming links of fugitive assistance. In 1826, Boston people of color organized the Massachusetts General Colored Association; in 1831, William Lloyd Garrison founded the *Liberator*, dedicated to immediate abolitionism; in January 1832 whites and people of color formed the New England Anti-Slavery Society; and throughout the 1830s local anti-slavery societies emerged throughout the Commonwealth—though not in every town and city.¹² The Underground Railroad was active well before the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, though it does seem clear that "vigilance committees," as fugitive aid groups often were called, stepped up their activity in response both to the law and increased fugitive traffic afterward.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 7 **Geographical Framework**

Of the New England states, only Massachusetts and Vermont offered relatively safe havens to people of color in the late colonial and early national periods. In the 1783 case *Commonwealth v. Jennison*, Massachusetts Chief Justice William Cushing stated his view that slavery was “inconsistent” with the 1780 constitution of the Commonwealth and that “there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature,” thus banning slavery in the Commonwealth (which included Maine, a district of Massachusetts until it became a state in 1820). In 1777, the first year of its decade-long existence as an independent republic, Vermont abolished slavery in its constitution.¹³

Yet in other New England states and in bordering New York, slavery continued to exist. New Hampshire’s 1783 constitution stated that all men are “born equal and independent,” and six years later the state ruled that “slaves cease to be known and held as property.” However, this ruling meant only that enslaved people were no longer to be treated as taxable property in that state; it did not free them. The 1790 federal census enumerated 157 slaves in New Hampshire, in 1800 eight slaves were counted in the state, and one enslaved person was listed there in 1840.¹⁴ New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island all had put in place “gradual emancipation laws” by which children born of enslaved parents were free after serving terms into their mid- to late twenties. In the two New England states, children born to enslaved people of color after 1 March 1784 would be free, after twenty-five years of service if they were female; if male, they were to be free after twenty-one years of service. Claimants of these enslaved children were not bound to pay them wages during these years. Rhode Island legislators did not pass an act formally banning slavery until 1843; Connecticut lawmakers did not do so until 1848. New York’s 1799 Gradual Emancipation Act stipulated that children of enslaved mothers born after 4 July 1799 were to serve as indentured servants until the age of twenty-eight if they were male or until twenty-five if they were female. This act was amended in 1817 so as to free on 4 July 1827, when all of the children specified in the 1799 act would be free, those slaves born before 4 July 1799.¹⁵ Two New York slaves who spent significant part of their lives in Massachusetts—Sojourner Truth, born Isabella Baumfree or Van Wagenen in 1797 in Ulster County, and the Reverend Thomas James, born in Canajoharie in 1804—would have been emancipated under the 1799 law, but both escaped before 1827.¹⁶

As historian Ira Berlin has noted, slavery was “more deeply entrenched” in southern New England than in the northern part of the region—presumably because Rhode

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number E Page 8

Island and Connecticut were more agriculturally viable and had plantation-like farms. While 157 enslaved persons lived in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont collectively in 1790, enumerators counted 3,606 in Rhode Island and Connecticut in that first federal census. As this context will later explore, fugitives escaped into Massachusetts not only from the South but from other northern states as well. In 1800, the federal census recorded 380 enslaved persons in Rhode Island and 951 in Connecticut, but 20,903 in New York. In 1830, two enslaved people were enumerated in Maine, three in New Hampshire, one in Massachusetts, seventeen in Rhode Island, twenty-five in Connecticut, and seventy-five in New York—all after, in most instances well after, they should legally have been free.¹⁷ Thus, in the earlier period under examination, Massachusetts existed within a region where slavery continued to exist.¹⁸

In the earliest years, Massachusetts and Vermont were the safest northern havens in the eastern United States for fugitives. In 1790, federal census takers counted 5,369 free people of color in Massachusetts and 269 in Vermont. By 1860 the population of color in Massachusetts had increased to 9,602 and that of Vermont to 709. Of all New England states, Massachusetts had the largest population of color throughout the period, most likely for three reasons. Its booming economy offered the greatest number of employment opportunities, its cities contained supportive and often activist enclaves of African Americans, and it was a major center of abolitionist activity. Vermont, an overwhelmingly rural state, lacked these essential features. It therefore served more as a passage than a destination for most fugitives whose stories are known.¹⁹

This context documents fugitive traffic, presence, and assistance over much of the Commonwealth, though solid evidence has so far not emerged for the area west of the Berkshire Mountain range and for Cape Cod other than Mashpee.²⁰ Examples of the range of activity will be cited throughout this report.

Fugitives and Their World

Although narratives make plain that many enslaved persons escaped without assistance, other accounts provide evidence of the presence of willing help in the South. Using the subterfuge of towing oyster sloops through the harbor of Wilmington, North Carolina, the father of North Carolina fugitive Peter Robinson worked with the vessel owners, Quakers Fuller and Elliott (whose first names he did not supply), to ferry

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 9

fugitives to the next "station." Thomas Smallwood wrote that he worked with Charles Turner Torrey "in the escape of all I could from Slavery, and after a time they crowded upon me by scores, and thank the Lord I was enabled to effect the escape of all except seven, who, through their own indiscretion and the treachery of others I was foiled in effecting their escape."²¹ A man of color named "Ham and Eggs" helped enslaved people escape from Petersburg, Virginia, until 1860. Philadelphia Vigilance Committee William Still called another, Henry Lewey, nicknamed Blue Beard, "one of the most dexterous managers in the Underground Rail Road agency in Norfolk"; Lewey himself escaped to Boston some months before his wife Rebecca did in July 1856, but nothing is yet known of his life in Massachusetts.²²

There is no question that lines of communication connected those who assisted fugitives in the South with their cohorts in the North, as Samuel J. May recalled in *Some Recollections of Our Antislavery Conflict* in 1869. Another retrospective account of the working of the Underground Railroad explained the role of Boston attorney and orator Wendell Phillips. "People used to write Mr. Phillips from the South, out in those places just before slaves were about to start," Austin Bearse stated in *Reminiscences of Fugitive-Slave Law Days in Boston* in 1880. "Mr. Phillips got the letters, and so was on the lookout when the vessels got into Boston harbor. He would know the name of the vessel, and who was on board, and be all ready to help them." Bearse, a key member of the Boston Vigilance Committee, then sailed his excursion boat, the *Moby Dick*, to these anchored vessels at night and brought the fugitives to shore. Robert Purvis, a well-known fugitive assistant in Pennsylvania stated in one 1838 letter that the son of a local Quaker slaveholder in New Bern, North Carolina, whom he did not name, routinely hid fugitives on Philadelphia-bound lumber vessels, either with the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee's address or in the company of other assistants.²³

That enslaved persons were well aware of means of escape is attested in numerous sources. Daniel Drayton, a mariner in the coastal trade who became an abolitionist after a religious conversion, wrote in his 1853 memoir, "My trading up and down the bay . . . of course brought me a good deal into contact with the slave population. No sooner, indeed, does a vessel, known to be from the north, anchor in any of these waters—and the slaves are pretty adroit in ascertaining from what state a vessel comes—than she is boarded, if she remains any length of time, and especially over night, by more or less of them, in hopes of obtaining a passage in her to a land of freedom." He began ferrying fugitives in small groups and continued to do so until 1848, when his attempt to carry

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 10

77 persons from Washington on the schooner *Pearl* ended tragically in the sale of most of the fugitives and his imprisonment for more than four years. Drayton took his life in a New Bedford's Mansion House hotel after visiting his "old friend" William Bush, whose wife Lucinda may have assisted Drayton in bringing the enslaved Washingtonians to his vessel.²⁴ Drayton's grave in New Bedford's Rural Cemetery is extant, though the Mansion House (the former home of whaling merchant William Rotch Sr.) has not. Thomas H. Jones, enslaved but permitted to hire his time as a stevedore on the wharves of Wilmington, North Carolina, learned in 1848-49 that the enslaved children of his second wife, whose freedom he had purchased, were to be sold. "I kept a good lookout for a vessel," Jones wrote in his 1862 narrative. "I found one, and made a bargain with the captain to take on board for New York a free colored woman and her three children." Just before 11 July 1849 they left, and by 25 July he learned that they had reached "a true-hearted friend in Brooklyn. I had notified him beforehand that they were coming; and now the good and glorious news came that they were safe with Robert H. Cousins, where the slaveholders could trouble them no more." Jones's narrative makes clear that he knew Cousins, an African American porter living on Jay Street in Brooklyn. Born in Virginia, Cousins's wife Sarah had been born in North Carolina, and in his home in 1850 was the 74-year-old Elizabeth Jones, also born in North Carolina.²⁵ By early September Jones was able to follow his family; he later lived in Boston, New Bedford, and the Florence section of Northampton; his Florence house (NR pending 2005) survives.²⁶

Routes to Freedom

A preliminary survey of primary sources bears out that most fugitives who passed through or settled in Massachusetts, however briefly, came from slaveholding states and districts along the Atlantic coast—Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and to a far lesser extent from Florida and through the port of New Orleans. Generally speaking, enslaved persons from interior portions of these states and from the Deep South were more apt to escape through the nation's midsection, into New York State, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.²⁷

Exceptions did occur, however. Perhaps the most notable among them was Lewis Hayden, who escaped Lexington, Kentucky, in 1844 after the sale of his first wife and child to the statesman Henry Clay. Calvin Fairbank (1816-98), then a student at Oberlin College, and Delia Webster of Vermont helped convey Hayden and his second wife and child to Ohio; from there the Haydens escaped into Canada West (what Ontario was

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 11

called between 1841 and 1867).²⁸ But Hayden, who longed to be closer to the center of antislavery activity, left Canada for Detroit and then for Boston by early 1846.²⁹ The house he rented beginning in 1847 on Beacon Hill's north slope (sold to his wife Harriet in 1865), survives (**66 Phillips Street, MHC #4088, NHL**). Moses Roper, born in 1817 in Caswell County, North Carolina, escaped aboard a lumber and cattle schooner from Savannah in 1834 to New York City and then, unable to find work in the countryside thereabouts, took another vessel up the Hudson to Poughkeepsie. Again unable to find work, he shipped out as a steward on a canal boat, eventually going northward, probably on the Champlain Canal. In Sudbury, Vermont, he got a job on a farm until nearby farmers told him his wages were too low, and after an argument he left when he came to suspect the farmer would contact his former owner. Roper then went to Ludlow, Vermont, and stayed with two different persons because he learned an advertisement for his return had appeared; he then went into New Hampshire and still felt unsafe. Finally Roper went to Boston for about a month, but, with the knowledge that he was being pursued, he fled to England in November 1835.³⁰

Like Roper, those in bondage were on the whole more likely to escape initially by vessel from one of the South's coastal and riverine ports than on foot. As Gary Collison, biographer of fugitive Shadrach Minkins, has pointed out, "The enormous size of Chesapeake Bay—the largest estuary in the world—and the number of its tributaries and corresponding swamps and marshes made travel by land through Tidewater Maryland and Virginia slow and circuitous. The water routes, by contrast, were direct and swift." By water Philadelphia was only 270 miles—"a two-day trip with a good breeze"—from Norfolk, Virginia. New Bedford was only 500 miles from that southern port and Boston only 600,³¹ and the pre-Civil War populations of both northern cities included scores of African Americans from Norfolk and Portsmouth, the city directly across the Elizabeth River. Many firsthand narratives document the use of coastwise vessels in the movement of fugitives into New England, either by mariners unwittingly or quite willingly involved in the activity. William Grimes, who had worked on board several vessels from Savannah after the War of 1812, came to know several of the crew of the Boston brig *Casket* when it came to that port to load cotton. Having grown "attached" to him, they made a space for him among the bales on deck, and he hid there nearly all the way to New York, when the master of the vessel discovered his presence and put him ashore on Staten Island. From there Grimes walked to New Haven, Connecticut, where he saw a relative of one of his former owners and so pushed on to Southington, back to New Haven, then to Newport, and then on foot to New Bedford, where he got work as a servant in the home of John Howland (not extant) in June 1816.³²

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 12

The road to freedom of most fugitives appears to have combined foot, vessel, and rail travel—in short, whatever means presented itself at any given time as safe, expedient, and affordable. Using another man's seaman identification paper, Frederick Douglass took a train from Baltimore in early September 1838, took a ferry across the Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace, Maryland, boarded another train to Wilmington, Delaware, and then took a steamboat to Philadelphia. From there he took the railroad to New York and then another steamer to Newport, Rhode Island. Two New Bedford Quakers met him at Newport and accompanied him by stagecoach to New Bedford. A preliminary survey of modes of escape among Massachusetts fugitives shows that in 38 escape episodes, 20 were persons escaping alone, seven were groups of three or more (and at least once in a group with twenty other persons), six were mothers or fathers with children, one was a married couple, five were in a group of two or three, and one was unknown. Of 80 individuals in this partial survey, 50 were men, 20 were women, and 10 were children.³³

Many narratives and assistants' accounts of the passage of individuals from South to North omit certain details of how the journey was accomplished or how links between assistants were established. We know, for example, that in his escape from City Point, Virginia (now Old Point Comfort), George Lewis took a ferry across the James River presumably to Norfolk, where he hid until a sloop came into port whose captain he knew. The captain took him along with the wood loaded there to Alexandria. We know that Austin Bearse took him by merchant vessel from Albany, New York, to Boston. However, we do not know how Lewis went from Alexandria to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Albany. When Frederick Douglass made his way to New York, David Ruggles sent him with a letter of introduction to African American caterer Nathan Johnson, but how the two knew each other is unknown, nor is it known how and by whom the link between William C. Taber and Joseph Ricketson, who escorted Douglass from Newport to New Bedford, was engineered.

Primary sources reveal that many fugitives intended to go to Canada, either of their own devising or on the advice of vigilance committee members or other assistants. But a good many remained in the northern United States. Historian Robin Winks has argued that probably 30,000 fugitives from American slavery, or their children, were living in Canada West by 1860, but that reaching Canada was so difficult that an untold number remained in, or returned to, the United States. And just as southern claimants of fugitives exaggerated the monetary loss of slaves escaping, Winks has asserted,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 13

abolitionists overstated the number of successful fugitive escapes into Canada. Still's book and other accounts exist, too, of fugitives returning to Massachusetts and other states after failing to find work in Canada. Mrs. Nancy Howard told Benjamin Drew, a Plymouth native who traveled to Canada in the early 1850s to interview fugitives, that she was born in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, brought up in Baltimore, and escaped to Lynn, where she had lived for seven years until the Fugitive Slave Act passed. For "fear of being carried back," she left for St. Catherines in Canada West. "I find it harder to get work here, than I did in Massachusetts," she told Drew. "It is a sin on the slaveholders that I had to leave and come here. It has brought me lower to the ground." And in June 1855 the Norfolk, Virginia, fugitive Thomas Bayne wrote to William Still, "Times are very hard in Canada 2 of our old friends has left Canada and come to Bedford for a living. . . . others are expected shortly."³⁴

Some evidence exists about the destinations of fugitives either passing through or destined for Massachusetts. Of the 892 fugitives William Still described in his Underground Railroad, a compilation of his Philadelphia Vigilance Committee records, 17 went to Boston and 23 to New Bedford.³⁵ While the authors know of no contemporary estimates of the number of fugitives in Boston's population, residents of New Bedford, on unknown authority, stated that anywhere from 300 - 700 fugitives lived in that city by about 1850.³⁶ In 1855 and 1856, the New York Vigilance Committee sent 56 of 158 parties of fugitives to Syracuse, 42 to Albany, five to "Syracuse & Canada," four to "Albany & Syracuse," nine to New Bedford, eight to Boston, and nine to Canada; the destinations of 25 were not listed.³⁷ Neither the Philadelphia nor New York Vigilance Committees directed fugitives to other Massachusetts cities or towns, but the records of both Boston Vigilance Committees—the first, of 1846-47, and the second, of 1850-61—document that fugitives who came to Boston were sent on to live and work in various Massachusetts places:

Ashburnham: Levin Evans, 1847, to Alvan Ward; Edward Ross, 1847, to Alvan Ward; Josiah Thomas, wife & child, 1847, to Jones & Whittemore
Attleboro: Thomas Jackson, wife, and two children, 1854
Cambridge: Mrs. Andy Long, 1852
Charleton: Sandy Swan, 1853

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

Section number E Page 14

Hopedale: Joseph Truet, his wife, and his son and daughter, 1850; Peter Truett, 1850; Joshua Truett, 1852

Marshfield: James Williams, 1847, to Moses F. Rogers

New Bedford: Andrew Jones, 1850; Thomas Clark, wife, and child, 1851; "Catherine Greeland for boarding Jones & Wife & Chas Ames fugitives & fare to New Bedford," January 1861

Pembroke: James Burgess, 1847, to Dr. Anthony Collamore; George Langdon, 1847, to Samuel Brown (returned to Boston after a few days)

Plymouth: Solomon Banks, Thomas Johnson, "& another," 1850 (two different times); "4 fugitive slaves," unnamed, 1851; \$2.25 paid out for Old Colony RR fare for 4 fugitives to Plymouth, 18 Feb 1851; Samuel Ward, May 1851; "Thomas Johnson, 29 October 1851; Fugitive to Plymouth"; John Wesley & wife, 1852; [name illegible], 1852; "James Seymour passage to Plymouth by F J," December 1859

Southboro: William Ringold, Isaac Gaiter, and William Peters, 1851

South Braintree: Elizabeth Higgerman, 1850

Wareham: William H. Fisher, 1851

Westfield: Ely Baney and his wife and Catherine Jones, 1850

Westminster: Henry Garnet, George Johnson, David Brown, Henry Richardson, Henry William, Henry Lewis, Edward Gray, and William Stuart, 1850

Worcester: James Jackson and George Reason, 1850

Of the seven places to which fugitives were sent that are identified in these vigilance committee records, five are known to have survived. The house of Moses Folger Rogers (1803-86) still stands in Marshfield (**540 Highland Street, MHC #59**), but no census record exists for James Williams in that town. The Pembroke home of Dr. Anthony Collamore (**225 Washington Street, MHC #16**) has survived, but, similarly, James Burgess is not shown in the 1850 federal census for Pembroke. In Ashburnham, both the Alvan Ward house (**323 Lake Road, MHC #215**) and the Enoch Whitmore house (**off Tuckerman Road, MHC #230**) are extant. In January 1847 Boston Vigilance Committee secretary John White Browne sent the fugitive Edward Ross of Snow Hill, Maryland, to Ward's farm to live and work, and in March that year he forwarded to Ward Levan Evans, his wife, and child of Newcastle County, Delaware. Ross left Ward, "with complaint," in April, and three days after learning that news from Ward Evans visited Browne in Boston to tell him that Ward wasn't paying him "according to agreement." Browne promptly wrote Ward "that he should pay Evans for a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 15

month & a half at \$8.00 a month." In 1850, Ward's family included his wife, three sons (one named Garrison), a daughter, Ruth Ward (age 75, possibly his mother), and two unrelated men, one a farmer and one engaged in sawing. The next household enumerated was one of color—Robert Johnson, who stated he was born in Africa, his wife Viena, born in New Hampshire, and three children. It seems possible that Ross and Evans could have lived either in Ward's house or in the adjacent one, which could have been a cottage for the family of a laborer on Ward's farm.

In March 1847 the Boston committee sent a fugitive family from Queen Ann's County, Maryland, to "Jones & Whittemore," a factory that made thread spools in Ashburnham. The company was founded about 1830 by Colonel Enoch Whitmore and Deacon Gilman Jones, whose wife Sylvia was Alvan Ward's sister. One of Ashburnham's local histories identified both men as abolitionists, Whitmore as "a radical but not a fanatic" whose views placed him "in the minority"; that antislavery was "a living principle of human right and justice" with Whitmore formed "a bar to promotion in public service." In 1840, the household of Gilman Jones contained four persons, but that of Enoch Whitmore contained fifteen, five of them between the ages of 15-50. In 1850 Whitmore's household included his wife, ten children, and five boarders—the last a box maker, a carpenter, a spool turner, and two farmers. By 1850 Jones' household of eleven included five boarders, two of them spool turners and one an engineer. Thus it seems possible that the Thomases could have lived in either the Whitmore or Jones household, though no census permits us to view the year 1847.

Browne's record of the arrival of the Thomas family does reveal that Josiah Thomas was 25 years old, that his wife's name was Elizabeth, and that they arrived with two children, one of them three years old and the other just a year old. About five weeks after they had been sent to Ashburnham, Gilman Jones came to Browne's office in Boston to report that Thomas was "doing well."³⁸ The family did well enough in Ashburnham that they remained there through at least 1860. Thomas, a laborer, his wife Elizabeth, their five-year-old son Samuel B., a four-year-old son Josephus, and a one-year-old daughter Elizabeth are shown in their own household in Ashburnham in the 1850 census; all but Elizabeth, born in Massachusetts, are listed as born in Maryland. The enumerator visited the Thomases the day after the Fugitive Slave Act was signed into law; it seems unlikely that they knew its ramifications. By 1855, the Thomas family formed six (another daughter, Sarah, had been born about 1851) of the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 16

eight people of color in Ashburnham, and the Maryland-born members of the family claimed a Pennsylvania birthplace; in 1860 they continued to do so. It is not yet known whether the Jones & Whitmore factory, vacant as of 1887, or the house the Thomas family occupied, have survived.³⁹

Moreover, two of the fugitives sent to Plymouth are listed in censuses in both 1855 and 1860. Solomon Banks and James Seymour were enumerated as though they lived in adjacent households in 1855, and both stated that they had been born in Pennsylvania; Seymour's wife Mary listed the same birthplace. In the 1860 Federal census, Seymour and his wife claimed Virginia as their place of birth. Banks, a mariner, was not shown in Plymouth in 1860, but in the household listed after Seymour's is Mary Banks, a Virginia-born washerwoman with an eight-year-old daughter. It is conceivable that Solomon Banks was at sea when the 1860 census was taken. In 1855 Banks was enumerated in the household of Mary Johnson, her three-year-old daughter Mary E., and her fourteen-month-old son William A. These children were living in Mary Banks's household in 1860. It is possible that Mary Johnson was the wife of Thomas Johnson, whom the Boston Vigilance Committee had sent to Plymouth with Banks in either 1850 or 1851. Thomas Johnson may have gone unrecorded or have gone on to Canada after the birth of his son William; his wife may have followed him there between 1855 and 1860.

Fugitive populations were largest in Massachusetts cities and towns with the largest populations of color. In 1855 there were 2,248 people of color living in Boston, 1,714 in New Bedford, 409 in Springfield, 309 in Salem, 299 in Cambridge, and 201 in Worcester. Plymouth was home to 137 people of color, Northhampton to 125. In all other places 100 or fewer lived. The opportunities of employment in such places were few, as were the chances that an unfamiliar face would go unnoticed. In a February 1850 letter to Wendell Phillips, Andover abolitionist William Jenkins (whose house at 8 Douglass Street, formerly the Boston-Haverhill Turnpike, survives) attests to this latter fact:

a man came to me & brought a letter from you asking me to find him work or keep him otherwise, he stayed a few days and grew verry uneasy in a place like mine where every one is looking & inquiring who is that, wonder if he is a slave and it is a fact that anything will spread faster then it would in Boston and he

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 17

being winter I could not keep him out of sight he was fearfull when 2 or 3 men called to speak with me he asked me what he had better do if he had ben to Canada & could not stay there I advised him to stear towards Cape Ann might be he could get a chance to go to the British W. I. Islands I did not dare send him to Boston I had none to advize with on the matter.⁴⁰

Small places unconnected to transportation arteries were not only unlikely places of settlement but unlikely stops on any given route. On the whole, people of color in such towns tended to be natives of Massachusetts or of some other New England state. In Becket, a hill town with no railroad and with no river passing through, the 1855 state census recorded only one person of color resident, born in Massachusetts. In Barre, on the small Ware River in the middle of the state, there were eight people of color that year, six of them born in Massachusetts. Beverly, once a thriving coastal port, saw its trade shift increasingly to Salem and Boston. Though the local economy thrived instead on fishing and later on manufacturing, Beverly's black population dwindled, probably due to the decline in maritime trade. From 79 persons of color in the town in 1765, the black population had fallen to fourteen by 1850. Eleven of those fourteen were women, and six of those eleven women were between the ages of 60-95. Except for one, born in Sumatra, they were all native New Englanders. In 1855, four of the twenty people of color in Beverly were foreign-born, no doubt reflecting the lingering cosmopolitan trade of Salem.

In larger places, the chances of finding work were far greater, and in such ports as Boston, New Bedford, and Salem in particular people of color probably found the best employment opportunity. The maritime trades had historically been relatively welcoming to black laborers, as the city directories in all three towns document. The density of population and the built environment in cities sometimes made it possible for fugitives—indeed, for strangers of all sorts—to be relatively invisible. In addition, in larger cities with established black populations fugitives frequently connected with friends and kin who had escaped before them. In 1844 the *Middlesex Standard*, published in Lowell, reported that an elderly fugitive couple from Georgia had made their way almost entirely on foot to Springfield, Massachusetts. "They have been in bondage more than half a century," the *Standard* stated, "and very naturally feeling a desire to be 'better off,' they started on a visit to some relatives who had preceded them several years and settled in Massachusetts." Phillis (or Florence P.) Galt escaped from Norfolk, Virginia, with twenty other fugitives in November 1855. After several days in Philadelphia, she went on to

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 18

Boston, where she lived in the Pinckney Street home of Mr. and Mrs. George Stillman Hillard (**62 Pinckney Street, Beacon Hill NHL HD 1966**). New York Vigilance Committee secretary Sydney Howard Gay noted that Mrs. Galt had “friends” in Boston. In 1856 her sister-in-law Sophia Gray escaped and came to Boston with her two children; in 1857 her nephew Thomas F. Page had escaped and was living at the Hillard house as well.⁴¹

Some cities and towns differ very markedly both in the composition of their black populations and in the frequency with which they are mentioned in primary sources of the Underground Railroad. A comparison of Springfield and Salem may serve to illustrate the point. Both were transportation centers: Salem an Atlantic port and Springfield on the Connecticut River. Yet Salem’s most robust growth occurred between 1790 and the War of 1812, when it carried on an immense trade with the East Indies as well as a coastwise trade distributing these former goods along the eastern seaboard; it was the sixth largest city in the United States in 1790. But by 1840, as historian Samuel Eliot Morison put it, “the center of interest in Massachusetts shifts from wharf to waterfall,” and the state—with the notable exception of its whaling industry—became focused on its manufacturing economy. By 1815 Salem had only 57 vessels in its transatlantic fleet; in 1807 182 had been registered in that port. As commercial traffic bypassed Salem, most of its merchants—including Nathaniel Bowditch, father of abolitionists and fugitive assistants William Ingersoll and Henry Ingersoll Bowditch—abandoned the city for Boston.⁴² Salem is scarcely mentioned in letters or narratives of fugitives and their assistants, and only 8.4% of Salem’s black population claimed a slave-state birthplace in 1855.

By contrast, Springfield is mentioned relatively often in narratives and newspaper accounts. The town was sited on the Connecticut River, a major artery ferrying goods north and agricultural products south; it had also been a significant migration path since the early 17th century. The United States Armory, constructed in 1794, had drawn merchants and both skilled and unskilled labor to the city, and with the building of rail links to Worcester in 1839 and Hartford and New York City in 1844 Springfield became a key transportation hub.⁴³ In the fall of 1838 James Lindsay Smith, of Northumberland County, Virginia (between the Rappahannock and the Potomac Rivers) escaped with two friends by sailboat and then on foot to New Castle, Delaware, and then on to Philadelphia. Assistants there sent him “with a letter directed to David Ruggles” of the New York Vigilance Committee, and Ruggles in turn sent Smith off with “two letters, one

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 19

to a Mr. Foster, in Hartford; and the other to Doctor Osgood, in Springfield." This Osgood was Samuel Osgood, pastor of Springfield's First Congregational Church. Smith took a steamboat to Hartford and another to Springfield. Osgood, Smith wrote, "informed me that the letter stated 'that he could either send me to Canada, or he could keep me in Springfield, just as he thought best.' He said: 'I think we will keep you here, so you can make yourself at home.' Smith, a shoemaker, stayed in Springfield, worked a year in the wholesale shoe shop of Rufus Elmore, studied at Wilbraham Academy, traveled the antislavery lecture circuit through Connecticut and Massachusetts with a "Dr. Hudson," and in 1842 moved to Norwich, Connecticut (David Ruggles's native place), where he lived the rest of his life. William Green, a fugitive from Maryland's Eastern Shore, was taken by a willing captain aboard a vessel to Philadelphia and then sent on to New York, where he stayed at a boardinghouse until constables came looking for him. From his lodgings he was somehow helped to escape to the home of Ruggles, who sent him on the same route Smith had taken to Osgood's home in Springfield. Green published his narrative in 1853, by which time he had been in Springfield for thirteen years.⁴⁴ By 1855, fully 29.9% of Springfield's 1855 black population claimed slave-state birthplaces, and though many may have been free people of color when they came to Springfield, the statistical difference between Springfield and Salem is striking.

Still, away from the coast, the number of people of color noticeably declined. In 1855 only 282 people of color lived in Lowell and Worcester, where the local economies were largely based on manufacturing; industrial jobs were virtually unavailable to blacks throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century. The population of Lowell, with 37,554 people one of the largest cities in the state, was only 0.2% black; Worcester, at 22,286, was 0.9% of color. Some few inland places were attractive to people of color, though not nearly to the degree that coastal places were. Probably because of its location and the consequent importance of inland trade Springfield's 399 people of color were 2.9% of its total population in 1855. Moreover, by that same year fully 29.9% of the city's black population claimed slave-state birthplaces. Only New Bedford could claim a similarly high percentage of southern-born people of color, and the real proportion was almost certainly higher: the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was still something to be feared actively throughout the North, a fact that arguably stimulated black respondents to be less than candid about their birthplaces when census takers asked.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 20

Springfield was also a center of radical black and white abolitionist sentiment, and the general abolitionist tenor of a place was another factor influencing African American settlement. Northampton was a demographic anomaly in the general African American experience in Massachusetts. While the far larger, more commercially active Springfield was 2.9% black in 1855, Northampton was 2.1% black. Of its 5,819 residents, 124 were people of color; Westfield and Greenfield, towns of roughly similar population size in the Connecticut River Valley, counted only 36 persons of color among their residents combined in 1855. Northampton itself was not esteemed among abolitionists; most of its residents of color, including David Ruggles and Sojourner Truth, were attracted to its Florence section to the west of downtown. Florence was home to the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a communal association dedicated among other things to equal rights "without distinction of sex, color, or condition, sect or religion." One association member explained Florence's appeal in these terms:

When the . . . associates reached their field of cooperative labors, each of them feeling that the brotherhood of man included all of whatever color or shape of head, [they] early made it known that here at any rate was a house of refuge for the ill-treated wanderer whether from Southern slavery or Northern barbarity. Many residents of color therefore soon made this their home and were fraternally greeted and guarded.⁴⁵

Not all utopian communities appear to have been similar magnets: Milford, of which Hopedale was part in 1855, and Harvard, the location of the Fruitlands community, were home to fifteen and thirteen people of color respectively.

Fugitive Assistance and Antislavery

As many narratives, including Smith's and Greene's, indicate, the presence of fugitive assistance groups influenced the routes and destinations of some fugitives. About 1842, four years before Boston's first vigilance committee was formed, people of color in that city formed the New England Freedom Association, whose object was to "extend a helping hand to all who may bid adieu to whips and chains, and by the welcome light of the North Star, reach a haven where they can be protected from the grasp of the man-stealer." The association further stipulated that it would never "pay one farthing to any

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 21

slave-holder for the property they may claim in a human beings. . . . Our mission is to succor those who claim property in themselves, and thereby acknowledge an independence of slavery." It may have been active until 1846, when Boston's white abolitionists began their first Committee of Vigilance and the groups merged. The New England Freedom Association is the first fugitive assistance group known to have been organized in Massachusetts. Among its officers and directors were John S. Jacobs, the fugitive brother of Harriet Jacobs; James Scott, arrested for his alleged role in the 1851 Shadrach rescue; and William C. Nell and Joshua Bowen Smith, both active Underground Railroad assistants.⁴⁶

Both the 1846-47 and 1850-61 Boston vigilance committees were interracial. New Bedford is believed to have had a vigilance committee, though its records have not surfaced. It may have been the same as the Vigilant Aid Society formed by New Bedford people of color, probably in the 1850s, which raised funds "to assist such as are daily making their escape from some portion of the slave States, and whom Divine Providence may direct among us, destitute of the means to make them comfortable."⁴⁷ Of the known members of New Bedford's Vigilant Aid Society—the Rev. William Jackson, Solomon Peneton, Thomas Bayne, William Henry Johnson, Lloyd H. Brooks and John Freedom—only Freedom and Jackson are believed to have been born free; Bayne and Johnson were fugitives, and Peneton and Brooks probably were as well.⁴⁸ Jackson, however, was an active fugitive assistant who had been jailed for his work in this regard in Philadelphia and whose church had numerous fugitives among its members in the 1850s; his New Bedford house is still standing (**198 Smith Street, MHC #2052**).

In 1851 in Springfield the fugitive-assisting group was called the Emigrant Aid Society. Its efforts were supplemented by the United States League of Gileadites, organized in 1851 by John Brown (who conceived, organized, and conducted the 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry) and others among local African Americans.⁴⁹ In 1855, after abolitionists failed to stop the return of fugitive Anthony Burns to slavery, Henry Ingersoll Bowditch organized the Anti-Man-Hunting League, whose aim was to kidnap slave claimants and their agents and spirit them away until fugitives could effect their escapes. The league, headquartered in Boston, had affiliates in Abington, Bedford, Braintree, Chelsea, Concord, Feltonville [Hudson], Fitchburg, Hanson, Leominster, Lynn, Marblehead, Mendon, Newburyport, Pepperell, Plymouth, Pembroke, Waltham, West Roxbury,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 22

Weymouth, Worcester, Manchester, Dedham, Salem, Springfield, Plympton, East Medway, Sharon, and North Bridgewater; Bowditch's papers at Massachusetts Historical Society list the officers of each affiliate, and in the case of the Boston and Salem leagues list the members.⁵⁰

These vigilance groups are not to be confused with antislavery societies, however, and to have been a member of an antislavery society, a professed opponent of slavery, or an abolitionist does not predict that one assisted fugitives. Hundreds of Massachusetts residents contributed money to the legal effort to free Charles Turner Torrey from a Baltimore jail, but probably very few sheltered fugitives or helped them escape. North Andover's Isaac Stevens, according to his grandson Hazard Stevens, subscribed to the *Liberator* and was "early in life a vehement and outspoken Advocate of antislavery," but there is no record of his aid to fugitives. In Lowell, Harriet Farley worked diligently among girls working in the textile mills to promote the antislavery cause, but, similarly, no evidence exists that she assisted fugitives. In New Bedford, educator John Emerson was an abolitionist who hired Debora Weston, one of the so-called "Boston clique" and an energetic organizer of abolitionist sentiment. Yet Emerson's name has never surfaced in the rolls of Underground Railroad assistants.

Another caution about abolitionism is the distinction between political and social equality. Some abolitionists concerned themselves with achieving freedom for enslaved people of color but shied away from issues of intermarriage and equal access to education, transportation facilities, venues such as theaters and churches, and associations. "A colored person, even of the deepest dye, may stand by our chair while at our meals and wait upon us—may cook our food—ay! put their dark hands into our bread—tend and nurse our children, and nothing is thought of it—but to sit near us in a concert room, a lecture room, or a church, this is by no means to be thought of," Daniel Ricketson of New Bedford noted eight years after his conversion to abolitionism.⁵¹ Fugitive Samuel Ringgold Ward wrote of Quakers, "They will give us good advice. They will aid in giving us a partial education—but never in a Quaker school, beside their own children. Whatever they do for us savors of pity, and is done at arm's length."⁵² Frances Drake of Leominster wrote to Boston abolitionist Maria Weston Chapman of the prejudice she encountered there:

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 23

“One church member has said that I was the means of keeping some fifty ladies from joining [*sic*] the society, the question was asked why the answer was because I was so familiar [*sic*] with coloured people when they come here, Charles & Carlina Remond visited us a few weeks since & I rode with them & walked with them. This was more than would be [*sic*] abolitionists would be. ‘Ladies’ said I could be just as good an abolitionists, and desire the slaves freedom just as well, and still not treat niggers [*sic*] so familiarly. If I prevent ladies from joining the society who are no more antislavery than to merely wish the slave to be free from the whip, and still be in the most degraded condition imagineable by the scorn & neglect of his wouldbe superior white bretheren [*sic*]—I think such antislavery of but little service to the coloured man as such. They have no hearts to feel for their wrongs in other respects than that of being beaten. . . . I am informed some really intelligent ladies have said they were willing to do anything for the cause, but did not wish to become members of any society to which I belonged, as I carried my views quite to [*sic*] far for respectability [*sic*], in being disposed to treat the coloured people as my equals. They thought the blacks should have their place & keep in it. One lady to test my principles asked me if I would marry a coloured man. I answered very frankly (as my nature ever prompts) yes, if he was just as worthy in every respect as a white man ought to be.⁵³

Membership in vigilance committees is a surer indicator of fugitive assistance. Still, even within the ranks of Boston Vigilance Committee members were some who did not actively assist but instead donated funds to the Legal Committee or toward the purchase of food, clothing, and passage to other places. Similarly, some abolitionists were subscription agents for *Voice of the Fugitive*, which was published by fugitive Henry Bibb in Canada and contained firsthand accounts of escapes. In Boston, Robert F. Wallcutt, J. Morse, and Mrs. W. Blakemore were agents for that newspaper, but of the three only Wallcutt is documented in Boston Vigilance Committee records as having actively assisted fugitives.⁵⁴

Any study of the Underground Railroad should also bear in mind that abolitionism, and fugitive assistance to an even greater degree, was a minority reform in its own time. “The present generation cannot realize the state of feeling in regard to slavery 50 years ago,” Joseph A. Allen recalled in 1896. “The postmaster in Medfield used to hand out the *Liberator* to my father with a pair of tongs.”⁵⁵ Because of David Walker’s 1830 *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* and Garrison’s call for immediate

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 24 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

emancipation in 1830, Samuel J. May wrote that in 1835 “we found, to our shame and dismay, that even New England had leagued with the slaveholding oligarchy to quench the spirit of impartial liberty, and to uphold in our country the most cruel system of domestic servitude the world has ever known.” Antislavery speakers could not secure churches, public lecture halls, even Faneuil Hall for their lectures. On his antislavery tour toward the end of 1830s and early 1840s, James Lindsay Smith wrote, “Brickbats and rotten eggs were very common in those days; an anti-slavery lecturer was often showered by them. Slavery at this time had a great many friends.” Frances Drake, a Leominster abolitionist and fugitive assistant, wrote of the mid-1840s, “Husband & self were at that time alone comparatively speaking, in our efforts for the slave, . . . those around us were pointing the finger of scorn.”⁵⁶ Simeon Dodge, a fugitive activist in Marblehead wrote in the 1890s to Wilbur Siebert, “Of course you do not care to hear anything about the menaces, fights, insults, and social ostracisms, to which all anti-slavery people were subjected. That was the common experience until the towns were abolitionized.”⁵⁷ But most historians agree that the majority of Americans never viewed themselves as abolitionists at any point. Paul Goodman places the number of abolitionists at about 125,000 in the mid- to late 1830s; in 1830 the population of the United States was roughly 12,866,000.⁵⁸

In religious terms, abolitionism cut across denominational lines, but in socioeconomic terms the movement tended to be less representative of the elite, or what Goodman has termed the “upper white collar” of Massachusetts society (excluding the cities of Boston and Lynn), than of the state’s master mechanics and manufacturers (31% of the 576 abolitionists surveyed in his study), skilled manual workers (25%), and farmers (29%). Skilled manual workers—earlier and otherwise known as artisans and among whom the historian Leonard Richards included “chairmakers, coppersmiths, glassmakers, printers, harnessmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and joiners”—were 53% of Boston abolitionists and 70% of Lynn abolitionists, in the latter case mostly shoemakers. Francis Edwin Bigelow of Concord (**19 Sudbury Road, MHC #109**) and Jonathan Drake of Leominster (**21 Franklin Street, MHC #152**), both of whom sheltered Shadrach Minkins in his escape from Boston to Montreal in 1851, were a blacksmith and a shoemaker, respectively. Marblehead’s Simeon Dodge was a wheelwright; John A. Innis of Salem was a baker; in Boston, African Americans Joshua B. Smith was a caterer and William C. Nell a copyist. Goodman has noted that businessmen were often leaders in antislavery societies: wealthy New Bedford whaling merchants Andrew Robeson (**47-R North Second Street, MHC #1048, NR/NHL in New Bedford Whaling**

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 25

National Historical Park/New Bedford HD 1966) and William Rotch Jr. (whose home during most of this period is now the Mariner's Home in New Bedford on Johnny Cake Hill) were leading abolitionists with documented roles in fugitive assistance, for example. But in Boston, Goodman has found, 86% of abolitionists owned little or no taxable real or personal property while in Lynn 34% owned little or no real property.⁵⁹

Another aspect of abolitionism bears noting, especially with respect to historic properties: collectively, abolitionists were highly self-conscious of their significance in their own time, and they seized every opportunity for the promotion of their cause among the wider American and international public. Frederick Douglass was aware that he was employed on the antislavery lecture circuit because he was "a brand new fact"—the first fugitive slave ever to presented to American audiences—and he knew his purpose was to build the subscription base of the *Liberator* and the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.⁶⁰ The deaths of such radical abolitionists as Daniel Drayton and Charles Turner Torrey were much publicized in the antislavery press, as were the efforts—particularly in Torrey's case—to raise funds for memorials to them. Both the *Liberator* and the *Standard* covered Drayton's suicide and funeral, fugitive minister J. W. C. Pennington officiated at the funeral, and U.S. Navy Chaplain Photius Fisk—one of the four "anti-slavery friends" to whom Austin Bearse had dedicated his Underground Railroad reminiscence—paid sixty dollars toward the obelisk that marks Drayton's grave.⁶¹ Torrey, whose contentious opposition to political action had greatly rankled Garrisonian abolitionists in the late 1830s, was elevated to the status of martyr after his arrest and imprisonment for aiding fugitive escapes in the early to mid-1840s. Hundreds attended his May 1846 funeral at Tremont Temple, and immediately afterward black Bostonians formed the Torrey Monument Association to gather funds for a suitable monument to him. Torrey is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge and Watertown (**580 Mount Auburn Street, MHC #802, NRHP 1975, NHL 2003**), as are the fugitives Peter Byus, Harriet Jacobs, and her brother John S. Jacobs.

Links in the Network

As Samuel May's statement and the narratives of James Smith and William Green illustrate, fugitives who received help from the vigilance committee system often proceeded with letters of introduction to other assistants in other places. Frederick Douglass carried one from David Ruggles to the home of Nathan Johnson in New

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 26

Bedford. The fugitive whom William Jenkins did not name brought one from Wendell Phillips in Boston to Jenkins's house in Andover. Joseph Ricketson received a letter with a "consignment"—the famed fugitive Henry "Box" Brown—that reached his house (not extant) in New Bedford in late March 1849.⁶²

Other connections were more fortuitous, such as Daniel Drayton's first encounters with persons who wished to escape. Some began more incidentally but then relied upon an established network of willing assistants. Austin Bearse's first recorded role in fugitive assistance occurred in 1847, when he happened to be trading at Albany. He had been converted to abolitionism by the mid-1830s. From the home of the sisters Lydia and Abigale Mott outside Albany, he carried the fugitive George Lewis to Boston. Lewis, the fugitive who escaped from City Point, Virginia, had learned from African American Leonard Grimes of Boston's Twelfth Baptist Church that Lewis's daughter Lizzie, also a fugitive, was then living in Boston. Bearse took Lewis to Robert F. Wallcutt, the Boston *Liberator* agent and abolitionist publisher; Wallcutt in turn took him to the home of "Mr. Thacker" (probably Henry L. W. Thacker, an African American caterer, whose 5 Phillips Street house has not survived), who was boarding Lewis's daughter. The next day Bearse took Lewis to the East Boston shipyard of Samuel E. Hall, where he worked for three years despite the fact that some of the white ship carpenters left on account of it. Lewis is listed in the 1847 Boston city directory as a carpenter living on Summer Street in East Boston. After the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Bearse noted, Lewis went to Nova Scotia, where he stayed until the Emancipation Proclamation.⁶³

Another detailed account of a fugitive's path has been preserved in the diary of the Rev. Theodore Edson of Lowell. In March 1839 he related his involvement in the case of the Kentucky fugitive Robert, who had taken the name John Taylor. Having just been sold at auction and bound for New Orleans, Taylor somehow escaped by steamboat into Ohio but was captured and put in irons. Passing through a wooded area, his party was ambushed and Taylor was set free. He proceeded to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and from there was sent to the abolitionist Gerrit Smith at Peterboro, New York; Smith sent him on to Kentucky native James G. Birney in New York City, who, Edson wrote, knew Taylor's master well. Edson's entry continues:

Thro N York he came to Boston where he was very sick of pleurisy from exposure in traveling lying out in the woods day and night in northern climate. Mr

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 27

Garrison befriended him But one day in Boston Cornhill he met unexpectedly Kentuckian slaveholder whom he knew James Coburn and who recognized him at once saying "Aye Bob what are you dong here" He made himself strange—But he felt that he must leave Boston—A Mr. Leonard from Ludlow Vt had seen him in Boston and had said to him that if he wd come to him he would take care of him and he gave him some directions—Mr G sent him to Salem to a Mr. Wm A Dodge But his story getting wind he was afraid to stay there and came on to Andover where he was directed to Smiths the Scotchmen's at Frye Village—Smiths directed him to come to me—which he did by the railroad.⁶⁴

Edson, in 1837 the president of the Lowell Anti-Slavery Society, was rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church; the church and rectory where he lived are extant (**8 Kirk Street, MHC #20, City Hall NRHD 1975, Lowell National Historical Park 1978**). "Wm A Dodge" almost certainly indicates William Bradford Dodge, president of the Anti-Slavery Society of Salem and Vicinity from 1836 to 1839 and at that time the teacher of Salem's "colored school." "Smiths the Scotchmen's" refers to either Peter or John Smith, natives of Brechin, Scotland, who with Andover's John Dove established a flax processing factory in the Frye (now Shawsheen) Village section of Andover in 1835; both were founders of the Andover West Parish Anti-Slavery Society in 1837. In 1846 John Smith purchased the town's Methodist Church for the newly organized Free Christian Church (the original building no longer standing), formed by antislavery activists including himself who had withdrawn from Andover's other churches.⁶⁵ When Edson mentioned the railroad, he must have meant the Andover & Wilmington and the Boston & Lowell lines; the latter had opened on 25 July 1835, and the branch called the Andover & Wilmington had opened from Wilmington, south of Lowell, to Andover on 8 August 1836. Smith put Taylor on the railroad south to Wilmington, where Taylor caught the connecting Boston & Lowell train north to Lowell.⁶⁶

Gary Collison has traced the route of Shadrach Minkins, whose escape was planned hastily when it became clear that his return to slavery was imminent. Probably within six days of his arrest on 15 February 1851 at Boston's Cornhill Coffee House, Minkins reached Montreal. Abolitionists principally from Boston, Worcester, and Salem stormed the Boston Court House where Minkins was detained; then abolitionist and fugitive Lewis Hayden brought him in the midst of a group of other activist African Americans to the black community on Beacon Hill, where he concealed Minkins in the home of Eliza Riley at 1 Southac Court (not extant) until he could arrange for transportation out of the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 28

city. Hayden then took Minkins by hired carriage to Watertown and then to the Cambridge home of the Rev. Joseph C. Lovejoy (not extant), who had earlier helped the fugitive brothers Lewis and John Milton Clarke (whose house at 2-4 Florence Place in Cambridge has survived) and was brother to the abolitionist printer Elijah Lovejoy, killed in a riot in Alton, Illinois, in 1837. Sometime later, with fellow black abolitionist John J. Smith, Hayden in another carriage took Minkins to the Concord home of Francis Edwin and Anne Bigelow. There he stayed part of the night, and then Francis Bigelow took him by carriage to the home of Jonathan and Frances Drake in Leominster, which survives. How he accomplished his journey beyond that point is not known.⁶⁷

Basil Dorsey's route of escape in 1836 took him and his brothers from Frederick County, Maryland, through Gettysburg, Reading, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Basil and two of his brothers were sent to the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, farm of famed African American abolitionist Robert Purvis and worked there about two years, but one day while plowing in one of Purvis's fields Dorsey was overtaken by his former owner and several other men. At trial after his arrest, he was released on a technicality. Purvis hurried Dorsey away. Philadelphia assistants sent him on to David Ruggles in New York, and there, according to one 1867 article, "gentlemen from the Anti-Slavery Standard" (an abolitionist newspaper published in New York) sent him to Northampton. For one or two days Dorsey stayed with Haynes K. Starkweather on South Street, and then Captain Samuel Parsons took him by carriage to the home either of Roger Leavitt or that of his son, Roger Hart Leavitt, both in Charlemont. Both houses are still standing. Dorsey, with his free wife Louisa and their three children, lived in Charlemont for five years. When Louisa Dorsey died in 1844, Dorsey moved to the Florence section of Northampton, where he worked as a teamster and laborer in the Florence cotton mill of abolitionist John Payson Williston.⁶⁸ Dorsey died in Florence, and both of the houses he occupied there, at 191 Nonotuck Street (NR pending) and 4 Florence Road, are extant.

Even though vigilance organizations denied it as a general mode of operation, some fugitive assistants reached directly into the South to abet escapes. Daniel Drayton was one of them, motivated by such views as animated Austin Bearse, a Barnstable native who had sailed as mate on various coastwise schooners along the coastal South and up its rivers to the rice and cotton plantations between 1818 and 1830. "People who go for visits or pleasure through the Southern States, cannot possibly know those things which can be seen of slavery by shipmasters who run up into the back plantations of countries, and who transport the slaves and produce of plantations. . . ." Bearse wrote in

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 29

his *Reminiscences*. "I saw these things as others did, without interference. Because I no longer think it right to see these things in silence, I trade no more south of Mason and Dixon's line." With such men as Captains Alfred Fountain, William Lambdin, and William Baylis, all of whom regularly worked with Delaware's Thomas Garrett and Philadelphia's William Still to bring fugitives from the South, several Massachusetts men were actively involved in such efforts in the South. Jonathan Walker, a mariner born in Harwich, helped orchestrate the escape of seven slaves from Pensacola, Florida, in 1844 but was overtaken at sea; that state's officials branded the palm of his hand with the initials "S. S.," for "slave stealer," and put him in jail for nearly a year. Charles Turner Torrey, born in Scituate and a resident of Salem, Boston, and other Massachusetts cities and towns, is claimed to have helped between two and four hundred enslaved people escape to the North between early 1842 and his arrest in Baltimore on 24 June 1844; he died in jail on 9 May 1846.⁶⁹

As these accounts indicate, once in Massachusetts fugitives traveled by rail, by carriage, and presumably on foot. The first rail line in operation in the Commonwealth opened from Washington Street in Boston to Newton on 18 April 1834 and was run through to Worcester by July 1835. It was surely this line to which William I. Bowditch of Brookline (**9 Toxteth Street, MHC #1726, NRHP IND 1985**) referred in one 1893 letter to Wilbur Siebert. "We had no regular route and no regular station in Massachusetts," he stated. "I had had several fugitives in my house. Generally I passed them on to Wm. Jackson at Newton. His house being on the Worcester Railroad, he could easily forward any one."⁷⁰ Jackson's house, now known as the Jackson Homestead, survives (**527 Washington, MHC #167 [listed as Timothy Jackson House], NRHP IND 1973**). Jackson was the brother of Boston Vigilance Committee treasurer Francis Jackson. Elizabeth Buffum Chace regularly relied upon the Providence and Worcester Railroad, in operation by October 1847. Robert Adams, a fugitive assistant in Fall River, brought fugitives by carriage to her home in Valley Falls, Rhode Island; she and her husband then put them on this rail line. Chace directed fugitives to transfer to "the Vermont Road," where a Unitarian minister named Young met them and directed them on to Canada. Chace wrote, "I used to give them an envelope, directed to us, to be mailed in Toronto, which, when it reached us, was sufficient by its postmark to announce their safe arrival, beyond the baleful influence of the Stars and Stripes, and the anti-protection of the Fugitive Slave Law." The fugitives could have gone to Vermont by one of two routes—on the Western Railroad to Springfield (completed by 1839), transferring to the Hartford and New Haven line (completed by 1844), and then taking the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 30 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Connecticut River Railroad to connect to the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad, the latter of which reached Brattleboro, Vermont, by late February 1849; or by the Fitchburg and Worcester Railroad (probably 1849) to the Cheshire Railroad, completed from North Ashburnham through Keene, New Hampshire, to Bellows Falls, Vermont, by 1849. Chace was probably describing the 1850s, for the clergyman Young of whom she spoke was probably Joshua Young, shown as a Unitarian minister in Boston in 1850 and known not to have been living in Burlington, Vermont, until after 1852.⁷¹

Fugitive Assistance among People of Color

Fugitive assistance groups such as the New England Freedom Association in Boston, the League of Gileadites in Springfield, and the Vigilant Aid Society in Boston indicate the presence of organized action on behalf of fugitives among people of color in Massachusetts. In addition, while not all communities of color were large enough to support their own ministers and churches, where black churches and settled ministers did exist some have been documented to have lent aid to fugitives. Leonard Grimes's Twelfth Baptist Church on Southac (now Phillips) Street on Beacon Hill in Boston was nicknamed the "fugitive slaves' church" and did count among its membership numbers of fugitives; Grimes himself had been convicted of facilitating the escape of seven persons from Virginia in 1839 and served two years in the state penitentiary. Neither Twelfth Baptist nor Grimes's longtime home at 28 Grove Street on Beacon Hill are extant. A church similar to Twelfth Baptist existed in New Bedford, William Jackson's Second (later Salem) Baptist Church. Jackson, like Grimes a free man of color who had been arrested for assisting in the escape of a fugitive from Philadelphia, baptized and married numerous people of color in his church who can be identified in other records as fugitives.⁷² It may have been in Jackson's church that a collection "for the benefit of persons escaping from slavery" was amassed in December 1855. Second Baptist Church and Jackson's home (**198 Smith Street, MHC #2052, also known as the Paul Carlisle House**) have survived, but Salem Baptist Church has not.

Still, it is possible that not all black churches, at least as corporate entities, could be counted upon to assist fugitives. Historian George Levesque has argued that the growing abolitionist sentiment of the Rev. Thomas Paul of the African Meeting House on Smith Court off Belknap Street in Boston (**8 Smith Court, MHC #4085, Beacon Hill NHL HD 1966, NHL 1974**) came to alienate more conservative segments of his congregation. Paul resigned in 1829 and died in 1831. The *Liberator* stated in 1837 that since Paul's death "the church and congregation have been torn with faction and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 31

divisions," and the fact that the church lacked a settled African American minister between 1829 and 1838 may suggest as much. The fugitive mariner Moses Roper's visit to the African Meeting House in late 1835 hardly indicates a congregation united in an effort to protect fugitives:

During the first part of my abode in this city, I attended at the colored church in Bellnap (sic) street; and I hope I found both profit and pleasure in attending the means of divine grace. I now saw the wicked part I had taken in using so much deception in making my escape. After a time, I found slave-owners were in the habit of going to this colored chapel to look for runaway slaves. I became alarmed and afterwards attended the preaching of the Rev. Dr. Sharp.⁷³

In 1843 46 members (including fugitive Leonard Black) of the African Meeting House, then called the First Independent Baptist Church, were dismissed. They formed the nucleus of Twelfth Baptist Church. Similarly, in 1855 the Vigilant Aid Society in New Bedford publicly criticized "the pro-slavery character of the African M. E. B. [Methodist Episcopal Bethel] Church on Kempton street" for having refused to permit the society to hold its meetings in that sanctuary. The society charged that the Bethel (not extant) had thus "arrayed itself against God, liberty and the bleeding bondman, by shutting its doors against a society, which has for its object the fundamental principles of the Gospel, and aids the poor panting fugitive out of the clutches of wicked human bloodhounds, and gives him a crust of bread and a cup of cold water, and bids him God speed on his way from the prison-house of bondage." Church wardens simply stated, "We cannot admit public meetings to be held in our church or house of worship."⁷⁴ The reasons for the Bethel's refusal are not entirely clear, especially in light of the fact that in August 1859 Jermain W. Loguen, "general agent of the Underground Railroad" in Syracuse, New York, spoke there to the "friends of freedom" and raised \$20 to assist his work.⁷⁵

Just as not all abolitionists were fugitive assistants, not every person of color was a fugitive assistant. In Boston, for example, Andrew Telford was a hairdresser who lived on Belknap Street, in the midst of a neighborhood of political activists. Yet he is not known to have been a member of the African Lodge, the Massachusetts General Colored Association, the New England Freedom Association (a vigilance group composed of men of color that predated the first Boston Vigilance Committee), or either of the Boston Vigilance Committees, nor is his wife Rachel believed to have been associated with any of the women's groups active in the city's African American

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 32

community. Not even advocates of political and social equality for people of color were necessarily fugitive assistants. George Putnam, a staunch Garrisonian abolitionist and supporter of desegregating Boston's public schools, does not appear among the large list of Boston people of color who sheltered or otherwise assisted those fugitives who were one way or another brought to the attention of the city's vigilance committees. Nor has his name surfaced in any fugitive narrative yet discovered nor in the correspondence of known Massachusetts abolitionists.

Some Native American towns and reserves in Massachusetts either were homes to fugitives or active in assisting them, though little is known to date of their role in general terms. In southeastern Massachusetts as elsewhere, the sex ratios that prevailed among people of color and Native Americans throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries—that is, there tended to be many more Indian women than men and many more men of color than women—tended to promote marriages between blacks and Indians, as did the general proscription against marriages between white and colored persons. In two cases—among the Yarmouth Indians on Cape Cod and the Hassanamisco Indians in and around Grafton—Indians tended to intermarry with whites over time, but 19th-century Massachusetts Indian censuses showed Indian-black intermarriage to be the more common tendency. The authors of the 1848 census noted that no more than “six or eight” of the 847 Indians in the state could be considered of “pure blood”; most of the rest were of Indian and African descent. “This fact, of the admixture of African blood, usually predominating, in amount, over the Indian, is the only one common to all the different tribes; beyond that, the condition and circumstances of each tribe are so peculiar as to require separate consideration.” Massachusetts Indian commissioner John Milton Earle wrote after his 1860 Indian census, “The mixture in most of the tribes has been more with the negro race than with the white, till that blood probably predominates, though there are still a considerable number, who have the prominent characteristics of the Indians—the lank, glossy, black hair, the high cheek bones, the bright, dark eye, and other features peculiar to the race.”⁷⁶ In New Bedford and surrounding towns before 1860, at least 50 men of color (whom early census takers and clerks variously identified as “negro,” “black,” “mulatto,” and “mustee”) married women of the Dartmouth, Gay Head, Chappaquiddick, Mashpee, Narragansett, and Middleborough tribes, all Wampanoags of southeastern Massachusetts, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. Black women married Indian men, but in far fewer numbers: no more than ten marriages of this sort are known to have occurred in this period, and often Indian women married men of both Indian and African descent.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 33 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Eleven tribes were identified in the state in 1848—Chappequiddick, Christiantown, and Gay Head on Martha's Vineyard; Marshpee (Mashpee), Herring Pond (in Plymouth and Sandwich), and Yarmouth on Cape Cod; Fall River or Troy; Grafton or Hassanamisco; Dudley (in Webster); Punkapog (in Canton and Stoughton); and Natick. Of these eleven, only the Punkapog, Yarmouth, and Natick tribes by then owned no land. In 1860 Earle identified only ten tribes and noted that the Yarmouth Indians—as well as the Dartmouth Indians, whom the 1848 census did not identify—as tribes with considerable numbers of members that, because they either never had or did not then have reservation lands, were not “wards of the state.”

The fact that the children of Indian women were considered to be free may also have encouraged intermarriage between men of African descent and Indian women. In Mashpee on Cape Cod, the Wampanoag Indian Museum (**State Route 130 at Mill Pond**) was originally the home of Timothy Pocknet, whose second wife was Leah Lewis Queppish. Queppish's father was James Lewis, recorded in Mashpee Vital records as a runaway slave and probably living there by 1841.⁷⁷ Gay Head Wampanoags on Martha's Vineyard were instrumental in the escape of Edinbur Randall, who stowed away aboard the lumber bark *Franklin* at Jacksonville, Florida, in September 1854. The vessel either went first to Bath, Maine, where the Boston Vigilance Committee attempted to rescue Randall (who by this time had taken the alias John Mason), or the committee had set up a ruse to delude Mason's pursuers into thinking the fugitive would be landed at Bath. In either event, the committee knew he was aboard the *Franklin*. When the captain discovered Mason at Holmes Hole (now Vineyard Haven) and moored there, Randall, with the advice of the crew, took a boat and rowed to Gay Head (now Aquinnah, MA). There, tribe member William Francis took him to the home of Beulah Vanderhoop, a Gay Head Indian whose husband, of African descent, had come to Martha's Vineyard from Surinam. “The people of Gay Head knew that if he once reached there he would be perfectly safe,” Vanderhoop told her granddaughter. “On the shore there gathered a large number of men, armed with guns, pitchforks, clubs, and almost anything that would do to fight with” in case a sheriff came to seize the fugitive. Gay Head's Samuel Peters then sailed Mason to New Bedford, as Francis Jackson's records also attest. Vanderhoop stated that “the women took the slave to the residence of an abolitionist” in New Bedford, where he was “working about wharves; he remained in that city for the next seven years under another alias, Edgar Jones.”⁷⁸

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 34 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

African American enclaves also figured centrally in fugitive rescues. The black community on the north slope of Beacon Hill assisted in the escape of William and Ellen Craft in 1850, Shadrach Minkins in 1851, and countless lesser-known fugitives; they sheltered and found work for Anthony Burns in 1854. Twenty men "from the colored district" of New Bedford were summoned to sit at a nearby church to prevent the removal of Lucy Faggins, a sixteen-year-old enslaved girl brought by the Southerner Henry Ludlam into that city for a short time in 1841. When Ludlam and other men attempted to take her from a house where abolitionists were keeping her overnight before a hearing on her status was to take place in Boston the next day, they fled when the men walked out of the church toward them.⁷⁹ On Nantucket in late October 1822, Camillus Griffith, an agent for "parties living in the vicinity of Alexandria," attempted to seize Arthur and Lucy Cooper, who had escaped, probably from Fairfax County, Virginia, aboard the sloop *Regulator* to New Bedford between 1815 and 1818. Griffith later testified that he and the deputy "were in the act of removing" the Coopers from their home in Nantucket's New Guinea neighborhood "when a large assemblage of persons collected round the house and seemed to set us at defiance." Griffith sent the deputy to the back of the house to keep the Coopers from escaping by a rear door, but, Griffith stated, "the threats of the mob alarmed him," and the deputy retreated. With the help of several influential Quakers, the Coopers escaped and Griffith was frustrated in his attempted rendition. Arthur Cooper became the minister of the Nantucket's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, founded in 1835; he is buried in the island's "colored" cemetery off Prospect Street.

The Growth of Fugitive Assistance

Within a decade of Judge Cushing's 1783 ruling banning slavery in Massachusetts, which involved the African American Quock Walker in Barre, some twenty-six Massachusetts residents had joined the Providence Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, founded in 1789. Two years before that founding, Providence society member William Rotch Sr. had attempted to secure the freedom of Cato, claimed by John Slocum of Newport, Rhode Island, who had escaped to Nantucket and was working for Rotch's son-in-law, Samuel Rodman. In 1792, a year before the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, Rotch's son and namesake, also a member of the Providence society, was involved in the case of a fugitive and his family who had come to New Bedford the year before and had been working in the family of Rotch's brother Thomas, but he was then being pursued. New Bedford's Thomas Hazard sent the man on to

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 35

abolitionist Moses Brown in Providence with a letter stating in part, "We think considering all circumstances, it will be best for them to leave this place in the most private manner, that no person here may know where they have done, so that when the person who is in pursuit of them arrives, he may not be able to follow them."⁸⁰

Such societies emerged chiefly among whites from the natural rights philosophy of the American Revolution and in part from concern over three sections included in the 1788 Federal Constitution. Article 1, section 2 counted unfree Americans as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of establishing representation and taxes by state; the ninth section of the same article banned any congressional action with respect to the foreign slave trade until 1808; and Article 4, section 2 held that "no Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due." Rotch probably referred to the slave trade article when he wrote to Brown, "Whatever high encomiums are given to it (the Constitution) it is evident to me it is founded on Slavery and that is on Blood, because I understand, some of the southern members utterly refused doing anything unless this horrid part was admitted."⁸¹

The same events seemed to impel people of color in Massachusetts in two directions, contrary to each other. The African Society, formed by men of color in Boston just three years earlier "for the mutual benefit of each other, which may from time to time offer; behaving ourselves at the same time as true and faithful Citizens of the Commonwealth in which we live."⁸² In 1787 seventy-three "African blacks," chiefly from Boston, petitioned the Massachusetts General Court to help finance their return to Africa because, they argued, as long as they and their descendants stayed in this country they would remain "in very disagreeable and disadvantageous circumstances."⁸³ In 1815, Westport Afro-Indian mariner Paul Cuffe brought a group of black emigrants to Sierra Leone, where he hoped to establish an agricultural colony producing goods that would undercut the products of the American South. But as white, and some black, Americans came to support the American Colonization Society (founded in 1816 to resettle black Americans in Liberia) in significant numbers in the 1820s, most people of color turned away from leaving the country and began to support efforts to aid the enslaved and improve the lot of free people of color in the United States. The 1784 Prince Hall Grand

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 36 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Lodge of Free Masons, the African Lodge, founded in Boston in 1796, and the Massachusetts General Colored Association (MGCA) of 1826 were associations of this ilk.

The abolition of slavery in Massachusetts, the gradual abolition acts of neighboring states, and the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law combined to stimulate fugitive traffic to Massachusetts, both from the South and from neighboring states. The case of Cato, a Rhode Island slave, is exemplary, though because it occurred before the fugitive law passed it did not expose Rotch and Rodman to the \$500 fine that other assistants potentially faced after 1793. The new law empowered any federal district or circuit judge or any state magistrate to determine, without trial by jury for the alleged fugitive, that person's status. Enforcement of the law, most agree, was poor. Benjamin Prentiss was born into slavery in 1760 in New London, Connecticut, and did not fall within the scope of Connecticut's 1784 gradual manumission act. He escaped to Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, in 1792 and was caught and returned, though it is not known if his apprehension took place before or after Connecticut passed an act that year to free all slaves between the ages of 25 and 45. In February 1793, the month the Fugitive Slave Law passed, he escaped again and settled in Marlborough, Massachusetts, where he was still living in November 1855.⁸⁴ In February 1808 Springfield residents raised \$100 to purchase the freedom of the fugitive Jenny, who had become "favorably known" among them, from Peter von Geyseling of Schenectady. Jenny's son was evidently sent to South Wilbraham (now Hampden Village) and harbored by the Beebe family so as to elude his claimants.⁸⁵ At a reunion of abolitionists in Danvers in the 1890s, Mrs. Catharine S. B. Spear, who grew up in Hubbardston, recalled, "We had a fugitive slave to live with us and to labor in my father's family. He had escaped from New York, for slavery then existed there. We children were very fond of *Henry*."⁸⁶ Similarly, Peter Wheeler, born in Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey, in 1789, escaped in June 1806 from near Cayuga Lake, New York. After making his way by vessel from Albany to New York City and sailing as a hand about various vessels to Europe and the West Indies, he moved in 1814 to Middletown, Connecticut, and then to West Springfield and Westfield, still technically enslaved by the laws of New York State.⁸⁷

Some historians argue that the increasingly vocal rejection of colonization among blacks led such white antislavery leaders as William Lloyd Garrison to reject the idea and turn toward the concept of immediate abolition. It does appear that African American efforts toward equal rights triggered activity among whites. The establishment of the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 37 **The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

Massachusetts General Colored Association preceded the creation of Garrison's *Liberator* by five years; the first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, by four years. *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles, Together with a Preamble to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in Particular and Very Expressly to Those of the United States of America. Written in Boston, in the State of Massachusetts, Sept. 28th, 1829* (Boston, 1829), by North Carolina native David Walker, a black used clothing dealer in Boston, impressed Garrison as "one of the most remarkable productions of the age." However, Garrison did find the *Appeal's* recommendations of black self-defense against white abuse and eventual uprising should whites continue to subject blacks to "wretchedness and degradation" startling. Walker, an anticolonizationist, advised blacks in cities to be on guard against other blacks pretending "to find out all strange coloured people, where they work and where they reside, asking them questions, and trying to ascertain whether they are runaways or not, telling them, at the same time, that they always have been, are, and always will be friends to their brethren; and, perhaps, that they themselves are absconders, and a thousand such treacherous lies to get the better information of the more ignorant." Such, he said, were "in league with tyrants" who sought to return fugitives to slavery.⁸⁸ Walker's house at 81 Joy Street on Beacon Hill has not survived.

After the *Liberator's* creation, antislavery societies followed in quick succession. The New England Anti-Slavery Society was formed in early January 1832 in the basement of the African Meeting House on Beacon Hill, and over time it appears to have absorbed members of the MGCA. In some cities, including New Bedford, people of color formed their own antislavery societies as auxiliary to the New England parent group; in others, such as Salem, these societies were integrated. In Boston, the female antislavery society was a racially integrated body; interestingly, very few antislavery organizations integrated men and women, particularly before 1840. In smaller places, where fewer people of color lived, few or no records exist of independent antislavery organizations.

Over the decades before the Civil War, the population as a whole was drawn from the countryside into the state's cities, further depopulating rural places and making it even more difficult for laborers to support themselves in towns and on the farms. As the cases of Moses Roper and Levin Evans suggest, some fugitives were abused in the farm labor pool, as many other laborers in a generally struggling farm economy may certainly have been.⁸⁹ Gravitating to the cities and larger towns, many people of color worked in service occupations—as barbers, waiters, clothes cleaners or second-hand

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 38 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

clothes dealers, domestics, and less often as caterers and confectioners—as well as in such transportation trades as teaming, hostling, and carting. In port cities, many men were mariners and dock laborers. The 1837 Salem directory included the occupations of 42 of the 65 people of color listed: 15 were laborers and 14 were mariners. In 1846, of 70 listed occupations for people of color there, 32 were mariners and 13 were laborers. In each year these two categories were the largest occupational groups. In New Bedford in 1836, 31 of 87 men of color (occupations were not listed for women in the directory) were mariners and another 31 were laborers; in 1845 70 of 258 were mariners and 92 were laborers. In the mid-1830s, in short, seven of every ten men of color were mariners or laborers in both port cities; about a decade later the proportion of mariners had grown appreciably in Salem but dropped substantially in New Bedford (while the numbers working in service occupations grew), and the proportion of laborers dropped greatly in Salem but stayed the same in New Bedford. The variance in the figures for African American numbers is possibly attributable to the differing nature and fortunes of the fleets in each town. New Bedford's maritime economy was very largely given over to whaling, which attracted a great many potential crew members to the fleet. By the 1840s Hawaiian and other South Pacific Islanders—whom whaler routinely referred to as “Kanakas”—may have accounted for a larger share of foremast hands because they were willing to work at higher “lays” (which translated into a smaller share of a voyage's net profit). Men of color may have opted for waterfront work as they grew aware that chances of advancement in the increasingly unappealing whaling industry were limited. In Salem, by contrast, black mariners may have continued to be in demand—and seemed in relative terms in greater demand—as the city's fleet size decreased and others sought opportunity in fields not as accessible to people of color. Overall, though, more than six of every ten men of color continued to work as mariners and laborers in the mid-1840s.⁹⁰

Particularly among the mariner population, evidence exists that fugitives were able to conceal themselves effectively, to say nothing of their ability to serve as effective aids in fugitive escapes. William Jenkins had recommended that the fugitive Wendell Phillips sent to him “steer [*sic*] towards Cape Ann” so that he might find there a vessel going to the British West Indies and thus elude anyone in pursuit of him. John W. Thompson, born enslaved on a Maryland plantation in 1812, escaped in 1842 through Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia; while there, he wrote, “Several slaves near by were arrested and taken to the South, so I finally concluded best for me to go to sea, and accordingly removed to New York city for that purpose.” Too inexperienced to get a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 39

berth aboard a merchant vessel, he was sent to New Bedford by a whaling industry agent. When the captain of the *Milwood* confronted him about his lack of skill as a ship's steward, the job for which he had signed on, Thompson told him, "I am a fugitive slave from Maryland, and have a family in Philadelphia; but fearing to remain there any longer, I thought I would go on a whaling voyage, as being the place where I stood least chance of being arrested by slave hunters." The North Carolina fugitive John S. Jacobs escaped from his owner in New York City by taking a boat to Providence and then went on to New Bedford. After working for merchant William Rotch Rodman (**388 County Street, MHC #70, County Street NRHD 1976**) for several months, he shipped aboard the whaling vessel *Francis Henrietta*, owned in part by Rodman's brother, Samuel Rodman Jr. Upon his return in 1843, Jacobs later became active in the Underground Railroad.⁹¹

Throughout the 1830s, the abolition movement showed signs of disintegrating over the issues of political, clerical, and women's involvement. The stance of churches as corporate bodies, as opposed to the views of their members as individuals, had long been an issue among abolitionists, and for that reason Underground Railroad researchers should exercise care in associating church buildings with fugitive assistance. Samuel J. May recalled how antislavery meetings were turned away from churches in the mid-1830s; the fugitive Samuel Ringgold Ward, once the pastor of a white Congregational church in upstate New York claimed in his autobiography that "the New England clergy, as a body, had taken ground distinctly and openly against the anti-slavery cause" because, he averred, "it will disturb their existing harmony so to take up, discuss, and consider this question." Catherine Spear told fellow abolitionists that when she attempted to have Frederick Douglass speak in her native Hubbardston church "an effort was made to turn me out of church, not by our good old minister, Rev. Samuel Gay, but by a new preacher from New York." When Cyrus P. Grosvenor, pastor of Salem's Second Baptist Church, gave an antislavery lecture in that town in 1833, he was not permitted to present it in his own church. Thomas Wentworth Higginson resigned his pastorate of Newburyport's First Religious Society in 1850 because "more than one" sea captain in his congregation had felt obliged to return stowaway fugitives to the South.⁹² Numerous accounts exist of ministers refusing to read notices of upcoming antislavery meetings from the pulpit. In 1906, Harvard historian Albert Bushnell Hart wrote that Garrison, who believed "nothing was more like the spirit of Christ than to relieve the oppressed . . . and to bring a whole race of people out of sin and debasement" shortly discovered:

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 40 **The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

that the cloth in the north was arrayed against him, and that many northern divines entered the lists against abolition, especially Moses Stuart, professor of Hebrew in Andover Theological Seminary, who justified slavery from the New Testament; President [Nathan] Lord, of Dartmouth College, who held that slavery was an institution of God, according to natural law; and [John H.] Hopkins, Episcopal bishop of Vermont, who came forward as a thick-and-thin defender of slavery. The positive opposition of churches soon followed.⁹³

Quakers, often credited with a large share of Underground Railroad work and often regarded among fugitives as invariable friends, were not as a sect any more likely to assist fugitives than others, including Wesleyan Methodists and Unitarians. Many 18th-century abolitionists were Quakers, and yearly meetings among them in various regions took early action against holding and trading slaves. But in the 1800s the sect as a whole had grown conservative on the issue and had come to concentrate more on issues of personal piety and simplicity. In 1841 the British abolitionist Joseph Sturge expressed regret that American Friends, "who once took the lead in efforts for the abolition of slavery . . . should now be discouraging, and holding back their members, from taking part in so righteous a cause." Elizabeth Buffum Chace had been overseer of the poor, assistant clerk, and clerk of the Swansea, Massachusetts, Monthly Meeting of Friends, wore the garb of Quakers, and had never, she wrote, "said 'you' to a single person in my life, or given the title of 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' to anybody." Yet as an abolitionist she was "ostracized" from the meeting, and at the Newport Yearly Meeting "almost everybody was against us. They denounced the *Liberator*; Garrison was an infidel; slavery could only be cut off gradually; the colored race must be colonized in Africa." William Bassett, a Lynn Quaker, was disowned by his meeting for writing a protest of the practice of segregating African Americans in the so-called "negro pew" in the meeting house; Abby Kelley Foster was also disowned from the Uxbridge Meeting for her abolitionist views.⁹⁴

The Boston Vigilance Committee twice sent circulars to religious societies in Massachusetts to raise money for its fugitive aid efforts, once in March 1851 and again in June 1854. During the month before the first appeal, the committee reported, about one hundred fugitives had come to it for help; the second appeal took place shortly after the rendition of Anthony Burns. In the 1851 appeal Massachusetts churches and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 41

pastors had contributed \$1,500 to the committee; in 1854 78 of 1547 churches responded to the circular and donated \$817.36 in all. At that time, committee treasurer Francis Jackson reported to Rev. Theodore Parker, the *Massachusetts Register* reported that there were 471 Orthodox (meaning Congregational), 270 Methodist, 267 Baptist, 170 Unitarian, 130 Universalist, and 239 of all other types of churches in the Commonwealth. Of these totals, 26 Congregational churches gave \$323.20 to the Vigilance Committee; 24 Baptist congregations and one Baptist minister gave \$184.12; 15 Methodist congregations gave \$78.72; eight Unitarian churches gave \$196.02—but \$132.00 of that total came from Salem's O. B. Frothingham—Episcopalian William Withington of Swansea gave \$4.00; two Friends meetings, one in Amesbury and the other in Uxbridge, together gave \$27.00; and Jonathan E. Corey representing the Freetown Christian Church gave \$4.00.⁹⁵

Some, though relatively few, churches did take a stand against slavery (see the Statement of Associated Property Types for a discussion of them), and there is no correlation between individual clerics of any denomination and the tendency to assist fugitives. Theodore Parker was on the executive committee of the Boston Vigilance Committee and remained a Garrisonian abolitionist to the end—that is, he did not advocate the use of force in the overthrow of slavery. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 he declared, "I will act with any body of decent and serious men, as the head, or the foot, or the hand, in any mode not involving the use of deadly weapons, to nullify and defeat the operation of this law; and I feel confident there is enough of manhood and true Christianity in Boston, to protect every fugitive amongst us, without the shedding of blood, or even the rending of a garment." He housed William and Ellen Craft at his Exeter Place home (not extant) as fugitive assistants attempted to keep them from pursuing slave agents, married them, and armed William Craft; despite his vow of nonviolence, he wrote, during the Craft incident "for two weeks I wrote my sermons with a sword in the open drawer under my ink-stand and a pistol in the flap of the desk, loaded & ready for defense, until they could be put on board a vessel for England." Vigilance Committee records document his active assistance in other escapes in 1851.⁹⁶

Other clerics were adamantly against Garrison's advocacy of "moral suasion" as the only effective means to end slavery, including the Rev. Charles Turner Torrey and many others who split with the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1839 and 1840. In January 1839, according to Garrison biographer Henry Mayer, Garrison told his associates of a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 42 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

“clerical snake . . . coiling in the grass for a spring” at the *Liberator* and the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, and by 1840 such men as Torrey and Amos A. Phelps had dissociated themselves from Garrison and begun a separate newspaper, the *Massachusetts Abolitionist*. Torrey’s allies called the state antislavery group “a woman’s rights, no-government organization.” Yet Torrey was as active in the Underground Railroad as Parker, if not more so.⁹⁷

Fugitive assistants were divided after the Fugitive Slave Act passed over whether to obey the new law. Much more rigid than the first fugitive law, the act was also much more penurious. The act required claimants to secure an affidavit attesting their ownership of the fugitives and a warrant from a special federal commissioner for the arrest and rendition of these fugitives, but these commissioners were authorized to enlist the aid of anyone to enforce the law. As in the 1793 law, fugitives continued to be denied the right of trial by jury and could not testify in their own behalf. Any law officer who failed to cooperate and any citizen who obstructed a fugitive arrest or concealed a fugitive were liable to a fine of up to one thousand dollars as well as imprisonment. Melissa Dawes of Cummington termed the Fugitive Slave Act “diabolical” but noted that while a fugitive came to her family home in the 1850s, “we had to let her pass on” because of possibility of fine and a prison term.⁹⁸ Others, such as Parker, who claimed a “higher law” held sway, had no qualms about defying the law. And as Parker’s address implies, fugitive assistants also split over whether to forcibly resist any effort to apprehend fugitives after the act’s passage, and here there may have been a decided racial correlation: while only some white abolitionists advocated forcible resistance, few black fugitive assistants appear to have been opposed to it. In early October 1850, Boston newspapers reported, the “supposed presence of slave catchers” had impelled Springfield residents to form a “committee of safety,” and African American residents—including an estimated fifty fugitives—were arming themselves. A meeting of “thousands” at the town hall declared that “not a slave shall be carried from Springfield, law or no law.”⁹⁹

The Fugitive Slave Act had a varying effect on fugitives themselves, as narratives such as George Lewis’s attest. A reported “forty or more” of the congregation of Leonard Grimes’s Twelfth Baptist Church left Boston for Canada.¹⁰⁰ The black populations of U.S. cities close to Canada suffered great losses, presumably because Canada was so near. In Philadelphia and Boston black populations also fell between 1850 and 1855, though in New Bedford it increased, both in raw numbers and in proportion to total

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 43 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

population. John Thomas, alias James Williams, escaped from Elkton, Maryland, in 1838 when he was thirteen and was active in Underground Railroad work in Lancaster, Reading, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, until the Fugitive Slave Act compelled his move to Boston. With the turmoil surrounding William and Ellen Craft at the end of 1850, Williams went to New Bedford but stayed only three weeks; he then returned to Philadelphia and ultimately left for California in March 1851.¹⁰¹ Others stayed in New Bedford, including documented fugitives Louisa Faggins Henson, William Ferguson, William H. Carney Sr. and Jr., and Charles Lightfoot, all of whom lived out their lives and died in New Bedford.

The Architecture of the Underground Railroad

The research on the Underground Railroad to date has not established a direct association between the Underground Railroad and architecture.¹⁰² The idea that secret hiding places and escape mechanisms were incorporated into houses involved with the movement is no longer a defensible one in view of the fact that so many of these assertions have proven to be illegitimate. There are but a few buildings where such spaces can be convincingly documented. Many other buildings were associated with the movement simply because owners and local historians encountered perplexing spaces that they were unable or unwilling to explain in any other way. Years of field work by state historic preservation offices, scholars, and other researchers have demonstrated that these pronouncements were largely based in an ignorance of historic construction methods as well as of the Underground Railroad itself. Some were blatantly spurious. Still there are buildings that can be clearly linked to the Underground Railroad through documented events, and it will be from this group that genuine and relevant architectural characteristics will be identified and interpreted. They may not prove to be as dramatic as the professed secret passages and hidey holes, but they will help illustrate the experiences of fugitives from slavery and define the milieu in which many lived and worked in Massachusetts.

The Underground Railroad has left a faint imprint on the geography and architecture of the state. This consequence is partly the result of the secret nature of the escape process, but it was perhaps due more to the fact that outside of only a few exceptions, fixed networks or specific architectural accommodations were not critical to carrying out the mission of escape. Each case had its own particular set of circumstances and players that existed outside the realm of normal daily life. It is in the absence of any unified system that the secrecy of the Underground Railroad is expressed.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 44

In terms of this Multiple Property Documentation Form submission, eight property types can be identified. (See Section F: Associated Property Types, p. 99) The predominant architectural type associated with the Underground Railroad is the dwelling. These houses fall into two principal categories of property types related to their relationship to the movement: houses where fugitives were harbored (Property Type 1: "Properties that Harbored Fugitives on the Underground Railroad") and houses where fugitives themselves lived (Property Type 3: "Properties Where Fugitives Lived in Massachusetts"). Fugitives with houses of their own frequently harbored other fugitives, and these dwellings are classified as part of Property Type 2 ("Properties Associated With Persons Active in the Underground Railroad"). Fugitive dwellings that exist in an enclave with other properties associated with African Americans can be categorized as Property Type 7 ("Properties Associated with Fugitives Living in an Enclave or an Afro-Indian Community") as well. Many of the properties associated with prominent persons active in the Underground Railroad but who did not harbor fugitives (Property Type 2) are also dwellings; however, their architecture does not evince a direct relationship to the fugitive experience.

Dwellings Where Fugitives Were Harbored

Houses where fugitives were harbored on their flight had no specialized functions or requirements that obliged architectural adaptation. Existing private spaces within these homes were sufficient for the temporary lodging or concealment of fugitives. Traditional practices respecting the privacy of the home afforded enough protection in the majority of instances even after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which permitted slave catchers with certain proofs to obtain search warrants. In the most celebrated cases of attempted fugitive captures, the houses themselves were the protective entity, along with people willing to confront the authorities. Pursued by slave catchers in 1850, William Craft hid in his Boston cabinet shop until he was forced to flee with his wife to the Southac (now Phillips) Street home of Lewis Hayden for protection. Hayden's house was a highly visible fugitive harbor where Harriet Beecher Stowe was once introduced to thirteen "newly-escaped slaves of all colors and sizes" harbored there. Boston Vigilance Committee records identify 77 fugitives sheltered, clothed, fed, and otherwise aided in Hayden's home between March 1850 and August 1857, and there were no doubt many more unnamed whom the Haydens assisted in their Phillips Street

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 45 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

home. English abolitionist George Thompson visited Hayden with William Lloyd Garrison while the Crafts were hiding there and with others arranged for their escape to England. He reported that "windows [were] barricaded and doors double locked and barred . . . [with] Lewis Hayden, his young son and a band of brave colored men armed to the teeth and ready for the impending death struggle with the United States Marshall and his armed posse."¹⁰³ Although the Hayden house bears no physical evidence of the obstacles put in place to protect the Crafts, it is at least possible that some fugitive harbors, documented currently or discovered in the future, may reveal signs of having been modified in some way for other fugitives.¹⁰⁴

If a house was raided, a sought-after fugitive would have been at risk whether or not there was a hiding place. In particularly busy and vulnerable locations, subtle alterations that would improve connections to more private sections of the house are plausible. A friend of Simeon Dodge, a well-known abolitionist in Marblehead, recalled that Dodge sheltered fugitives under the watchful eyes of "pro-slavery spies," and that he constructed a secret trap door for those in his care to use in case law officers raided his home, still standing at 236 Washington Street.¹⁰⁵ Even in the most extreme instances, fugitives relied on those who were committed to protect them. Vigilance was the first line of defense, followed by blocking entry to the house. When the need arose, a fugitive was removed from the situation. There are many accounts of ingenious escapes under the veil of darkness, in disguise or secreted in loads of hay, onion barrels, and false-bottomed wagons. When all else failed, as in the case of Arthur and Lucy Cooper in Nantucket (1822), a defiant antislavery mob encircled the house, drove back the catchers, and spirited them and their children out a window and to a place of greater safety.¹⁰⁶

The private sections of houses—kitchens, pantries, and bed chambers—were off-limits to strangers and in general would have been adequate hiding places; social convention would have prevented uninvited guests from venturing past public areas in the front of the dwelling. The son of Natick abolitionist Edward Walcott recalled often coming down to breakfast to discover "strange black faces in the back kitchen." He was cautioned not to say anything about it.¹⁰⁷ Mrs. George S. Hillard was reputedly "in the habit of putting the fugitives in the upper chamber" of the house she and her husband shared on Beacon Hill in Boston. Once she found that one of her charges had pulled down the window shades for fear of being seen. She reassured him that there was little danger of his being seen from the street, but he felt more of an urge for caution than she did.¹⁰⁸ In

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 46 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

a number of accounts, fugitives required some nursing to be able to complete their journeys. Some were ill from long voyages and poor conditions; others were injured from whippings and gunshot wounds; most were hungry and exhausted. Their caretakers were highly sympathetic to their hardships and desired to provide them with every possible comfort. Sarah Bradstreet's earliest memory of seeing a fugitive in her parents' house in Danvers (**4 Putnam Court, MHC #213**) was in the front chamber where she witnessed their treatment of his infected lash wounds. She later wrote that "he was nursed by my parents for two weeks and then went away." The next was spoon-fed broth by her mother. Another was "nursed and passed on."¹⁰⁹

Cellars and attics were utilized if the need was felt for greater secrecy and protection. Methodist minister and suffragist Anna Howard Shaw (1847-1919) wrote that as a child she heard a noise in the coal-bin at her home on High Street in Lawrence in 1857. "I investigated and discovered a negro woman concealed there. . . . My mother wisely kept me close to her for several days, until the escaped slave my father was hiding was safely out of the house and away."¹¹⁰ In Boston newly arrived fugitives were housed in the attics of the **Lewis Hayden House** and the office of the *Liberator* until they could be moved to other places.¹¹¹ These two locations were perhaps the most important entry points to the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts. There was no secrecy about these places, and it was unlikely the attics were rude hiding places.

Outwardly, houses revealed nothing about their status as fugitive harbors for the Underground Railroad. They represent the full range of architectural periods and types. Many dated earlier than the beginning of the Underground Railroad, but others were constructed during the antislavery movement. Abolitionists embodied a gamut of ages and lifestyles. Their dwellings varied in scale and pretension, as well reflected the cultural diversity of fugitive assistants. Some of the Commonwealth's most elite citizens participated in the abolitionist movement, as well as some who were much less wealthy, including other fugitives who had settled in Massachusetts and established households. In this way, the architecture of the homes of fugitive assistants ranges from Colonial-era, center-chimney dwellings such as the **Collamore House** (1713) in Pembroke or the **Jenkins House** (1765) in Andover, to the fashionable, two-story, Greek Revival-style **Francis E. Bigelow House** (about 1840) in Concord.¹¹² While Bigelow's house was high style, he was a blacksmith whose real estate was valued at three thousand dollars in 1850. In New Bedford, Andrew Robeson helped finance the *Liberator*, sheltered and employed the fugitive David W. Ruggles in the late 1830s and early

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 47 **The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

1840s, and was part of a fugitive assistance network that moved fugitives from that city to Fall River and beyond. With real property valued at \$78,600 in 1850, Robeson was at least as if not more apt to assist fugitives than Bigelow. George and Susan Hillard on Beacon Hill, with real property estimated to be worth \$9,300 that year, employed and assisted numerous fugitives; George Howland in New Bedford hired fugitives and sold property to others and, with real estate worth an estimated \$200,000 in 1850, was among the wealthiest men in that city, itself one of the wealthiest in the world.¹¹³ The modest one-story **Greek Revival cottage** (1840) of Leominster shoemaker **Jonathan Drake** and his wife Frances was probably one of the most active stations in the Fitchburg area.¹¹⁴ On the north slope of Beacon Hill, the African Americans Lewis Hayden and John P. Coburn (**2 Phillips Street, MHC #4101**) owned 4- and 3 ½ -story brick houses, respectively (built between 1825 and 1840) where they boarded fugitives.¹¹⁵ These houses are representative of the brick townhouse style popular in Boston in the Federal period and illustrate the quality of life enjoyed by independent blacks in the city. Farmhouses also harbored fugitives, such as the wood frame **Alvan Ward House** (about 1790) in Ashburnham, with its two-story, center-passage plan, and the **Ross Farm** (about 1830; **123 Meadow Street, MHC #153**) in Northampton, with a two-story, side-passage plan.¹¹⁶ No one building, period, or style defines the type, which indirectly was another advantage in preserving the secrecy of the Underground Railroad.

In most instances, fugitive harbors were probably intended only for temporary lodging. In all but a few instances so far documented, fugitives' visits were of short duration, lasting until a new fugitive harbor was identified and it was safe for them to continue along the route. A spare room in the back or upper story of the house would have been put into use, with the host family being vigilant in protecting the identity of their guests. In this way the houses themselves were the hiding places, rather than particular areas of concealment constructed within. Some fugitive harbors were more threatened than others, and some fugitives were more hotly pursued or felt more at risk. Bronson Alcott of Concord wrote in his diary, "Our friend the fugitive, who has shared now a week's hospitalities with us (sawing and piling my wood), feels this new trust of Freedom yet unsafe here in New England, and so has left this morning for Canada."¹¹⁷ The Alcott house is extant (**455 Lexington Road, listed as the Wayside, MHC #171, NRHP 1977, NHL 1985, Minute Man National Historical Park NRD NHL 1966**). Each instance had its unique set of conditions. Yet for the humane reasons people volunteered their homes as fugitive harbors, it is likely that uninhabitable spaces,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 48

particularly cramped quarters such as closets and crawl spaces, would have been reserved only for emergency situations.

Dwellings Where Fugitives Lived

An important Underground Railroad property type represents the dwellings in which fugitives lived, as it is now evident that for many escaped slaves Massachusetts was a destination rather than simply a stop on the route to somewhere else. Massachusetts was well known as a state that had abolished slavery before the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law and, unlike most of its neighbors, was viewed as a place to settle. Perhaps it will become known that this image, coupled with such other variables as the availability of employment and the relative size and concentration of populations of color, motivated more blacks to settle in Massachusetts than in other northern states when more data is uncovered regarding the individuals involved in this diaspora.

With a limited number of fugitive dwellings so far identified in the state, only the most general conclusions can be made. Foremost, it must be acknowledged that abolitionist sentiment notwithstanding, free blacks were restricted to a lower and marginalized status in antebellum Massachusetts. Thus, in general, architecture associated with the laboring class in Massachusetts is appropriate to their means. A broader application of this classification would include other property types, such as the places where they worked, stores where they shopped, churches where they worshipped, schools they attended, public buildings where they encountered local authorities, locations where they socialized, and gathering places for their political activities. A knowledge of these other buildings is crucial to developing an image of the communities antebellum blacks inhabited, an environment that has been virtually erased from the cultural landscape.

Many fugitives found work, as well as kindred spirits in the larger cities in the state. Boston and New Bedford were the major points of entry for escaped slaves who landed in Massachusetts as crew, stowaways, or passengers on coastal vessels. Both of these towns had sizeable black populations that worked in maritime and service trades. Here new arrivals sought out helpful individuals or aid societies to determine a course of action. Fugitive assistants helped many find work, room, and board until more permanent accommodations could be identified; they probably moved those who were more hotly pursued to Canada or deeper into the state by means of Underground Railroad networking. In these cities, the fugitives were limited to dwellings that were available to their class and economic level and were restricted to specific areas where

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 49 **The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

the concentration of people of color, as well as of newer immigrants and poorer people, was high.

In Boston, early in the period of significance of this multiple property documentation format nomination, those blacks who did not reside as servants in white households congregated in the denser commercial and wharf areas of the city. By 1800 many had begun to populate a fringe area in the city's West End on the north slope of Beacon Hill.¹¹⁸ By the time the Underground Railroad was most active, this area constituted the city's principal African American community. Census figures indicate that 766 persons of African descent were enumerated in the city in 1780, and by 1860 that number had increased to 2,261. Of that latter figure, 1,395, or about 62%, lived in and around the Beacon Hill area. A review of a historic resource study for the Boston African American National Historic Site provides some insight into the character of housing during the period.¹¹⁹

Boston selectmen began enforcing a "brick-only" rule in new construction in 1803 for fire prevention. From this point on houses with walls built of brick and roofs covered with slate began to replace the traditional wood-frame houses that had defined Boston's domestic architecture for more than a century. Of course, many of these wood-frame houses survived into the 19th century, though at a devalued status. Older houses such as these would have been inhabited by blacks as tenants and owners. The **William C. Nell House**, a three-story, five-bay Federal-style house at **3 Smith Court** on Beacon Hill's north slope, was constructed in 1799 with a windowless rear wall—a building feature common before 1805 for houses facing side alleys (**MHC #4093, Beacon Hill NHL HD 1966**). A remarkable survivor of the earliest period of urban house construction on Beacon Hill, 3 Smith Court was owned by people of color from 1830 until 1928. Clothing dealer James Scott, indicted (though later released) for storming the Boston Court House to rescue fugitive Anthony Burns in 1854, lived in the house from 1839 to at least 1888. Scott shared the house with William Cooper Nell, one of the city's foremost fugitive assistants, and Henry Weeden, one of the founding members of the fugitive-assisting New England Freedom Association.¹²⁰

With the advent of brick construction in the early nineteenth century, house design in Boston's West End became more standardized and the neighborhood denser and more urban. Earlier, houses were less numerous and more scattered, occupying lots subdividing old pastures and waste land. New construction had an organizing effect.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 50 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

New streets were plotted along with the lots, and an architecture evolved that maintained the growing regularity of the landscape. Land was still an expensive commodity in cities, and at the lower end of the economic scale it was parceled out in small amounts to be affordable. On Beacon Hill and in Cambridge this resulted in a complex pattern of streets, alleys, and terraces as the rears of lots were further subdivided to squeeze more housing in and generate more revenue from the real estate. This more precise planning often created what are now considered quaint architectural enclaves, but it also resulted in excessive crowding.

Later houses responded to the restricted dimensions, narrow frontages, and concealed inner lots of the intensifying urban landscape. The "first" **John P. Coburn House**, located on what is now known as **3 Coburn Court**, is a distinctive example of affordable housing constructed in the West End in the 1830s. It is a two-story, wood frame dwelling with a high basement and attached to its neighbors with brick walls on the front and rear. The house, only 800 square feet, is sited at the rear of the house fronting on 24 Southac (Phillips) Street and accessible only by a narrow passageway between buildings. Coburn, a used clothes dealer, purchased the house in 1835. Also a founding officer of the New England Freedom Association, he paid one-third of James Scott's bail following Scott's arrest in the Burns case.¹²¹ A similar dwelling is the **George Putnam House**, built 1826-27 on **Belknap (now Joy) Street** on Beacon Hill's north slope. In 1850, when the black hairdresser and Garrisonian abolitionist George Putnam moved his family to Salem, he rented this three-story, two-bay brick house to Robert Johnson, who had escaped slavery in 1829. Johnson purchased the house in 1853. These small houses illustrate the depressed value of real estate in the areas where many of the free blacks and fugitives resided. Most black property owners and tenants could afford only limited amount of space and amenities.¹²² Technological advances, such as stoves and, later, central heat, were slow to be introduced.

Most dwellings were built, and then continually adapted, to function as multiple dwellings. If any one characteristic emerges that links these Beacon Hill buildings, it is that property owners rented out space in their houses for either commercial gain or to subsidize the cost of home ownership. Certain black homeowners on Beacon Hill are known to have added an extra story to the tops of their houses. In these cases it was apparently done to create more rooms for boarders, some of whom were fugitives. Boardinghouses also functioned as fugitive harbors, such as the three-story, brick **Lewis Hayden House** on **66 Phillips Street**, who was known to have harbored as

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 51 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

many as 13 fugitives at one time in his attic, which was contained within a mansard roof added above the third story of the house.¹²³ The several north slope sites of the boardinghouses of John R. Taylor, none of which are extant, also operated in this manner. Clearly, one distinctive architectural element of the African American presence on the north side of Beacon Hill is the manner in which these prototype row houses were enlarged by their black owners to accommodate tenants and boarders (including fugitives) in their households. It can be conjectured that they would have personalized them as well, perhaps introducing decorative features that recalled their southern or African heritage.¹²⁴ Applied decoration, furnishings, ritual arrangements, and ceremonial features may have been present; however, no vestiges of these features have survived in pictorial representations or narrative accounts, much less in surviving buildings so far as is known.

This strategy was not unique to the blacks in Boston; every marginalized cultural group in the city employed it, and none had a direct impact on its architecture. Neither was it unique to Boston or the period; rather, this is an enduring condition of urban life. Nevertheless, this strategy was an important aspect of the black urban community during the period of the Underground Railroad because it both allowed free blacks to live independently and created a milieu in which fugitives could easily enter and hide from external authorities. Census statistics indicate that Boston's black population grew at a relatively slow rate during the height of the Underground Railroad years in the 1850s and 1860s. However, even taking into account the movement of fugitives to Canada after the Fugitive Slave Act, historians and others have long argued that census records consistently undercounted minority populations. Such undercounting might have been especially pronounced on the north slope of Beacon Hill, with its narrow streets connected by a largely hidden maze of courts and places and with fugitives harbored in its warren of buildings and rooms along them.

Working-class whites and blacks mingled in the same neighborhoods, at times in the same buildings, in both large and small Massachusetts cities, but in architectural terms the character of those neighborhoods differed outside Boston. In older towns that had grown into cities, independent blacks lived in enclaves with architecture that reflected the genre of lower-class, affordable housing typical of those towns. As these places grew more populous and urbanized, the physical segregation of races was impractical: while there were large concentrations of people of color in the densely settled west ends

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 52 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

of Boston and New Bedford, for example, they shared these neighborhoods with working-class and poor German and Irish immigrants as well as native-born whites of various ethnic backgrounds. Outside Boston brick was seldom used as a material, unless for large-scale tenement developments; rather, wood-frame construction predominated, which was more consistent with the modest, economical features of the buildings. In Cambridge there are a few small houses associated with members of an African American community that expanded there during the period of the Underground Railroad. Two houses from that era illustrate the range of architecture expressed in that city. It was into one half of a two-story, wood-frame double house located on a court off Norfolk Street that fugitive J. Milton Clarke and his friend and employer Joshua Bowen Smith, a successful Boston caterer, moved with their wives in 1852 (**79 Norfolk Street, MHC #551, listed as Robert Fuller House, Norfolk Street NRHD 1982**). Both men were highly visible abolitionist and political figures.¹²⁵ The double house was cleverly designed to appear as a larger house or terrace and was embellished with Greek Revival-style cornices and a massive Doric porch. The J. Milton Clarke House was located behind a pair of 1½ story, front-gable single dwellings designed in a similar Greek Revival style with Ionic porches. These three units were part of a larger planned trio of similar groupings on the city's old almshouse lot.¹²⁶ This section of Cambridge was urbanizing very much as Beacon Hill had, only a generation later and with smaller wood houses consistent with its suburban location. Within two years Joshua Bowen Smith purchased a neighboring lot that contained one of the single dwellings; there he resided for the rest of his life. (Both the **J. Milton Clarke House** and the **Joshua Bowen Smith House** are extant on Norfolk Street in Cambridge.)

Similar situations existed in other of the commonwealth's eastern cities, such as Salem and New Bedford. Working-class neighborhoods there were integrated with blacks inhabiting the shared vernacular architecture. As the 19th century advanced, this architecture was characterized by small, one-story front-gable dwellings that came to define the single-family independent worker house type in the multitude of industrial towns that proliferated throughout Massachusetts during the period of significance for the multiple property documentation format nomination. Larger, multiple-family dwellings were also in vogue, as were boardinghouses for people unable to afford to own property. While white abolitionists and integrated vigilance committees often provided financial support for fugitives, communities of free black people and those fugitives integrated within them were the principal source of physical assistance for

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 53 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

fugitives in Massachusetts. These communities warrant further study in terms of how their geographical and architectural composition was shaped in this period by the African-American presence.

Architectural Style in Fugitive Dwellings

The Greek Revival style in architecture neatly corresponds to the peak era of the Underground Railroad (1830-1860), and domestic architecture built for fugitives during this period displays a design unity as a result. The **J. Milton Clarke House** and **Joshua Bowen Smith House** in Cambridge are particularly distinctive examples of this style. The far more common front-gable cottages and upright-and-wing houses also embody the characteristics of the style, but in a far more diluted fashion. The rectangular plan and front-gable orientation of these houses evinces the appearance of the Greek temple form, which was at the root of the fashion. Roof edges are embellished with wide friezes to further emphasize the temple image. In more fully developed examples, such as the one-story **Joshua Bowen Smith House** or the two-story **Aaron Safford House**, also in Cambridge, the entablature returns across the façade to create a pediment.¹²⁷ Less developed examples reduce the scale of the entablature and break the horizontal return a short distance from the eave. An example of the latter restrained development is illustrated in the upright-and-wing house associated with fugitive Basil Dorsey in Florence. Three of the four examples of the Greek Revival style cited above have wide front porches with columns in a Grecian order. The porch of the **Basil Dorsey House** was more restrained than the others and limited to the doorway, but it has been removed.

These small dwellings were based on pattern book models freely interpreted by professional builders. Plans were relatively uncomplicated and unpretentious. The Joshua Bowen Smith House is the most formal with an entry lobby with staircase in a front corner and double parlors on the opposing side. A dining room was located at the back of the entry, with a kitchen in the elevated basement. Bed chambers occupy space in the attic story, illuminated by large gable and dormer windows. There is a hierarchy of decoration in the house. The lobby trim and stair display an imposing level of ornament; however, the highest degree of detail is present in the parlors where there are white marble mantels and substantial architraves about the doors and windows. The private areas in the rear, cellar, and attic of the house are simply detailed. A particular pretension in the house is that it was built with central heating; the parlor fireplaces contain hot-air ducts behind decorative cast-iron screens.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 54 **The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**

Outwardly, the double house that was partially inhabited by J. Milton Clarke is composed of a large two-story, four-bay, gable-roof form flanked by 1½-story wings to which are, in turn, attached one-story kitchens at the ends. Even though it is a modest dwelling, the massing of the house was cleverly assembled to aggrandize its overall scale and appearance. Each half has an entrance in the 1½-story wing that opens on a center passage. The best room in the plan is located in the large center section of the house, which provides it with a high ceiling and wide, battered architraves. The other flanking room, located in the wing, is smaller, lower, and plainer. Connected to the kitchen, it was the common room. Both rooms were heated with fireplaces, a curious anomaly for 1851. There is also a small rear room in the center of the house. The floor plan is similar on the second story, except above the one-story kitchen.

Across the state, the main, front-gable section of the 1½-story **Basil Dorsey House (NR pending)** in the village of Florence (Northampton) is efficiently arranged around a central chimney. A side passage with a stair occupies the east side of the house, as in the Smith House, yet it is much plainer. There is a single parlor in the opposite front corner, which would have been heated with a stove although there is no mantel present. A room about the size of the parlor is located at the rear of the entrance lobby; this room functioned as a dining room and was heated with a fireplace, which also represented the symbolic hearth. A small unheated room is positioned in the remaining rear corner of the plan. The upper half-story is laid out essentially the same with a large bed chamber in the front of the house and two smaller chambers in the rear. Typical of the progressive upright-and-wing plan form, a one-story kitchen ell is appended to one side, connecting to the main rear room of the house. This wing contained a large kitchen with a pantry and wood shed partitioned on the outside end.

The ubiquitous front-gable cottage likely evolved from the design precedents of the small Greek Revival urban house and the more universal upright-and-wing plan form, which was an early prototype house for laborers in 19th-century industrial villages throughout Massachusetts and the rest of New England. The **Jonathan and Frances Drake House** in Leominster is an appropriate example. The plan of the main section of the house is similar in arrangement, but the kitchen has been relocated to the rear of the house to conform to the small, narrow lots allotted to factory workers and laborers. Introduced by the mid-19th century, this cottage remained the preferred option for a single-family, working-class dwelling into the 20th century. It retained its Greek Revival-

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number E Page 55 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

style elements for the most part, although in the post-Civil War era these houses were frequently embellished on the exterior with ornate cornice brackets and porch features to make them appear more picturesque. Many antebellum houses were updated with more current features, such as the full front piazza added to the Drake House. Houses in this class of dwelling have survived because they have been affordable, expandable, and adaptable.

Other Buildings

Other people assisted fugitives but did not offer their homes to them as shelter (Property Type 2). In some instances their homes, however, are the only tangible representation of their association with the Underground Railroad. George Howland, for example, gave work to the fugitive Frederick Douglass on ships and wharves he owned in New Bedford; Howland's home at the corner of Seventh and Walnut Streets is the only surviving material connection to his fugitive assistance. In addition, other people employed fugitives in their homes, farms, and businesses. These properties cannot legitimately be considered fugitive harbors, yet many of the fugitives still experienced the threat of discovery and recapture there; fugitive James Lindsay Smith worked for a year at the shoe shop of Springfield abolitionist Rufus Elmer, but only in a situation "secreted from public gaze."

The range of types and periods of architecture represented by these properties is essentially the same as that of fugitive harbors. They reflect the cultural, economic, and social diversity of the broader abolition movement. However, in addition to domestic architecture, this category also includes shops, factories, and farms where fugitives were employed. As with fugitive harbors, an association with the Underground Railroad cannot be evinced in the design or function of these buildings. Places where fugitives were employed are made evident only through documentary evidence. Unlike houses, there are types of workplaces where fugitives predictably found employment. Certain trades and industrial jobs tended to be closed to blacks, whether they were born free or in slavery. In addition to providing labor on farms, wharves, and whaling vessels, blacks routinely found occupations as barbers, teamsters, clothes cleaners and used clothing dealers, rag men, gardeners, and in restaurant and domestic service. If their own communities were large enough, they provided services to other blacks as merchants. But they were seldom employed for skilled positions within factories, in the construction trades, or municipal services.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 56

There are accounts of outbuildings being used to hide fugitives, particularly in rural areas. Hiram Hull told a Springfield newspaper correspondent that his father used to shelter fugitives, sometimes as many as twenty at a time, in his Westfield barn, and that he and his brother Liverus, later the mayor of Charlestown before it was annexed by Boston, used to help feed and care for them.¹²⁸ The granary at Jerry and Phoebe Warriner's Tavern in Springfield contained a large bin that could accommodate a number of fugitives. Mrs. Ambrose Merrick remembered going out there with her Aunt Lydia, ostensibly to feed the pigs, but instead to provide food and hot coffee to the fugitives.¹²⁹ Fugitive assistants also cited other inns, such as the tavern run by Richard Kingman in Cummington (**41 Main Street, MHC #111, listed as Kingman Tavern**), as harboring people escaping slavery.¹³⁰ Then, too, mills, offices, and other building types associated with properties harboring fugitives may have been called upon for hiding places.

Architecture associated with the Underground Railroad is deceptive in two ways. It does not manifest either its owners' direct participation in the antislavery movement or the action of concealing fugitives; nor does it establish a form, plan, or style that distinguishes the lifestyle of free or fugitive blacks as different from other cultural groups making up the growing urban laboring class in the 19th century. In the first case, the architectural ambiguity is an apt metaphor for the secret and synchronic aspects of the phenomenon. Each case was a largely unrecorded, ephemeral moment that transcended the expected functions of daily home life. The Underground Railroad was an overlay on everyday life. It existed outside the range of normal experience. It was an act of civil disobedience. In the second case, the hundreds of fugitives who made Massachusetts their destination and settled in its cities and towns apparently brought little of material substance with them that made a lasting impact on the architecture around them. They were like millions of immigrants before and after them who were not able or did not choose to express themselves in architecture. By class they were workers, not builders; they did not hold creative power over their environment and preserved and celebrated their traditions and beliefs in other media.

More systematic examination of the African-American lifestyle is needed; however, the first clear architectural expression still awaits discovery. The idea that they shared essentially the same architecture and material culture with a white laboring class may be an important factor in establishing the quality of the fugitive's life in freedom. This is

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number E Page 57

an optimistic interpretation, but in truth black people remained marginalized, even in the communities they shared with other immigrant groups. It is perhaps this enduring prejudice that their architectural legacy will ultimately inform. The buildings that were involved in the social and political action to abolish slavery and create situations where African Americans could live and work in freedom and dignity combine to create a framework and establish landmarks to interpret the varied events and ideas of the Underground Railroad era, as well as its aftermath.

Documenting the Underground Railroad

Just as escapes occurred in different ways under different circumstances—through the established vigilance committees linked to outlying supporters, through fugitives who connected by happenstance to sympathizers en route, through fugitives who made their way unassisted—the study of the struggle to break free of slavery involves assembling evidence piece by piece. Each fugitive's story is a unique one; each instance of fugitive assistance, when it occurred, differed in some manner from every other one because of the historical events surrounding it; the places in which it occurred; the assistants, if any, it involved; and the fugitive's own circumstances and goals. Researchers should accordingly be wary of the generalizations that have plagued the study of the Underground Railroad for decades. For years, for example, writings on the subject underplayed if not utterly ignored the role of African Americans in fugitive assistance; over the past 40 years the trend has been in the opposite direction. While this trend has been a critically important correction to Underground Railroad historiography, it has sometimes, heedless of documentation, been pushed to an overcorrection. "Vigilance committees were part of a skillfully orchestrated network that operated across the North and the upper South," historian Peter Ripley has stated. "This 'underground railroad,' as it was often called, was a loosely linked web of northern vigilance committees and groups of southern blacks who smuggled fugitives and rescued slaves from the upper South. It operated without much white aid beyond that provided by a few dedicated Quaker abolitionists like Levi Coffin and Thomas Garrett. James G. Birney reported in 1837 that 'such matters are almost uniformly managed by the colored people.'" The narratives quoted in this document make clear that both whites and people of color who were not Quakers assisted fugitive escapes. The 2000 National Park Service Underground Railroad theme study asserts that most vigilance committees were "dominated by African Americans" and, in the South, organized by them. While it does

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 58

appear to be true that vigilance committees relied heavily upon black communities to provide room and board and perhaps to secure work for fugitives, the two Boston Vigilance Committees were dominated by whites, as were the Anti Man-Hunting League in Boston and its various branches in Massachusetts towns and cities. The New England Freedom Association in Boston, the League of Gileadites in Springfield, and the Vigilant Aid Society in New Bedford were African American groups.¹³¹ The racial makeup of the New Bedford Vigilance Committee, apparently a separate organization from the Vigilant Aid Society, is not known. Whatever the case, the evidence in New England does not so far support that the majority of vigilance committees were dominated by African Americans.

Researchers should expect in this field that sources will be limited. Many fugitive narratives leave out the details of their routes and in particular the names of key assistants for fear of jeopardizing the safety of those individuals as well as their usefulness to other fugitives. The identity of the New Bern slaveholder's son, a man Philadelphia black fugitive assistant Robert Purvis once identified as having routinely assisted in escapes from that city, may never be known and thus never possible to corroborate in other sources. Fugitive John Parker, who assisted in scores of escapes at his home in Ripley, Ohio, wrote, "I had a diary giving the names, dates, and circumstances of all the slaves I had helped run away," but because of his anxiety about the possible loss of his business and property, he said, "I threw this diary into the iron furnace, for fear it might fall into other hands." Parker said "everyone" destroyed evidence of their association with the Underground Railroad after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. Reticence about one's involvement persisted among some for decades afterward. Mary E. Hall, living in Brookline in 1897, wrote to Wilbur Siebert, "I can only tell you that my father Dr. Amos Farnsworth kept at his house in Groton, Mass. During the winter probably of 1836-7, a negro slave whom he sent on to Canada in the spring—I knew not whence he came or where he went. My father, doubtless from motives of prudence, never talked about the methods or doings of the Underground RR and left no mention of it among his papers."¹³² Frederick Douglass, whose three narratives revealed successively more details about his journey from slavery but never seemed to tell the complete tale, urged such reticence on the part of his fellow runaways. "Had not Henry Box Brown and his friends attracted slaveholding attention to the manner of his escape, we might have had a thousand *Box Browns* per annum," Douglass wrote in 1855. The "very public manner" in which midwestern activists

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 59

conducted their business had turned the Underground Railroad into the "Upper-ground Railroad," Douglass complained; "its stations," he wrote, "are far better known to the slaveholders than to the slaves." The fugitive Henry Watson stated that his wife, born and enslaved "about one hundred miles from Baltimore," was taken to that city when she was older and was there hired out. She escaped from slavery at Baltimore, but Watson would say nothing of the details "lest I should block up the way, or affect the business of the under-ground railroad."¹³³

Despite the "underground" nature of the movement, much can be discovered about fugitives and those who sheltered and otherwise aided them in Massachusetts. Yet researchers must be critical of the nature of the sources they consult. As historian Carol Kammen has pointed out, the seeming scarcity of sources for learning about these individuals has led many researchers to gravitate to oral accounts, either modern-day ones or those preserved in published local histories, often from the late 19th or early 20th centuries, "at the very time when they need to take the most care":

About no other local topic, except possibly the weather, are there more legends, more hearsay, or more dubious claims; about no other topic is there more to question. Yet footnotes, when they appear, tend to recite earlier works that contained no notes or ones that are dubious. In a field where much information has been gathered orally, it is important that the reason why an informant deserves to be believed be given. In one article on the underground railroad the author cites an undocumented church history, a pamphlet written without footnotes, and repeats stories hears from a variety of people—some of whom had reason to have credible information while others did not.

Kammen has concluded, "To separate fact from fiction is the historian's job and it can be done knowing full well that the genuine accounts present us a thrilling enough account without their needing embellishment."¹³⁴

With that in mind, two general types of sources are available on the Underground Railroad—contemporary ones, or those written at the time of its operation, and retrospective accounts. All contemporary accounts may be regarded as primary sources; some were published.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 60 **Contemporary Sources**

One source is abolitionist newspapers, including the *Liberator*, published in Boston from 1831 through the end of 1865, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, published in New York City, and perhaps several dozen local newspapers throughout Massachusetts that were inclined to report on abolition and the presence of and aid to fugitives and issues surrounding them. The so-called "clerical abolitionists" published several abolitionist newspapers, including the *Massachusetts Abolitionist* and the *Emancipator*, edited by Charlemont native Joshua Leavitt; David Ruggles, who moved to Florence in 1842, was a correspondent for this newspaper. One should not overlook African American newspapers in particular, such as *Freedom's Journal*, the *Colored American*, the *Mirror of Liberty*, and the *North Star* (later *Frederick Douglass' Paper* and by 1859 called *Douglass' Monthly*). Henry Bibb's *Voice of the Fugitive*, published in 1851-52, is online at <http://www.paperofrecord.com> but contains little if anything about Massachusetts fugitives and assistants. Still, though none of these papers was published in New England, Falmouth native Charles B. Ray was agent and correspondent for the *Colored American*, Boston native William C. Nell was for a short time on the editorial staff of the *North Star*, and Connecticut native David Ruggles edited *Mirror of Liberty*. All of these serials are in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester.

Chief among contemporary published sources are fugitive narratives. At least thirty were written and published by at least twenty-four fugitives who spent some time in Massachusetts (five published after 1863).¹³⁵ A number of these persons traveled through numerous towns and cities, and many of them can be read online at "North American Slave Narratives, Beginnings to 1920," a project of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/about.html>). When completed, the Web site will include all two hundred narratives and biographies of fugitive and former slaves published in English up to 1920.

Researchers should make an effort to corroborate these published narratives whenever possible in other primary sources, most of which are unpublished. For example, the 1840 federal census, city directories, local newspapers, and vital statistics (specifically, birth records) document Frederick Douglass's presence in New Bedford during the years his autobiography indicates as well as his lay preaching at a small church on Second Street in the city (some sources, such as censuses, are available on line at <http://www.ancestry.com>, a fee-based site; Massachusetts vital records are available to members at New England Historical Genealogical Society's website, as are the 1855

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 61

and 1865 state censuses enumerations of people of color.). Assessors records show that Leonard Black lived in the home David Walker once occupied on Belknap Street on the north slope of Boston's Beacon Hill; such records, compiled yearly, often document the presence of short-term residents when such other records as decennial federal and state censuses and city directories (which identify only householders but not household occupants) do not. Thus, if a researcher knows the name (or alias) of a fugitive, such primary sources as these are useful to consult; one can then sometimes determine if a dwelling he or she inhabited has survived. Another potentially useful contemporary primary source is overseer of the poor records. In view of the fact that fugitives tended to arrive with few or no resources, it is possible that they called upon local managers of poor relief for aid. In New Bedford, it happens that these records identified, at least in some cases, those who were "runaway slaves."

One key unpublished source is the records of Massachusetts vigilance committees, where they existed. Irving Bartlett transcribed and published the records of the 1846-47 Boston committee in *New England Quarterly* (see the bibliography); the Bostonian Society has issued those of the 1850-61 committee in a cloth facsimile edition. The locations of Anti-Man-Hunting League affiliates are known, and researchers in those towns should check for the existence of records—either in local repositories or in the papers of known officers, which may have been passed down in families. Whether local vigilance committees existed is not yet known, but that the Boston Vigilance Committee encouraged their creation is documented in an 1854 letter from Frances Drake to Theodore Parker. "We recd a circular relative to the formation of a Vigilance Committe [sic] in our town, which should have been responded to before this," she stated. "We have handed the circular to those who take a lively interest in the fugitive & will render such aid as may be required. Still they do not feel moved to organize as a committee. Husband bids me say, that we wish to be considered as a standing committee for the aid of fugitives, under any & all circumstances— (we had the honor of sheltering Shadrach while his persuers [sic] were searching for him)."¹³⁶ Records of local antislavery societies are probably worth consulting as well.

Another contemporary source is the correspondence of documented fugitives and fugitive assistants. For example, the papers of Sydney Howard Gay, Wendell Phillips, and Theodore Parker exist as a body, at Columbia University's Butler Library, at Harvard University's Houghton Library, and at Harvard Divinity School's Andover-

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 62

Harvard Theological Library respectively. Both Gay's and Phillips's are cataloged and indexed by name of correspondent. Much of William C. Nell's correspondence has been collected and published. The editorial project that produced the five-volume *Black Abolitionist Papers*, edited by Peter C. Ripley, also produced a much more extensive microfilm version that includes a good deal of correspondence.¹³⁷ Yet the correspondence of other key Underground Railroad persons, such as Lewis Hayden, Austin Bearse, and many individuals active on a local level, has survived only in small quantity and is dispersed among many collections.

Retrospective Sources

After the Underground Railroad ceased to operate, numerous sources emerged in an attempt to document it. Because of the character of memory, all of them should be used with a critical eye, and corroboration in other sources should be sought for the details they offer.

Unpublished sources include both modern-day oral accounts as well as modern-day and historical correspondence of townspeople not descended from assistants or fugitives. As Kammen cautions, researchers need to analyze the sources of all such claims and should be sensitive to the possibility—if not the likelihood—that the claims put forth about Underground Railroad associations in such sources are based on hearsay.

Chief among retrospective sources are those that may be considered primary, some of them published and some not. Among published accounts are fugitive narratives, assistants' accounts in book, article, and newspaper form, and some obituaries. The most reputable published retrospective accounts dealing with Massachusetts are William Still's *Underground Railroad* (1871) and Austin Bearse's *Reminiscences of Fugitive Slave-Law Days in Boston* (1880). Still's book (available online at <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/x6776.xml>) is based on accounts recorded during the 1850s and includes transcripts of letters Still received from fugitives; the accounts in Bearse's book are corroborated in other sources.¹³⁸

Civil War pension applications and county probate records are also retrospective sources that are primary and may be useful in identifying or corroborating fugitive identities. In New Bedford, for example, depositions in pension records revealed that both John L. Wright and Wesley Furlong, both in the Massachusetts 54th Volunteer

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number E Page 63

Infantry Regiment along with fugitive William H. Carney Jr., were fugitives. Probate records in the same city in a few instances indicated that children of decedents were born in slavery, though such is not always an indicator that parents were fugitives; they may have purchased their own freedom before coming to the North.

A final type of source is the published retrospective accounts of nonparticipants, such as Wilbur H. Siebert, Marion Gleason McDouglass, and R. C. Smedley.¹³⁹ Of these, Siebert's works have long been regarded as the principle source on Underground Railroad, and they are the most relevant to Massachusetts. They are based largely on a circular he and his assistants sent to reputed fugitive assistants and letters sent to others, first in the 1890s and again, for monographs on specific states, in the 1930s. Siebert, a professor of European history at Ohio State University for more than forty years, compiled the responses he received into notebooks for each state and gave them to the Harvard College Library in 1939. Another set of materials is in the collections of Ohio Historical Society. His published works present Siebert's synthesis of these responses. Massachusetts Underground Railroad researchers would do well to consult Siebert's research base, preserved in the Harvard notebooks.

Some of those who answered Siebert's queries were themselves Underground Railroad participants. Elizabeth Cooley, living at 62 Phillips Street on Beacon Hill in Boston in 1897, told Siebert's project that she had escaped slavery in January 1851 and that "she had hidden out two years, when she finally got away from Norfolk, Virginia, on a boat which took her to Boston. She had been a seamstress and had an easy time, but had wanted to be free from her childhood days." Cooley also told Siebert about Eliza Baines, "a colored woman at Portsmouth, Virginia, who worked for captains of vessels. She was able to learn from them their times of sailing. She harbored fugitives and got numbers of them on board boats sailing for Boston and New Bedford. Once when a party of slave-hunters came to her house to find runaways, she outwitted them by hiding the slaves between the rows in her garden and spreading sheets over them. When some of her fugitives had been put safely aboard for the North . . . she went about singing 'It's all right, halleluja, glory to God.'" Cooley may have been the "Mrs. Cooley & child" and "Mrs. Cooley & daughter" whom the Boston Vigilance Committee reimbursed Lewis Hayden for boarding, first in February 1852 and again in April of the same year. The 1855 state census records Elizabeth Cooley, age thirty-two and fifteen-year-old Marianna Cooley at the 83 Phillips Street boardinghouse of Virginia native William Manix, who had boarded numerous other fugitives at his 83 Southac (Phillips) Street boardinghouse. At the same

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS**Section number E Page 64

address was Loderic Cooley, probably Mrs. Cooley's husband, who probably came to Boston after she and her daughter escaped: between 23 December 1854 and 27 March 1857, the Boston physician John V. DeGrasse provided care for the wife and daughter of a "Mr. Cooley" at 83 Southac Street.¹⁴⁰

Recollections of fugitive assistants are more common in Siebert's notebooks than of fugitives. Simeon Dodge of Marblehead, Thomas Wentworth Higginson of Worcester, Robert Adams of Fall River, Elizabeth Buffum Chace of Valley Falls in Rhode Island, Joseph Marsh of Florence, Ann H. Bigelow of Concord, William Ingersoll Bowditch of Boston and Brookline, Frances Drake of Leominster, Samuel S. Crocker of Fitchburg, D. S. Whitney of Southboro, and Joshua T. Everett of Westminster were alive at the time Siebert compiled his information, though he appears not to have contacted Everett directly. Some few others, such as D. L. Brigham of Manchester and George W. Putnam of Lynn, took part in aiding single fugitive escapes. Researchers may consider the testimony of participants credible, though their recollection of dates and names, where it is given, may not be precise.

Once removed is the information provided by the children of assistants. Some, like Melissa Dawes, were old enough to witness the work of their parents; some, by contrast, were quite young, as a survey of 1850 and 1860 census records will generally reveal. "Such information as you want should be first-hand and accurate," the Boston cotton buyer C. F. Atkinson wrote to Siebert in 1898, "therefore I fear I shall not be able to help you of my own knowledge, as I was only a boy at the time, and although my Father was active in the cause, and I lived in an atmosphere of Anti-Slavery Effort, I have only a boy's remembrance of it myself." Atkinson promised to consult "two old gentlemen who should know details accurately, and write you again."¹⁴¹

Twice removed was the recollection of great-grandchildren, which should be treated with increasing caution. "Since receiving your letter dated Mar. 19 regarding the operating of a station of the Underground railroad in this town, I have made some slight investigation . . . and learned that in all probability my grandfather Robert Brown was more or less active in this work," Robert S. Brown wrote to Siebert from West Newbury in 1935. "As near as I can ascertain these fugitives came here from Danvers, Mass. and were then sent on to North Weare N. H. to a family by the name of Sawyer, relatives of our family. This is all of the information I am able to give you at this time, but trust it will

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 65

be of some slight assistance to you in your research work." The Congregationalist minister William G. Poor of Upton wrote to one of Siebert's Massachusetts assistants a year earlier, "My father, Joseph W. Poor, spoke of the Underground Railway, something like this: 'We children sometimes might hear a quiet sound outside the house or some kind of a knock, and we knew that father got up quickly, went down and harnessed Nellie into the covered wagon and drove away. He was always back in time for breakfast as usual. Asked how far Grandpa went on his drive the reply was 'just over the line into New Hampshire.'" Poor guessed that his grandfather probably drove to Salem but offered no evidence for this conclusion.¹⁴²

Researchers should be most skeptical of the many accounts Siebert included of nonparticipants. "From an old resident I have learned that Sewall Felch of Kensington [New Hampshire] aided slaves," Amesbury librarian Marguerite Merrill wrote in 1935. "Richard Plumer of Newburyport was a son-in-law of Sewall Felch. Slaves were taken through Amesbury to Kensington. Slaves were seen in Warren Huntington's Grandfather's barn at Pond Hills, Amesbury. Dr. Brown an old resident said that slaves were brought from Ipswich to his father's farm in Kingston [New Hampshire]. This would be via Amesbury." In a letter shortly afterward Merrill told Siebert that Huntington's grandfather was a Quaker and that "old residents tell me that all the Quakers about here assisted in the Underground railroad," a claim that, among others, warrants scrutiny. Andover librarian Marion La Mere, who often sent tips to Siebert, wrote in 1935 to tell him of a letter she had recently received from Walter Gerritson of Reading that stated, "Years ago, Mr. Cyrus King Littlefield told me that as a boy he had several times seen, at twilight, two or three negroes coming from the barn at the corner of Ash and Cross streets with a little bundle on a stick, headed for the North. He spoke of it as part of the Underground R. R. . . . The barn had ample room under the barn floor to furnish a hiding-place for many."¹⁴³ How Littlefield, who was seven years old in 1850, knew where they were headed is unclear, and it is at least possible that over time his memory had conflated the "bundle on the stick" with runaway slave imagery standard in newspaper woodcuts for many decades. Siebert's notebooks also include many newspaper accounts and extracts from secondary sources, sources this context has already addressed.

The conclusions Siebert presented in his books differ from the evidence he collected in several ways. First, specific factual discrepancies exist. For example, Siebert asserts that one fugitive route ran 19 miles from Fall River to Barrowsville, where the Rev.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 66

Solomon P. Snow maintained a "station" from 1850 to 1854. Siebert states, "As his parish was an Underground centre, its activities cannot be supposed to have been limited to the term of his pastorate." But Marshall Snow, son of the minister, did not specifically identify Barrowsville as an "Underground centre," and Siebert received information from no other informant identifying the town or Norton, of which it became part, as such.¹⁴⁴ Second, the text often relies on generalities, as its language about routes indicates. Siebert stated of Worcester County, "A bewildered fugitive could find friends almost anywhere in the county. Too often, however, we do not know the names of the persons who made a practice of harboring slaves. Among the many Quakers of the city we know only Edward Earle." Siebert thereby propounded two assertions, the first—that a fugitive could find friends "anywhere"—clearly unsupportable and the second implicitly stating the mistaken but long-held belief that Quakers were predominantly, if not invariably, fugitive assistants.¹⁴⁵

The final issue, emblemized by but not peculiar to Siebert's work, is the tendency so pronounced in the literature of the late 19th and early 20th century to expunge people of color as well as, to a lesser degree, women from the Underground Railroad. In Siebert's work, nowhere is his tendency to avert his attention from the role of blacks in fugitive assistance more glaring than in his recounting of the escape of Shadrach Minkins from Boston in February 1851. "The night of the rescue, which was stormy," he wrote in *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, "Shadrach was driven by Samuel S. Crocker to the house of William S. White, in Watertown, who escorted him to the residence of Mrs. Mary S. Brooks in Concord." This account contradicts other evidence Siebert himself had collected, most critically from Anne Bigelow, to whose home African American fugitive assistants Lewis Hayden and John J. Smith had driven Shadrach.¹⁴⁶ Siebert cited a letter from "Mrs. Brooks," which is not preserved in his notebooks, an 1897 article in *Atlantic Monthly*, and an undated article in *New England Magazine*.¹⁴⁷ His notebooks do preserve an article from the July 1890 issue of *New England Magazine* by Nina Moore Tiffany, part of a series entitled "Stories of the Fugitive Slaves." This piece states the Shadrach story as Siebert presented it. In short, Siebert, for whatever reason, chose to publish a secondary account emphasizing the undocumented role of white assistants over a firsthand account that included black participants. Embedded in the sensibility of many whites at the turn of the 20th century was the notion that they and others "helped negroes northward," as Erastus Gunn put it to Siebert in 1895, as though free blacks and former fugitives had no role and fugitives themselves utterly lacked agency.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 67

That white men were primarily responsible for this work also has plagued Underground Railroad research. Frances Drake complained of it in her own time in a letter about the Leominster Female Anti-Slavery Society to Boston's Maria Weston Chapman. "It is perfectly astonishing to hear really intelligent people ever saying, 'I wonder what those few women think they can do to abolish Slavery.' 'I don't think it is womans sphere to be making such efforts to accomplish that which belong not to them, but to men high in office.' And everything of this kind we have to reply to almost daily, to such people. I lend your letter, in many instances it has not failed to convince them of their error," Drake wrote.¹⁴⁸ Researchers need to be constantly mindful of such biases in historical sources—and of the possibility that, given the assumption that few primary sources exist to study the Underground Railroad, they may persist in the sources of the current day.

Notes

1 *A Narrative of Thomas Smallwood (Coloured Man)*. . . (Toronto: James Stephens, 1851), 17 n.

2 Samuel J. May, *Some Recollections of Our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co, 1869), 144, 296-97.

3 Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), and Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1936), the latter of which includes a fold-out map of routes in Massachusetts reaching into adjacent states; Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), 18, 91-92.

4 At any early point in this scholarship, Harvard historian Albert Bushnell Hart, *Slavery and Abolition, 1831-1841* (1906; reprint, New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1968), 226-27, objected to the use of the term "Underground Railroad" and offered his own definition: "Once across the border, and sometimes before he reached it, the negro entered upon a concealed and intricate system of routes, to which the name 'Underground Railroad' was commonly applied. The term suggests not only a route, but termini, trainman, and general officials. There was,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 68

however, never any general association, hardly so much as a definite understanding between the abolitionists who carried on this forbidden traffic; nor did the conductors and station-masters know all the links in the routes which ran past, or rather into, their doors. The 'U.G.' can be traced back to informal committees formed in several of the northern cities; and two veterans in this service—Still, in Philadelphia, and the Quaker, Levi Coffin, in Cincinnati—kept a record of the business that went through their stations.

"The Underground Railroad had an advertising agency in the understanding, which somehow permeated the slaves in the southern states, that if they once crossed into the free states they would find friends who would forward them from place to place, until they were free from pursuit or arrived at the haven of Canada." New research suggests that Hart may have underestimated the degree to which Underground Railroad activity existed in the South, but in every other respect this definition is still useful and arguably accurate. Hart's book, however, is hardly ever cited in Underground Railroad literature.

5 Among the postwar publications on the Underground Railroad, in addition to Siebert's, are Nina Moore Tiffany, "Stories of the Fugitive Slaves," *New England Magazine* 2 1890 (in several parts); Lillie B. Chace Wyman, "Harriet Tubman," *New England Magazine*, new ser. 14, 112, March 1896; Marion Gleason McDougall, *Fugitive Slaves (1619-1865)* (Boston, 1891); Robert C. Smedley, *History of the Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Penn.: Office of the Journal, 1883); Rowland E. Robinson, *Out of Bondage; and Other Stories* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905); William M. Cockrum, *The History of the Underground Railroad, As It Was Conducted by the Anti-slavery League* (Oakland City, Ind.: J. W. Cockrum Printing Co., 1915); *Laura S. Haviland, A Woman's Life-Work: Labors and Experiences* (Chicago, 1887); James Freeman Clarke, *Anti-Slavery Days: A Sketch of the Struggle Which Ended in the Abolition of Slavery in the United States* (New York: J. W. Lovell Company, 1883); Eber M. Pettit, *Sketches in the History of the Underground Railroad Comprising Many Thrilling Incidences of the Escape of Fugitives from Slavery, and the Perils of Those Who Aided Them* (Fredonia, N.Y.: W. McKinstry and Son, 1879); May, *Some Recollections*; Parker Pillsbury, *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles* (Concord, N.H.: Clague, Wegman, Schlicht, 1883); Austin Willey, *The History of the Antislavery Cause in State and Nation* (Portland, Me.: B. Thruston, 1886); and H. U. Johnson, *From Dixie to Canada: Romances and Realities of the Underground Railroad* (Orwell, Ohio: H. U. Johnson, 1894).

6 John Michael Vlach, "Above Ground on the Underground Railroad: Places of Flight and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 69

Refuge," essay for forthcoming volume edited by David Blight for Smithsonian Institution Press; used by permission of author and editor.

7 [Francis Jackson], "The Boston Vigilance Committee Appointed at the Public Meeting in Faneuil Hall October 21st 1850 To Assist Fugitive Slaves: Treasurers Accounts" (Facsimile edition, Bostonian Society); F. N. Boney, Richard L. Hume, and Rafia Zafar, *God Made Man, Man Made the Slave: The Autobiography of George Teamoh* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1990), 109-10.

8 See *Oxford Companion to United States History* (2001), s.v. "Fugitive Slave Act."

9 One instance of a fugitive reaching the North after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation is documented in the records of the New Bedford Overseers of the Poor (collections of New Bedford Free Public Library, New Bedford, MA) on 23 March 1864: "John Gardner c [signifying "colored"], age 50. Born in Maryland. to state 1863. Mr Horatio Leonard says that John is at his house, sick, wants City Doctor. Order to Doct Mackie to attend No 105 Elm St. Mr Leonard says that John worked last summer for Timothy Akin in Dartmouth has been at Mr Leonard's only 2 or 3 days - is a Fugative [*sic*] Slave - see 24 - [entry for 24 March]." The 24 March entry reads, "Mr Leonard says that John is palsied, will probably never be able to provide for himself, wants him removed order on E Sampson for ticket to state almshouse 90¢." During the war, the slave states of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri remained were not part of the Confederacy.

10 Siebert, *Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, 5, citing *Boston Globe*, 15 September 1900.

11 New Bedford *Medley*, 26 August 1794, 26 April 1799.

12 The aim of the Massachusetts General Colored Association was "to unite the colored population, so far, through the United States of America, as may be practicable and expedient; forming societies, opening, extending, and keeping up correspondences, and not withholding any thing which may have the least tendency to meliorate *our* miserable condition." See "Document II: David Walker Addresses the Massachusetts General Colored Association, 1828," in Peter P. Hinks, ed., *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 86. The document was reprinted from *Freedom's Journal*, 19 December 1828.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 70

13 Joanne Pope Melish, in *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 64, 66, has stated that the wording of Vermont's constitution was "sufficiently vague that slaveholding may have persisted without sanction in a few areas for several years." See also 76. Melish, *Disowning Slavery*, 76; Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 6.

14 The language of New Hampshire's 1783 constitution was similar to that of Massachusetts's, but no court in that state appears to have ruled that it meant slavery was forbidden. Slaves were enumerated in the state in the 1790, 1800, 1830, and 1840 federal censuses. See Valerie Cunningham, "Limited Freedom," *Historical New Hampshire* 41, 4 (Winter 1989). Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 3 n. 1, has stated that slavery was abolished by "constitutional interpretation" in New Hampshire, but Douglas Harper, at his "Slavery in the North" Web site, has stated that "no judicial records from New Hampshire" indicate that the language of its constitution, which is similar to that in the Massachusetts constitution, "was construed there as ending slavery." See <http://www.slavenorth.com>.

15 In Rhode Island and Connecticut, enslaved women were to be free after twenty-five years of service; men were to be freed after twenty-one years. Rhode Island legislators did not pass an act formally banning slavery until 1843; Connecticut lawmakers did not do so until 1848. New York's act stipulated that children of enslaved mothers born after 4 July 1799 were to serve as indentured servants until the age of twenty-eight if they were male or until twenty-five if they were female. This act was amended in 1817 so as to free on 4 July 1827, when all of the children specified in the 1799 act would be free, those slaves born before 4 July 1799. On New York, see Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 6.

16 See *Narrative of Sojourner Truth, a Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York, in 1828* (Boston: by the author, 1850); and *Life of Rev. Thomas James, by Himself* (Rochester, N.Y.: Post Express Printing Co., 1887)

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 71

17 Clayton E. Cramer, *Black Demographic Data, 1790-1860: A Sourcebook* (Westport, Conn., and London: Greenwood Press, 1997), 99-107.

18 On southern New England, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 233.

19 Cramer, *Black Demographic Data*, 101, 102.

20 Research has begun in the Berkshire region on fugitive presence and assistance. Work is currently focusing on the site of the Todd homestead in Lanesboro, which burned in 1983. Near the homestead was "the gulf," an area of African American settlement through which fugitives are said to have traveled eastward toward Dalton. Susan Denault, reference librarian and acting archivist, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, telephone to author, 30 March 2004.

21 Rev. W. H. Robinson, *From Log Cabin to the Pulpit; Or, Fifteen Years in Slavery*, 3d ed. (Eau Claire, Wisc.: James H. Tiff, 1913), 11-13, cited in David S. Cecelski, *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 121, 138; *Narrative of Thomas Smallwood*, 17.

22 John T. Kneebone, "A Break Down on the Underground Railroad: Captain B. and the Capture of the Keziah, 1858," *Virginia Cavalcade* 48, 2 (Spring 1999): 83; William Still, *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c.* (1871; reprint, Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970), 23, includes a letter from Ham and Eggs. Still, *Underground Railroad*, 585-91, stated that Henry Lewey "was fortunate enough to make his way to Canada," but Sydney Howard Gay, in an 8 July 1856 entry in his "Record of Fugitives," wrote of Rebecca Lewey, "Her husband is in Boston; left a son of 15 behind, whom she hoped to get off somehow. Sent to Boston." Gay was then secretary of the New York City Committee of Vigilance. His papers are at Butler Library, Columbia University.

23 Purvis cited in Cecelski, *Waterman's Song*, 135-36.

24 *Personal Memoir of Daniel Drayton, for Four Years and Four Months a Prisoner (for Charity's Sake) in Washington Jail. Including a Narrative of the Voyage and Capture of the*

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 72

Schooner Pearl (Boston: Bela Marsh; New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853), 20; "Death of a Martyr," *Republican Standard*, 2 July 1857, 1:2. According to the District of Columbia record of manumissions, William and Lucinda Bush were free people of color; they moved to New Bedford in early December 1849. The Rev. Leonard Grimes of Boston was their nephew.

25 *The Experience of Thomas H. Jones, Who Was a Slave for Forty-Three Years. Written by a Friend, as Related to Him by Brother Jones* (Boston: Bazin & Chandler, 1862), 36. Thanks to Jim Driscoll of the Queens (NY) Historical Society for the information on Cousins was black. Driscoll's search of the Hearnese' Brooklyn City Directory for 1853-54 found that Cousins then had a clothing store and barber shop at 9 Linden Row and was living at 9 Jay Street, the same address at which he was listed in the 1850-51 city directory. Driscoll notes that this section of Brooklyn was an African American neighborhood and the home of the Bridge Street African American church, to which Cousins was connected, as well as the Concord Street Baptist Church, also African American. The 1850 census shows five others within several households of Cousins with North Carolina birthplaces. In a 11 July 1849 letter to his wife reprinted in his several narratives, Thomas H. Jones wrote, "Tell brother Robert H. Cousins that he must pray for me; for I long to meet him one time more in this world."

26 By 1860, according to the federal census, Jones was in Worcester. In 1861 Thomas H. Jones is listed in the Worcester directory as living at 13 Austin Street; in 1862 the directory showed him at 18 Chandler Street. A block apart, the streets run parallel to Park Avenue in the city's seventh ward. In the 1865 Boston census, a Mary Jones with sons of the correct names and ages is shown running a boardinghouse; see fifth ward, household 236, family 374, Massachusetts state census. On 7 September 1867, Thomas H. Jones married Mrs. Anna Campbell in New Bedford; it is listed as a second marriage for both, though it was technically Jones's third. Jones was listed as sixty years old, from North Carolina, and the son of Tony and Grace Kirkwood. Campbell was thirty-three, from Virginia, and the daughter of Matton (?) and Nancy; no surname was shown in the record. At the time of his fourth marriage in 1882 Jones stated his parents names as Henry and Grace with no surname. Thanks to Carl J. Cruz of New Bedford for this marriage data. George B. Richmond of the city's YMCA stated in a letter dated 20 November 1869 that he had known Jones for the "past two years"; see Thomas H. Jones, *The Experience of Thomas H. Jones, Who Was a Slave for Forty-Three Years. Written by a Friend, As Related to Him by Brother Jones* (New Bedford: E. Anthony & Sons, 1885), 85.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 73

27 These sources include [Francis Jackson], "Fugitive Slaves Aided by the Vigilance Committee since the Passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill 1850," Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society Papers, New-York Historical Society; [Jackson], "The Boston Vigilance Committee . . . 1850"; Still, *Underground Railroad*, which compiles letters from fugitives, fugitive assistants, and accounts Still recorded during his years as secretary of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee; the transcriptions of the records of the 1846-47 Boston Vigilance Committee in Irving H. Bartlett, "Abolitionists, Fugitives, and Imposters in Boston, 1846-47," *New England Quarterly* 55, 1 (March 1982): 97-110; Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University; and the Crawford Blagden Collection of Wendell Phillips Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Based on these sources and others, the authors are in the midst of compiling a database of fugitive names, aliases, assistants in Massachusetts, stops or destinations in Massachusetts, routes, conveyances, and sources of information. Of 66 fugitives so far entered, 38 (57%) were from coastal or river ports; 56 were from coastal southern states; the residences/places of birth of ten were not indicated in the source.

28 See Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2d ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), xxi. In these years, Canada East referred to what is now Quebec. Before 1841, Ontario was known as Upper Canada and Quebec Lower Canada. The Maritime Provinces of Canada included Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

29 Fairbank, who all told helped 47 slaves escape from Kentucky, was jailed twice in the state penitentiary in Frankfort for more than 17 years.

30 *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery* (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838).

31 Gary Collison, *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 46.

32 *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave, Brought Down to the Present Time. Written by Himself* (New Haven, Conn.: published by the author, 1855), reprinted in *Five Black Lives: The Autobiographies of Venture Smith, James Mars, William Grimes, The Rev. G. W. Offley, James L. Smith* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 104-5.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 74

33 These findings are very tentative; the final report will include data based on a larger sample based on the sources cited in note 18 as well as fugitive and assistant narratives.

34 Winks, *Blacks in Canada*, 235-36, 237, 240; Benjamin Drew, *The Refugee: Or the Narrative of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by Themselves* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1856; reprint, Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000), 50-51; Still, *Underground Railroad*, 264. Two women of color named Nancy Howard are listed in the 1850 federal census in Lynn, both born in Maryland and both living in black households—one aged sixty-two living with Kezia Gray, also born in Maryland, and the other aged 67? (the latter number is smudged) and living with the family of George Grimage, a laborer born in Delaware, who named his one-year-old son Wendall P., probably after Wendell Phillips.

35 Winks, *Blacks in Canada*, 239, cites the total of fugitives in Still's account. In eight instances, evidence other than that Still offered establishes that fugitives resided in or passed through Boston or New Bedford.

36 Caroline Weston, New Bedford, to Wendell Phillips, 9 February 1845, stated that "more than four hundred" fugitives lived in New Bedford at that time; Weston Papers, Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, Boston Public Library. The high-end estimate of seven hundred fugitives in New Bedford was stated twice, apparently by two Quakers, soon after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in the fall of 1850. See Edwin Barney, New Bedford, to Charles S. Barney, 19 October 1850, Barney Papers, New Bedford Whaling Museum, and "A City of Refuge," *New Bedford Republican Standard*, 1 November 1850, 2:3, which reprinted a Boston *Chronotype* article itself reprinting a letter from a "wealthy Friend (Quaker) of New Bedford, [who] writes to a friend of ours who enquired of him whether a fugitive slave would be safe in that city." The *New Bedford Friend* replied, "We have about 700 fugitives here in this city, and they are good citizens, and here we intend they shall stay." It is unlikely that this latter Quaker was Barney, who was then living in a boardinghouse and was just beginning to practice law; his mother was herself taking in boarders in another part of the city.

37 Janine da Silva compiled these destinations from Sydney Howard Gay's "Record of Fugitives," Gay Papers, in preparation for Kathryn Grover and Janine V. da Silva, "Historic Resource Study: Boston African American National Historic Site" (Boston National Historical Park, 31 December 2002).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 75

38 The full text of Browne's 4 March 1847 entry in the Vigilance Committee records reads, "Josiah Thomas (David Lewis) 25 years of age—wife & two children, one of them 3 the other one year old—his wife Elizabeth—all came from Queen Ann's County, Md. Caroline Thompson owner—wife free—came away in a buggy with wife & children & his sister & her child—rode about 15 miles, then turned the horses head back & let him run home—then found aid. Have been stopping about 8 months in same place with Evans [thinks he means Schuylkill Twp, Chester Co, PA]. Evans came the day after me—Have been at work tending masons, & farming. 18 March went with wife & children to Ashburnham, to live with Jones & Whittemore. Apr. 26 Jones came in & says Thomas doing well." See Bartlett, "Abolitionists, Fugitives, and Imposters," 102-3.

39 On Ashburnham, see Ezra S. Stearns, *History of Ashburnham, Massachusetts . . .* (Ashburnham: by the town, 1887), 417, 768-69, 936, 938.

40 William Jenkins, Andover, to W. Phillips, 28 February 1850, Phillips Papers.

41 *Middlesex Standard*, 1 August 1844; thanks to Mat Griswold of U Mass Lowell for searching this newspaper for us. Still, *Underground Railroad*, 161-69, 344-45, 585-91; Gay, "Record of Fugitives," entries for 30 Nov 1855, 9 July 1856.

42 Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860* (1861; reprint, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1979), 79, and see generally 79-95 and 213-24.

43 Richard D. Brown and Jack Tager, *Massachusetts: A Concise History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 212; Hon. Edward Appleton, "History of the Railways of Massachusetts" (1871), written for *Walling's Atlas of Massachusetts* and reprinted on the Railroad Enthusiasts, Inc., Web site, <http://www.catskillarchive.com/trextra/abnere1.html>.

44 James Lindsay Smith, *Autobiography of James L. Smith, Including, Also, Reminiscences of Slave Life, Recollections of the War, Education of Freedmen, Causes of the Exodus, etc.* (Norwich, Conn.: Press of the Bulletin Company, 1881); *Narrative of Events in the Life of William Green (Formerly a Slave), Written by Himself* (Springfield: L. M. Guernsey, 1853).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 76

45 A. G. Hill, "Florence the Meeea [sic] Sanctuary of the Colored Race," Arthur G. Hill Papers, Forbes Library, Northampton, Mass. Hill had crossed out "mecca," evidently feeling "sanctuary" the more appropriate descriptor.

46 On the New England Freedom Association, see James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, "The Affirmation of Manhood: Black Garrisonians in Antebellum Boston," in Donald M. Jacobs, ed., *Courage and Conscience: Black & White Abolitionists in Boston* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press for the Boston Athenaeum, 1993), 144; "Meeting of the New England Freedom Association, *Liberator*, 12 December 1845, lists the officers and directors of the group. In their introduction to *William Cooper Nell, Nineteenth-Century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist: Selected Writings, 1832-1874* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2002), 18, Dorothy Porter Wesley and Constance Porter Uzelac state that the association was founded in 1843, though in "Integration versus Separatism: William Cooper Nell's Role in the Struggle for Equality," in *Courage and Conscience: Black & White Abolitionists in Boston* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1993), ed. Donald M. Jacobs, Wesley stated the date of formation as 1842.

47 "Public Meetings," *Liberator*, 14 March 1856, 43:4; *New Bedford Republican Standard*, 6 December 1855, 2:4.

48 Born either in Maryland or the District of Columbia, Brooks had worked as a waiter for whaling merchant James Arnold in 1845. Peneton, who never stated the same birthplace in four known listings, was probably from Maryland and worked for whaling merchant George Howland, who had sold Peneton the land on which he built his home; it was for Howland that Frederick Douglass worked for a time, along with Peneton, when he first came to New Bedford. By 1856 Peneton and Brooks were in business together, selling groceries and provisioning vessels. See Kathryn Grover, *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

49 In early October 1850, a Lowell newspaper stated that the citizens of Springfield had appointed a "large committee of safety" after slave catchers had been reported in town and that members of that group had formed themselves into squads to patrol the streets.

50 "H. I. Bowditch/1855/Anti-Man-Hunting League" Folder, Box 1 of 3, Henry Ingersoll Bowditch Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 77

51 Daniel Ricketson to the *Republican Standard*, 18 May 1853, in New Bedford Benevolent Society Papers. Harriet E. Wilson, who wrote the autobiographical novel *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two-Story White House, North. Showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There*. By 'Our Nig' (1859; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 129, expressed the same idea as she recounted her efforts to find work to sustain herself and child in New Hampshire and Massachusetts: "Strange were some of her adventures. Watched by kidnapers, maltreated by professed abolitionists, who did n't want slaves at the South, nor niggers in their own houses, North. Faugh! To lodge one; to eat with one; to admit one through the front door; to sit next one; awful!"

52 Ward quoted in Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 72.

53 Frances H. Drake, Leominster, to Maria Weston Chapman, 6 August 1843, Ms.A.4.6A.1 p.86, Weston Papers.

54 See, for example, the 31 August 1851 issue of *Voice of the Fugitive*, which is online. Mrs. Blakemore was a member of the Vigilance Committee but never listed in Jackson's records as having sheltered or been reimbursed for fugitive assistance.

55 Joseph A. Allen, Medfield, to Wilbur H. Siebert, 16 August 1896, in vol. 2 (vol. 14 in series), "The 'Underground Railroad' in Massachusetts," Material Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus, n.d., Houghton Library, Harvard. Unpaginated (hereafter cited as Siebert Notebooks).

56 May, *Some Recollections*, 128; Smith, *Autobiography of James L. Smith*, 62; Frances H. Drake, Leominster, to "Friend Phillips," 26 September 1847, Phillips Papers. See also Albert Bushnell Hart, *Slavery and Abolition, 1831-1841* (1906; reprint, New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1968), 210-11, which recounts the similar experience of Harriet Martineau, Theodore Parker, Charles Follen of Harvard, Charles Sumner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Garrison.

57 Simeon Dodge, Marblehead, in response to circular sent by Wilbur Siebert, 29 January 1894, Siebert Notebooks vol. 1.

58 Paul Goodman, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xviii, xix, 150. See also Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 78

of Property and Standing": *Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

59 Goodman, *Of One Blood*, 145-50; Richards, *Anti-Abolition Mobs*, 131-42. Goodman never defined, however, what sorts of occupations are included in the categories "upper white collar," "proprietor," "lower white collar," "manual skilled," and "manual unskilled"; in Richards, no listing is presented by occupation for such overall categories as "commercial and professional men" and "manufacturers and tradesmen." Peter R. Knights, *The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study in City Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), Appendix E, 149-56, has developed a useful occupational typology.

60 Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, ed. William L. Andrews (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 220.

61 *Republican Standard* (New Bedford), 20 August 1857, 2:2; "Daniel Drayton," *ibid.*, 21 April 1859, 2:2; "City Government," *ibid.*, 21 April 1859, 3:1; *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, 9 July 1857, 1:3; J. B. Sanderson, Lowell, Mass., to William C. Nell, 20 July 1842, Black Abolitionist Papers microfilm, 4:453. Very little is known about Photius Fisk. That Bearse dedicated his book to Fisk as well as to Drayton, Torrey, and Jonathan Walker—the last three of whom had themselves gone into the South to help fugitives escape—suggests that Fisk may also have done so. See Bearse, *Reminiscences of Fugitive-Slave Law Days*, 7. Fisk changed his name from Kavasales to Fisk and was commissioned as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy in March 1842. Edward Callahan, ed., *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900* (New York: L. R. Hamersly, 1901), 195, lists Fisk as having retired on 18 July 1864 and having died 7 February 1890. Navy Registers at the National Archives indicate that he served at the Washington, D. C., Navy Yard in 1847-49, when the *Pearl* incident occurred, and in 1855 at the Navy Yard in Pensacola. Many thanks to Bob Huddleston for forwarding this information on Fisk to me. On Fisk's contribution to Drayton's monument see *Republican Standard*, 20 August 1857, 2:2.

62 On Douglass, see Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), in *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies* (New York: Library of America, 1994), 353; on Box Brown, see Joseph Ricketson, New Bedford, to Deborah Weston, 29 April 1849, Weston Papers.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 79

63 Austin Bearse, *Reminiscences of Fugitive-Slave Law Days in Boston* (Boston: Warren Richardson, 1880), 10-12.

64 "Wm A Dodge" was almost certainly meant to indicate William Bradford Dodge, president of the Anti-Slavery Society of Salem and Vicinity from 1836 to 1839 and at that time the teacher of Salem's "colored school"; in primary sources he is consistently identified as a fugitive assistant. "Smiths the Scotchmen's" refers to either Peter or John Smith, natives of Brechin, Scotland, who with Andover's John Dove established a flax processing factory in the Frye (now Shawsheen) Village section of Andover in 1835. Journal of Rev. Theodore Edson, entry for 19 March 1839, Center for Lowell History, Lowell, Mass.; thanks to Martha Mayo for guiding me to this source and this passage. *The Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad in Andover & Greater Lawrence, Massachusetts* (Greater Lawrence Underground Railroad Committee, 2001).

65 On the Smiths and Dove, see *The Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad in Andover & Greater Lawrence*.

66 See Appleton, "History of the Railways."

67 Collison, *Shadrach Minkins*.

68 "Basil Dorsey," *Hampshire Gazette* 81, 36, 2 April 1867; Robert Purvis quoted in Smedley, *Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*, 356-61; Edward H. Magill, "The Underground Railroad," *Friends Intelligencer* 55 (1898): 124-25, 142-44, 159-61, 245, 276-77; Library of Congress, Joshua Leavitt Family Papers, MMC-0893, Library of Congress, and Hugh Davis, *Joshua Leavitt, Evangelical Abolitionist* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), cited in Roger Hooker and Keziah Leavitt House Network to Freedom Application. Thanks to Steve Strimer, Florence (Mass.) History Project, and Bambi Miller, Tyler Memorial Library, Charlemont, Mass., for sharing these materials.

69 See J. C. Lovejoy, *Memoir of Rev. Charles T. Torrey, Who Died in the Penitentiary of Maryland, Where He Was Confined for Showing Mercy to the Poor* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1847; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969). In Lovejoy's memoir, composed largely of letters and other primary documents, no account of Torrey's own figure of fugitive rescues is presented. In his funeral sermon, Lovejoy stated that "*hundreds* of slaves" were freed

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 80

by Torrey's "instrumentality" (304). Torrey appears to have begun in this work shortly after moving to Washington, D.C., in early December 1841, as a correspondent for several northern newspapers. There he "renewed" associations with Nathaniel B. Borden of Fall River, Leverett Saltonstall of Salem (with whom John White Browne studied law), Joshua Giddings of Ohio, and Joshua Leavitt, a native of Charlemont. All of these men except Saltonstall have documented Underground Railroad associations. Torrey also resolved, soon after his arrival, only to worship at "colored churches" while in Washington. After having been jailed in Annapolis for attending a slaveholders' meeting, Torrey was contacted by Thomas Smallwood, an African American man whose wife was laundress in Torrey's boardinghouse. Torrey and Smallwood thereafter worked together to move fugitives to the North. See *Narrative of Thomas Smallwood*. John Brown stated in his narrative, "From first to last, that is, in about two years, Mr. Torrey was individually instrumental in running off nearly four hundred slaves." John Brown, *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, a Fugitive Slave* (London: n.p., 1855), 216-18.

70 William I. Bowditch, Boston, to Wilbur Siebert, 5 April 1893, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

71 Elizabeth Buffum Chace, "My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences" (Valley Falls, R.I., 3d mo 3 1891) in *Two Quaker Sisters from the Original Diaries of Elizabeth Buffum Chace and Lucy Buffum Lovell* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1937), 127-28; Appleton, "History of the Railways"; on Young, see Raymond Paul Zirblis, "Friends of Freedom: The Vermont Underground Railroad Survey Report" (Vermont Department of State Buildings and Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 12 December 1996).

72 Philip J. Schwarz, professor of history at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, made available the transcripts of Grimes's case, preserved largely in Letters Received, Virginia Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond. According to Schwarz, evidence exists to document that Grimes had been involved in assisting fugitives before this incident. On the exodus from Grimes's church after the Fugitive Slave Act, see George W. Williams, *History of the Twelfth Baptist Church, Boston, MA, from 1840-1874, with a Statement and Appeal in Behalf of the Church* (Boston: James H. Earle, 1874). William Jackson's record of baptisms, admissions, marriages, and deaths includes such fugitives as Caroline Taylor and Anthony Loney, whose escapes William Still recounted, and James Pritlow, whom the fugitive George Teamoh described in his narrative.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 81

73 George A. Levesque, *Black Boston: African American Life and Culture in Urban America, 1750-1860* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1994), 273-74; *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery* (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Gunn, 1838), 83; *Liberator*, 27 October 1837, reprinted in Levesque, *Black Boston*, 278-79.

74 "Public Meetings," *Liberator*, 14 March 1856, 43:4; *New Bedford Republican Standard*, 6 December 1855, 2:4.

75 *New Bedford Republican Standard*, 14 August 1859, 2:4.

76 Bettye Hobbs Pruitt, ed., *The Massachusetts Tax Valuation List of 1771* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1978); Daniel R. Mandell, "Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1760-1880," *Journal of American History* 85, 2 (September 1998): 466. F. W. Bird, Whiting Griswold, and Cyrus Weekes, *Report of the Commissioners Relating to the Condition of the Indians in Massachusetts*, House Report No. 46, February 1849, 6; John Milton Earle, *Report to the Governor and Council Concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth, Under the Act of April 6, 1859*, Senate Report No. 96 (Boston: William White, 1861), 9-10.

77 See Russell M. Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee: An Indian Perspective on American History* (Indian Spiritual and Cultural Training Council, 1987). Peters offers no date for Lewis's arrival or presence in Mashpee, and a survey of the three microfiche copies of that town's vital records has not yielded this information. These records, however, exist only for 1834-99. Records beginning in 1763 through 1834 have either been lost or destroyed by fire, and the three microfiche records for the period after 1834 are in many instances illegible. A record of the marriage of Timothy Pocknet and Leah Lewis, on 4 December 1862, is legible; it states the parents of the forty-eight-year-old Leah as James and Jane Lewis and her marriage to Pocknet as her third. On the same day the son of Leah and James Lewis, also James, age twenty-one, to Elizabeth Gardner Pocknet, was also recorded. This second James Lewis stated his birthplace as Mashpee, so his father James Lewis was probably living in Mashpee at least by 1841.

78 *New Bedford Standard*, 29 & 30 September 1854; and John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 320-25, reprinted from *Liberty Bell* (Boston, 1858), 29-43; Netta Vanderhoop, "The True Story of a Fugitive Slave: Or the Story a Gay Head

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 82

Grandmother Told," *Vineyard Gazette*, 3 February 1921. Blassingame states that the trip to Bath was a subterfuge, but the records of the Vigilance Committee contain these three references to Mason: "Sept. 1854 S. P. Hanscom for expenses to Bath Me. To rescue John Mason from Bark Franklin [\$]15.84"; "1 Dec 1854 John Mason escaped from bark Franklin Holmes Hole \$8.25"; 18 July 1856 "E. F. Eddy for . . . Beulah Vanderhoof and John Mason [\$] 5." The September payment, of course, may not have been made. [Jackson], "Fugitive Slaves Aided by the Vigilance Committee," lists John Mason's destination as New Bedford in 1854.

79 The Rev. Thomas James, who witnessed the Faggins event, recounted it in his autobiography *Wonderful Eventful Life of Rev. Thomas James, by Himself* (Rochester, N.Y.: Post-Express Printing Co., 1887), reprinted in *Rochester History* 37, 4 (October 1975): 1-32. Numerous other accounts of it appear in newspapers and in private correspondence; see Grover, *Fugitive's Gibraltar*, 160-69.

80 See Massachusetts people in the Providence society, see Grover, *Fugitive's Gibraltar*, 35. William Rotch Sr., Nantucket, to Moses Brown, 8 November 1787, Moses Brown Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society; Thomas Hazard, New Bedford, to Moses Brown, 24 June 1792, Brown Papers. Charles B Ray, a native of Falmouth and later the editor of the *Colored American*, visited William Rotch Jr. at his home in July 1837 and wrote, "the old gentleman entertained us in part, in relating cases of fugitives in which he had participated," he reported. "He had been, during life, a practical abolitionist." *Colored American*, 22 July 1837, 2:4, 3:1.

81 William Rotch, Nantucket, to Moses Brown, 8 November 1787, Brown Papers.

82 See *Liberator*, 4 August 1832, 122, for a list of the original members.

83 See Sidney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, rev. ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 206-8. The original petition, Unenacted Legislation House Doc #2358, is in the Massachusetts Archives. The petitioners defined themselves as African blacks.

84 Undated supplemented to the *New London Day*; 1855 Massachusetts census for Marlborough.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 83

85 *History of Springfield, Mass., 1636-1886*, 374, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks; Hampden Village Center Historic District nomination, Massachusetts Historic Commission files, HMP.1-3.

86 *Old Anti-Slavery Days. Proceedings of the Commemorative Meeting, Held by the Danvers Historical Society, at the Town Hall, Danvers, April 26, 1893, with Introduction, Letters and Sketches* (Danvers: Danvers Mirror Print, 1893), 144.

87 Peter Wheeler and Charles Edwards Lester, *Chains and Freedom: Or, the Life and Adventures of Peter Wheeler, a Colored Man Yet Living. A Slave in Chains, A Sailor on the Deep, and A Sinner at the Cross* (New York: E. S. Arnold and Co., 1839).

88 Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 83; Peter P. Hinks, ed., *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 27, 24-25.

89 Fugitive Evans and his family came from the "lower part of Newcastle County, Delaware," to Schuylkill in Chester County, Pennsylvania, where he lived eight months, until he began to feel "not safe there." On 4 March 1847 he came to the office of the Boston Vigilance Committee. The text of Browne's account reads, "March 9th Evans, his wife & child, went to live with Alvan Ward, at Ashburnham. 24 April. Letter on file from Ward saying Evans dissatisfied.— 27 April. Evans came in, & complained that Ward had not paid him according to agreement. 30 April. Wrote to Ward that he should pay Evans for a month & a half at \$8.00 a month." See Bartlett, "Abolitionists, Fugitives, and Imposters," 102.

90 These statistics derive from research for Grover, *Fugitive's Gibraltar*, and the Eleanor Broadhead Papers, MSS 0.595, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.

91 *The Life of John Thompson, a Fugitive Slave, Containing His History of 25 Years in Bondage, and His Providential Escape. Written By Himself* (Worcester, Mass.: John Thompson, 1856), 103, 107-8; on Jacobs, see his "A True Tale of Slavery," *The Leisure Hour* (London), 7 -28 February 1861; on the Jenkins letter, see note 28.

92 May, *Some Recollections*, 128-30; Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labours in the United States, Canada, & England* (London: John Snow, 1855), 66-67; *Old Anti-Slavery Days*, 20, 144; Higginson's statement is cited in Mary Thatcher Higginson, *Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1914).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 84

93 Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, 211-12.

94 Blockson, *Underground Railroad*, 2; Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers & Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 95; Chace, "My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences," 116-7; Henry J. Cadbury, "Negro Membership in the Society of Friends," *Journal of Negro History* 21 (April 1936): 178-79.

95 Siebert, *Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, 42-43, citing *Boston Evening Transcript*, 31 March 1926, and Boston Vigilance Committee treasurer's accounts; "Contributions of Religious Societies in Massachusetts/June & July 1854," in Francis Jackson's hand, with letter to Theodore Parker, 27 August 1854, Ms. Am. 1590, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library.

96 On Parker's actions during the Craft escape effort, see *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State: A Memoir of His Life, with Selections from his Letters, 1846-1861* (New York: Denby and Miller, 1891), 1:168; Boston Vigilance Committee records, 1 and 16 April 1851.

97 On Torrey's split with Garrison, see Mayer, *All on Fire*, 254-58, and his correspondence in Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library.

98 Melissa E. Dawes, Cummington, 27 July 1896, to Siebert, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks. Dawes may have been the daughter of Darden Dawes of Goshen, as she is listed as a resident of East Cummington (which borders Goshen) in a letter from M. M. Fisher to one of Siebert's assistants, 23 March 1893, who stated, "I have just had a call from an early fugitive slave who has been here in times past and I learn of him something of the Underground R.R."; this man, Oliver Cromwell Gilbert, identified Dawes as "one of the living persons" who could give Siebert information on the subject. Darden Dawes, a farmer, and his wife had eight children, the youngest of whom appears to have been named Elseta [?]. Her age was listed as seven months. No Melissa Dawes appears in the 1850 federal census in Hampshire County.

99 "The Slave-Catchers!" *Lowell American*, 2 October 1850, citing a telegraph reported in Boston newspapers.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 85

100 Roy E. Finkenbine, "Boston's Black Churches: Institutional Centers of the Antislavery Movement," in Jacobs, ed., *Courage and Conscience*, 182, states that sixty members, "including two deacons," left after the Act passed, apparently based on an article in *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 25 August 1853.

101 *Life and Adventures of James Williams, a Fugitive Slave, with a Full Description of the Underground Railroad* (San Francisco: Women's Union Print, 1873).

102 See Vlach, "Above Ground on the Underground Railroad," and Byron D. Fruehling and Robert H. Smith, "Subterranean Hideaways of the Underground Railroad in Ohio: An Architectural, Archaeological and Historical Critique of Local Traditions," *Ohio History* 102, 98 (Summer/Autumn 1993). In a survey to determine the existence of "special features" in houses with "unassailable credentials" as Underground Railroad stations—such as "a place under the floor accessible only by a trap door, a secret space behind a particular wooden panel in the hallway, or an area behind a knee wall up in the attic," as well as "tunnels extending from the cellar of the house to a safe location as much as a hundred yards away"—Vlach found all to be "elements of fanciful legend." He concluded, "The cellars, trap doors, crawl spaces, and storage spaces tucked behind knee walls that all seem so exotic to us today, usually prove to be nothing more than the normal details of the average nineteenth-century house. . . . Contrary to popular legends very few Underground Railroad stations were outfitted with secret hiding places. Most fugitive slaves were sheltered in existing rooms and spaces." In an investigation of seventeen houses with traditions of "subterranean chambers or tunnels" in three northeastern Ohio counties through which two Underground Railroad routes ran from the Ohio River Lake Erie, Fruehling and Smith found no evidence of "architectural constructions intended specifically to conceal slaves or assist their flight" having been incorporated into any of them (116).

103 Grover and daSilva, "Historic Resource Study," 111; George W. Putnam to Siebert, 30 Oct 1893, vol. 2, Siebert Notebooks.

104 Stanley Robboy, e-mail to Horace Seldon, 7 June 2004. Robboy is a former occupant of the Hayden house and a scholar on Hayden. See Stanley W. Robboy and Anita W. Robboy, "Lewis Hayden: From Fugitive Slave to Statesman," *New England Quarterly* 46, 4 (December 1973): 591-612. Thanks to Horace Seldon of Boston African American National Historic Site for contacting Robboy; Seldon, e-mail to Grover, 7 June 2004.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 86

105 David Mead to Siebert, n.d. [after 3 Nov 1893], vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

106 Grover, *Fugitive's Gibraltar*, 95-97. Anna Gardner remembered the Cooper family was concealed in the attic and cellar of her family's home (her father was Oliver G. Gardiner) "for weeks until the slave catcher left the island."

107 As told by Gayle T. Forbush, daughter of the informant, in "Secret Tunnel Discovered," *Wellesley Townsman*, March 1930. When the house (1853) located at 89 West Central Street was torn down a "bricked-up subcellar passage" was revealed. Forbush and her husband drove out to see the hole and found that "a man could just crawl in it... Her husband was skeptical. He thought it might as well have been a cold air shaft."

108 Clark, *Antislavery Days*, 83. In typical fashion, the reputation of the Hilliards' house prompted speculation about hiding places later in its history. "Only a few years ago, when some repairs were being made in the plastering of the ell, a well-concealed trap door in the ceiling of a closet unexpectedly dropped on the head of a workman, revealing an unfinished space under the lean-to roof large enough to hold several human beings. This place was without windows, but it was ventilated in a measure by an opening into a shaft under a skylight. Recalling the tradition that this house had been a fugitive harbor on the 'Underground' in Mr. Hilliard's time the then owner had the place explored, with the result of two tin plates and two iron spoons were found on the floor. Were these the relics of the last meal ever served to fugitives under that roof?" "Old Passages of Boston's 'Underground Railroad' Uncovered," part 3, *Boston Evening Transcript*, 31 March 1926, in vol. 2, Siebert Notebooks.

109 "The Underground Railway in Danvers: Recollections of Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Bradstreet," *Danvers Historical Society Collections* 4 (1918), in vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

110 Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1915), quotation cited in *Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad in Andover & Greater Lawrence*.

111 Lewis Ford to Siebert, n.d., vol. 2, Siebert Notebooks.

112 Boston Vigilance Committee records for 15 May 1847 record that fugitive James Burgess from Maryland "went to Pembroke to Dr Anthony Collamore to live with him"; Bartlett,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 87

“Abolitionists, Fugitives, and Imposters,” 107. William Jenkins represented Andover at the North Reading Freeman’s Convention that labored to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act; he and his wife renounced their membership in the South Parish Church over the slavery issue and joined the Free Christian Church. See Kay Noyes, “Jenkins House Fugitive Harbor for Escaping Slaves: Famed Abolitionists Met There,” *Andover Townsman*, 1956. Siebert Notebooks identify Bigelow as a “conductor” and state that his wife housed Shadrach.

113 *Old Anti-Slavery Days*, 83; Nina Fletcher Little, *Some Old Brookline Houses* (Brookline, Mass.: Brookline Historical Society, 1949).

114 Frances E. Drake to Siebert, 4 Jan 1894, vol. 2, Siebert Notebooks.

115 Grover and da Silva, “Historic Resource Study,” 97, 106-15.

¹¹⁶ Bartlett, “Abolitionists, Fugitives and Imposters,” 101-2; Joseph Marsh, “The Underground Railway,” *History of Florence, 1681-1894*. ed. Charles A Sheffield (1895) 165-166.

¹¹⁷ F.B. Sanborn, *Henry D. Thoreau* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883) 195, in vol. 2 Siebert Notebooks.

118 Daniels, *In Freedom’s Birthplace*, 17.

119 Grover and da Silva, “Historic Resource Study.”

120 *Ibid.*, 64-71.

121 *Ibid.*, 96.

122 These limitations can be measured against the up-to-date and stylish homes of financially-successful blacks who represented the upper end of the economic range within their communities. For example, architect Asher Benjamin designed John P. Coburn’s gaming house on 2 Phillips Street (formerly Southac Street) in Boston; Joshua Bowen Smith’s house on Norfolk Street in Cambridge was constructed with central heating.

123 Grover and da Silva, “Historic Resource Study,” 112.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 88

124 Scholars have recognized this tendency to personalize prototype housing in urban and suburban communities. Kingston Wm. Heath, *The Patina of Place: The Cultural Weathering of a New England Industrial Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001); Alice Gray Read, "Making a House a Home in a Philadelphia Neighborhood," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture II*, Camille Wells, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986) 192-199. Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown* (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 1993)

125 *African American Heritage Trail, Cambridge, Massachusetts* (City of Cambridge, 2000).

126 Street Survey Files, Cambridge (MA) Historical Commission.

127 After coming to New England in 1842 and telling the story of their escape from Kentucky in various places, the fugitive brothers J. Milton and Lewis Clarke came to Cambridge in 1843 and stayed with Boston merchant Aaron Safford, who lived on Prospect Street near Broadway in Cambridge; his house is extant. Safford was a member of the Second Evangelical Congregational Church, known then as "the abolition church." Its pastor was Joseph C. Lovejoy, whose brother was the martyr Elijah Lovejoy, the Alton, Illinois, printer murdered in the antiabolitionist riot there in 1834. J. C. Lovejoy transcribed the Lewis brothers' two fugitive narratives and wrote *Memoir of Rev. Charles T. Torrey* (1847). Safford's wife was Mary Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe; it was either she or their father, Lyman Beecher, who brought the stories of Lewis and Milton Clarke to Stowe's attention. In her *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe revealed that she based her character George Harris on Lewis Clarke. See Stowe, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Co., and Cleveland: Jewett, Proctor & Worthington, 1854), 18-22.

128 Aella Greene, "Well-Known '[Outlaws]' of Westfield, Northampton, Amherst and other Towns—The Chester Branch, A [Bit] of the Way in Vermont," Part 3 of "The Underground Railroad and Those Who Operated It," *Sunday Republican* (Springfield, Mass.), 25 [?] March 1900.

129 "Jerry Warriner's Tavern," *Springfield Weekly Republican*, 31 Jan 1907, 13, in *ibid.*

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 89

130 Arthur G. Hill to Siebert, 18 July 1896, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

131 Peter C. Ripley, *The Black Abolitionist Papers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 3: 39; *Underground Railroad Resources in the United States: Theme Study* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register, History and Education, September 2000), 3, 17, 30.

132 On the reluctance of fugitives to cite names, see, for examples, Drew, *Narratives of Fugitive Slaves*, 31-32, 45-50, 160-61, 198-233, and others throughout this volume; John Parker, *His Promised Land*, ed. Stuart Seely Sprague (New York, 1996), cited in Carol Kammen, "The Underground Railroad and Local History," *Upstate History Alliance Newsletter*, Winter 2002, 4, reprinted from *History News*; Mary E. Hall, 135 High Street, Brookline, 13 January 1897, to Siebert, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

133 Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, ed. William L. Andrews (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 196; *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1848), 40.

134 Kammen, "Underground Railroad and Local History," 4.

135 They are *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave. Written by Himself* (1824)(1855); *Life and Adventures of Robert Voorhis* (1829); *A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery* (1838); *Chains and Freedom: Or, the Life and Adventures of Peter Wheeler, a Colored Man Yet Living* (1839); *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke* (1845) and *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke* (1846); *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845) (1855) (1881); *Life and Sufferings of Leonard Black, a Fugitive from Slavery* (1847); *Narrative of William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Written by Himself* (1847) (1848) (1850); *Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave* (1848), *Narrative of Henry Box Brown* (1849); *The Experiences of Thomas H. Jones* (1849); *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1850); *Narrative of the Life of James Watkins* (1852); *Narrative of the Events in the Life of William Green, (Formerly a Slave), Written by Himself* (1853); *The Life of John Thompson, a Fugitive Slave* (1856); *Narrative of Jane Brown and Her Two Children* (1860); *Narrative of the Life and Labors of the Reverend G. W. Offley* (1860); William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860); Linda Brent [Harriet Jacobs], *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861); John S. Jacobs, "A True Tale of Slavery," *The Leisure Hour* (1861); *Life and Adventures of James Williams, A Fugitive Slave* (1873); James Lindsay Smith,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPSSection number E Page 90

Autobiography of James L. Smith (1881); *Wonderful Eventful Life of Rev. Thomas James, by Himself* (1887); and F. N. Boney, Richard L. Hume, and Rafia Zafar, *God Made Man, Man Made the Slave: The Autobiography of George Teamoh* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990).

136 Frances H. Drake, Leominster, to Theodore Parker, 2 September 1854, Ms. Am. 1590, Boston Public Library.

137 See Wesley and Uzelac, *William Cooper Nell*. The microfilm copy of the Black Abolitionist Papers is available at Lamont Library, Harvard University.

138 Other accounts exist written by assistants active in other regions, including Eber Pettit's *Sketches in the History of the Underground Railroad* (1879), H. U. Johnson's *From Dixie to Canada* (1894), and James Harris Fairchild's *The Underground Railroad* (1895). These may mention fugitives and assistants with Massachusetts associations.

139 Marion Gleason McDouglass, *Fugitive Slaves (1619-1865)* (1891); Smedley, *Underground Railroad in Chester and the Neighboring Counties of Pennsylvania*; see also *Old Anti-Slavery Days*, which, like Siebert's book, contains reminiscences of both participants and nonparticipants.

140 Elizabeth Cooley, Boston, typewritten account filed under Suffolk County, April 1897, vol. 2, Siebert Notebooks. Cooley's recollection of the date of her escape is somewhat puzzling, though quite commonly reimbursements in Vigilance Committee accounts appear to have taken place well after the dates of assistance. Still, Francis Jackson's accounts at New-York Historical Society indicate that Mrs. Cooley and her daughter were to be sent to New York in 1853; Jackson then crossed out "New York." Manix boarded twelve fugitives between 1 August 1855 and 12 December 1856. He may himself have been a fugitive, for Vigilance Committee records show that he was sent to Canada in 1856. DeGrasse's account books are in the DeGrasse-Howard Papers, 1776-1976, Massachusetts Historical Society.

141 C. F. Atkinson, "Cotton Buyer/41 Mason Building/Boston," 2 May 1898 to Siebert, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number E Page 91

142 C. F. Atkinson, Boston, to Siebert, 2 May 1898, vol. 2; Robert S. Brown, West Newbury, to Siebert, 12 April 1935; Rev. William G. Poor, Upton, to Marion La Mere, included in La Mere, "Underground Railroad in Andover, Mass.," (Typescript, 25 November 1934), in vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

143 Marguerite Merrill, Amesbury Public Library, to Siebert, 6 and 12 April 1935; Marion La Mere, Andover, 25 Jan 1935 to Siebert, vol. 1, Siebert Notebooks.

144 Siebert, *Underground Railroad in Massachusetts*, 10.

145 Ibid., 12.

146 One of the houses Smith lived in survives on Beacon Hill at 86 Pinckney Street (MHC #4105), but because he and his family occupied the house between 1878 and the mid-1890s, it falls outside the scope of this context.

147 Ibid., 42-45.

148 Frances H. Drake, Leominster, to Maria Weston Chapman, 6 August 1843, Ms.A.4.6A.1 p.86, Boston Public Library.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS

Section number F Page 92

Section F

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

I. National Register Criteria and Aspects of Integrity as They Apply to Historic Resources Associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts

Historic resources associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts will be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B, C, or D. Eligible properties can meet more than one criterion. They must also be demonstrated to be significant within the period of significance of the Underground Railroad and to retain physical integrity from that period as described below.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for historic resources associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts extends from 1783, when slavery was abolished in Massachusetts by judicial decree, to 1865, when the Civil War ended and the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery, was ratified. The historic events associated with eligible properties or the individuals who inhabited them must have occurred within this period of significance.

National Register Criteria

Criterion A

An eligible property must possess a documented association with a significant event or represent a distinguishing aspect of the history of the Underground Railroad in a local, state, or national context, though in this Multiple Property Documentation Format submission properties will be evaluated in a state or local, not national, context. It is also important to document that the property existed at the time the significant event or activity occurred. Under this criterion, the representative features principally will be buildings, but structures, sites, and historic districts may also qualify.

Criterion B

An eligible property must be associated with an individual who can be documented as having

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 93

established his or her importance within the context of the Underground Railroad at a local, state, or national level. Properties should reflect the time period when that person achieved significance; properties that postdate the period of significance will not be eligible. A property may, however, predate the period of significance as long as its associations under Criterion B are within the period of significance. Under this criterion, the representative features principally will be buildings. Graves of persons with notable Underground Railroad associations, if erected within the period of significance and for whom no associated building or other structure survives, will also be eligible. Commemorative objects, such as monuments erected to recognize a documented individual, will also be eligible in the context of their own era and design significance, if erected within the period of significance, especially if an associated property is no longer intact or extant.

Criterion C

An eligible property must possess distinctive characteristics that directly relate it to property types associated with the Underground Railroad. Though physical evidence directly attributable to fugitive presence – that is, spaces designed expressly for their concealment or shelter – has so far not been documented in Massachusetts or in other states where research has been done, including New York, Ohio, and Indiana, should such spaces be soundly and convincingly documented in the future, they would be eligible under this criterion. So would definable methods of construction attributable to African-American cultural traditions. In the majority of cases Criteria A and B will be the principal means of establishing significance, and the architectural evaluation of a property will focus on distinctive characteristics of workmanship, material and/or design from within the period of significance, but outside the specific context of the Underground Railroad. However, design features pertaining to this criterion may emerge from continued research and comparative analysis. In addition, this criterion will apply in determining the significance of gravesites.

Criterion D

An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design. For example, properties known to have been associated with fugitives who settled in Massachusetts may contain archaeological evidence that would provide valuable information concerning their living conditions, lifestyle, and their preservation of traditional objects in the context of the Underground Railroad.

Criteria Considerations

Certain property types are generally excluded from consideration for listing on the National Register unless they are part of historic districts that meet the criteria or meet certain criteria considerations. In the context of the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts, those considerations follow.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS

Section number F Page 94

- A religious property will qualify for listing if a documented association with the Underground Railroad can be demonstrated to be significant under Criteria A, B, and/or C.
- A building or structure moved from its original location will have diminished significance because of the strong geographical component of the context. However, a moved building or structure may be eligible if it can be documented that it is the most significant surviving resource associated with a person or event significant in the history of the theme.
- A birthplace or grave of a figure significant in the history of the Underground Railroad may be eligible if there is no other appropriate building or site directly associated with that individual. However, to be eligible according to this theme, the associations with the property should date within the period of significance (1783-1865). Resources that were constructed later than the period of significance may be eligible for listing in the National Register, yet they will need to be nominated outside of this context.
- A cemetery may be eligible for its distinctive design features, association with persons of transcendent importance, or association with significant historic events. The presence of gravesites associated with figures significant for their association with the Underground Railroad will contribute to the eligibility of a historic cemetery, but it is unlikely that the cemetery, as a whole, will qualify for listing in this context alone. Furthermore, these burials are likely to postdate the period of significance of the theme. There may be certain cemeteries, such as an African American burial ground or sections of cemeteries that are wholly or predominantly African-American, where associations with the Underground Railroad will have a more prominent role in their significance. If associations can be documented and if sufficient burials were made during the established period of significance, then the resource may be eligible in this context.
- A reconstructed building will not be eligible in the context of the Underground Railroad if the reconstruction has compromised its association or if its construction date falls outside the established period of significance.
- A commemorative property associated with the Underground Railroad – for example, monuments erected to recognize significant documented events or individuals – will be eligible only as long as it was created during the established period of significance.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 95

- A property achieving significance within the past fifty years will not be eligible in the context of the Underground Railroad because it falls outside the established period of significance.

Integrity

An eligible property must exhibit sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance. Research has so far not found properties with documented associations with the Underground Railroad to be plentiful in Massachusetts, and many of those that survive have been altered subsequent to the period of significance. As is generally the case, elite properties have been better preserved over the intervening 150 years than the homes of middle-class, working-class and poor individuals, which have not fared as well. Where they have survived, their smaller-scale and limited amenities have motivated alterations to bring them into conformance with more recent codes and lifestyles. Many of these more modest properties have not survived at all. As a result a disproportionate number of high-style homes associated with the Underground Railroad context remain than do the more modest dwellings of fugitive assistants – as well as of the homes of fugitives themselves.

The overall rarity of resources for which associations with the Underground Railroad can firmly be established, and the known levels of alteration typical of many of these resources, represent factors that need to be considered in applying the National Register integrity standards. To be eligible for listing in the National Register under this context, properties must have integrity of associations with the Underground Railroad. Of the remaining integrity standards, properties should usually have a high integrity of location and sufficient integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship and feeling to convey their association with the context. It is understood, however, that eligible properties may not meet all the integrity standards at a high level, and that some physical characteristics of the property from the period of significance may typically have been lost or visually obscured subsequent to the period of significance. In general, integrity of association and location should be the primary considerations, followed by overall design, feeling and setting. Integrity of workmanship and materials may sometimes be of secondary concern under this context.

In applying the integrity test for a potentially eligible property, the means by which it meets the registration criteria is a determining factor. Properties associated with events or individuals significant in the history of the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts (Criteria A and B, respectively) may not need to meet standards of architectural integrity as stringent as those for a property where the significance is primarily for its design and workmanship. In these cases, aspects of integrity pertaining to location, setting, feeling, and association are more relevant. The integrity test should be applied in a balanced manner that uses each of the seven aspects of integrity in a cumulative rather than selective way. There are ideal levels of integrity, yet it is unrealistic to

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 96

expect that all of the seven aspects need to be met or that a property will not be deficient in one or more aspects. Many properties significant in the history of the Underground Railroad will require a careful consideration of the integrity test to ensure that these valuable resources are not excluded from registration because standards from other social, cultural, or architectural contexts form the basis for evaluation.

The following guidelines can be used in applying the seven aspects of integrity to properties associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts.

Location. To be eligible under this context, properties are expected to have high integrity of location. Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. As the historic context points out, geography is a crucial factor in the history of the Underground Railroad, and the integrity of location is very important. While the Underground Railroad network in Massachusetts is relatively ambiguous, the locations of the homes of assistants along the paths fugitives traveled are primary factors in its definition.

Location establishes these sites within communities as well as provides a reference point along a chain of travel. Likewise, location is important in establishing the significance of fugitives' houses, enclaves, and workplaces in their localities. The locations of properties associated with legal actions or fugitive renditions and rescues are also important considerations. Significant buildings that have been moved must be evaluated as to how their relocation affects their ability to convey their significant associations with the Underground Railroad in a community setting and/or as part of the pattern of Underground Railroad activity in Massachusetts.

Design. To be eligible under this context, properties are expected to retain a level of integrity of design that at least conveys their form, plan and structure from the period of significance. Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, structure, and style of a property. In many buildings associated with the Underground Railroad, consideration of the aspects of architectural design will play a greater factor in their evaluation, notably in the stylish homes of fugitive assistants and in churches, meetinghouses, and civic buildings. The integrity of design for many others, such as more modest homes of assistants and of fugitives themselves, will be considered in the context of their existing form, plan, and structure, and how those characteristics continue to convey the comparative social and domestic conditions in which the associated people lived. Small, modest houses often have been altered by additions and exterior and/or interior changes that compromise the original design of the building, and the extent to which the original physical characteristics are preserved *in spite of* those modifications needs to be evaluated. Yet it should be understood that periodic alterations are common to this type of affordable, vernacular architecture and in many instances have preserved original detail.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 97

No evidence exists of design features specifically constructed as fugitive hiding places, and no special design features are expected to convey the functions of structures as fugitive dwellings. Any properties asserting the presence of such features must be verified against physical evidence and corroborated by documentary evidence. Tangible remains will factor prominently in the significance of the property.

Setting. The level of integrity of setting for properties eligible for listing under this context may be quite varied. Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. The settings of properties associated with the Underground Railroad are diverse, and as a guideline it is important in establishing the relationship of fugitive and those who assisted them to their communities. This is most critical in the case of fugitives. Setting provides important information about the conditions of fugitives who settled in Massachusetts and whether they lived in enclaves, integrated situations, or in marginalized communities. Occupational status, whether in urban centers, in industrial villages, or on farmsteads, is often conveyed by the setting of the historic property. These characteristics are important to consider, although it should be acknowledged that many urban and village settings have changed significantly since the Civil War, as have the racial and cultural demographics of these communities. Historic features that characterize the setting of the property during the period of significance will often need to be identified within more recent environments.

Materials. The level of integrity of materials for properties eligible for listing under this context may be quite varied. Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. For any historic building to be considered intact, it needs to substantially retain the materials that created it. In general most historic buildings retain significant amounts of original material, but the proliferation of replacement wall, roof, and window materials in the last fifty years has seriously compromised the appearance of their historic integrity. This is particularly the case with vernacular architecture that does not have the elaboration of form and ornament to distinguish its exterior envelope beyond surface materials. Plain buildings will appear less intact when they have been re-roofed and resided, even though they retain a high degree of material integrity. Realizing that in most cases replacement wall sidings have been applied over intact historic fabric, the impact of this alteration is visual rather than material, and it should be balanced against the significance of the property.

In most cases replacement siding alone will not affect the historic significance of a property. Yet, other alterations to materials must be assessed. Window and door replacement, cornice alteration, porch removal, and the addition of new wall and roof openings are more critical to a property's material integrity. Likewise, substantial changes to interior walls and ceilings are a concern. High levels of material alterations will be a common factor in the evaluation of properties associated with

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 98

the Underground Railroad, and the cumulative impact of a high degree of material alterations must be assessed.

Workmanship. Similarly, the level of integrity of workmanship for properties eligible for listing under this context may be quite varied. Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is an effective tool for distinguishing between elite and vernacular architecture, and for identifying local building traits. There should be sufficient evidence of workmanship in a significant building to determine the status of the household and its cultural milieu. Craftsmanship is a cost item, and the evidence in the houses of many fugitive assistants and fugitives will be subtle and restrained. Properties that are eligible because of their association with significant events or individuals should have evidence of craftsmanship that reflects the economic and cultural context of those events or people. Alterations that remove this evidence or transform it into another type or craft era will diminish the integrity of a property.

Feeling. While the levels of integrity of setting, design, workmanship and materials may vary, together they should convey a strong sense of feeling for the properties significant under the context. Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Properties significant for their association with the Underground Railroad need to convey the sense of that historic period to a sufficient degree. This aspect is particularly useful in the assessment of their integrity. It establishes a benchmark for assessing the overall architectural integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. In spite of physical alterations, if these aspects of the building still combine to convey the feeling of the property's historic significance, then a positive evaluation is possible.

Association. To be eligible for listing under this context, all properties must have a high level of integrity of documented association with the Underground Railroad. Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. This integrity is established by documentation and will apply to all properties associated with the history of the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts.

Levels of Significance

Properties associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts will be significant at a state level of significance. Properties that are determined eligible for the National Register using this context study will have been evaluated in a statewide perspective. The significance of some events and the actions of some people in Massachusetts will transcend the state context and be associated with national themes and contexts. In these cases, properties representative of a broad pattern in a meaningful national context will be discussed in terms of their national significance.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 99 **II. Property Types Associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts****1. PROPERTIES THAT HARBORED FUGITIVES ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**Description

This type characterizes buildings where it can be documented that fugitives were temporarily harbored in their flight to freedom in Massachusetts. Properties that functioned as places of refuge for fugitives in flight comprise a wide variety of resource types, such as dwellings, taverns, workplaces, barns, and natural features. By far, houses represent the most numerous documented examples of this property type, and those range from the mansions of elite community members who were both abolitionists and fugitive assistants, such as the Concord home of Francis E. Bigelow, to the modest cottages of tradesmen involved in the abolitionist movement, including shoemaker Jonathan Drake and his wife, Frances, in Leominster. In addition, fugitives were secreted in the homes of African Americans who had settled in Massachusetts, many of whom had escaped slavery themselves. Lewis Hayden boarded fugitives in his house at 66 Phillips Street in the African American enclave that had developed on the north side of Beacon Hill in Boston. African American abolitionists Nathan and Polly Johnson of New Bedford housed Frederick Douglass in 1838 and the relatively obscure fugitive Caroline Harris and her child in 1861. Fugitives were lodged in existing spaces in these houses, such as kitchens and chambers; fugitives who stayed in the home of Mrs. George S. Hillard at 54 Pinckney Street in Boston commonly stayed in upstairs bedrooms. If more secrecy was required, fugitives sometimes were sheltered in attics and cellars. Accounts of hiding places specifically constructed in houses for this purpose have not been substantiated.

There are documented instances of taverns and workplaces having sheltered fugitives, and there are farmers known to have secreted fugitives in their barns and granaries. In Westfield, Hiram Hull recalled how as a boy he helped his father care for fugitives, sometimes as many as 20 at a time, whom he sheltered in the barn on the family farm; though both the barn and house were razed in the 1920s, other assistants may have used outbuilding in this way in other parts of the state.

Buildings of this type can be of any construction date prior to the Civil War, and they are indistinguishable from similar buildings that were not associated with Underground Railroad activity.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 100Significance

Although an untold number of fugitives accomplished their escapes from slavery unaided, the properties of fugitive assistants played a pivotal role in the function of the Underground Railroad. These buildings are associated with numerous documented events that help define the historic event throughout the period of significance. In addition to their direct association with the stories of specific fugitives, properties that harbored fugitives are landmarks that characterize their journey and combine to distinguish a geography of routes for the freedom seekers. These properties also are important identifiers of the individuals who harbored fugitives and participated in a network committed to securing their freedom.

Eligible properties that sheltered fugitives will meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. Many of them will also be eligible under Criterion B as they are associated with individuals who can be demonstrated to be significant in the anti-slavery movement during the period. For example, William Jenkins's house in Andover is significant both for having harbored fugitives and for its association with a prominent abolitionist; so, too, is the Nathan and Polly Johnson house in New Bedford, now a National Historic Landmark. Buildings where fugitives were sheltered may have sufficient design significance to meet Criterion C; however, in the context of the Underground Railroad, this criterion will not be particularly relevant unless design features can be directly associated with a dwelling's function as a fugitive harbor. A property that functioned as a fugitive harbor and also represents other associated property types, such as properties associated with prominent persons active in the Underground Railroad or properties where fugitives lived in Massachusetts, could meet Criterion C because of how its design informs those areas of significance. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design in order to meet Criterion D.

Registration Requirements

Only stations where there is convincing documentary evidence of harboring fugitives will be eligible under Criterion A. More detailed stories will provide documentation about fugitive assistants and fugitives that will apply to potential significance of individuals under Criterion B. Physical characteristics will be more a factor of integrity than significance; however, domestic design features that have been documented in the accounts of fugitives and fugitive assistants as locations where fugitives were harbored in the household, such as kitchens, chambers, attics, and cellars, will be factors in the discussion of significance.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association in the context and its period, as well as its position in the network. Geography is a crucial factor in the history of the Underground Railroad, and location is a key attribute for the property type. Moved buildings will have diminished significance, especially if relocated from their historic community

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 101

settings. The homes of fugitive assistants will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function. The diversity of resources within this property type obliges a nuanced application of the registration requirements. Fugitive assistants came from a wide range of economic and class backgrounds; many of them were freed slaves or fugitives themselves. It will be important to apply these requirements within appropriate social, cultural, and architectural contexts. A vernacular working-class dwelling cannot be evaluated by the same standard as an elite house, nor should the latter be considered more important simply because it has greater design distinction.

2. PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH PERSONS ACTIVE IN THE UNDERGROUND
RAILROADDescription

This property type represents the homes or businesses of abolitionists and fugitives who can be documented as directly aiding escaping slaves but whose houses or places of work cannot be documented to have housed fugitives. An identified example of this property type in Massachusetts is the George Howland House in New Bedford, who hired Frederick Douglass but has not so far been documented as having sheltered fugitives in his home. The Williston family's Bensonville (later Greenville) Manufacturing Company in the Florence section of Northampton employed fugitives. If extant, the wholesale shoe shop of Rufus Elmer on Main Street in Springfield also would be an example of this property type, for it was where fugitive James Lindsay Smith worked for at least a year, "secreted from public gaze," after his escape in 1838. The first Boston Vigilance Committee sent fugitives to work on Alvan (sometimes Alvin) Ward's farm and the Jones & Whitmore thread spool factory in Ashburnham. This property type also includes schools, such as the evening school for fugitives Martha Briggs ran at her 29 Allen Street home in New Bedford, which still stands.

The condition of known extant resources is generally good; however, the number of documented properties so far associated with prominent persons active in the Underground Railroad is few. This property type will contain more high-style than modest houses. Still, as more African Americans are identified as fugitive assistants, more diversity of associative and physical characteristics will be revealed. As with other related property types, the larger and more pretentious houses have been, in general, less altered than the smaller and more modest dwellings.

Significance

Many people from many walks of life actively participated in the Underground Railroad and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 102

provided direct support in fugitives' flight to freedom. Properties with documented associations to fugitives and the kind of assistance they provided are significant within the context of this nomination. Many of these buildings are associated with documented events that help define the historic event throughout the period of significance. Others are significant because they are the best physical representation of individuals who attained significance for their roles in the greater movement. In many cases, their direct association with the stories of specific fugitives enhances their importance, and those places that provided work and other types of support for fugitives provide important information for the cultural geography of the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts.

Properties that are eligible for their associations with prominent persons active in the Underground Railroad will generally meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. Yet they will be best represented by Criterion B, as they are associated with individuals demonstrated to be significant in fugitive assistance during the period. Buildings associated with this property type may have sufficient design significance to meet Criterion C; however, in the context of the Underground Railroad, this criterion is relevant only in relation to establishing the significance of prominent individuals and their relative position in their community and the Underground Railroad and to conveying the range of people involved and services provided. In this way, the different living conditions of wealthy New Bedford merchant George Howland (with property worth an estimated \$200,000 in 1850), middling Ashburnham farmer Alvah Ward (property worth \$6,000), and the African American schoolmistress Martha Briggs in New Bedford (whose father John, a laborer, had property valued at \$1,500 that year) will illustrate the economic and social diversity within the context. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design to meet Criterion D.

Registration Requirements

Properties that have convincing documentation of associations with persons providing assistance to fugitives but *did not* function as stations will be eligible under Criterion B. Physical characteristics will be more of a factor of integrity than significance; however, domestic design features that express the relative status of the individual and the kind of assistance he or she provided are important to identify.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association to the context and its period, as well as its representation of the significant person. Geography is a crucial factor in the history of the Underground Railroad, and location is a key attribute for the property type. Moved buildings will have diminished significance, especially if relocated from their historic community settings. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 103

diversity of resources within this property type obliges a nuanced application of the registration requirements. Fugitive assistants came from a wide range of economic and class backgrounds; many of them were freed slaves or fugitives themselves. It will be important to apply these requirements within appropriate social, cultural, and architectural contexts. A vernacular working-class dwelling cannot be evaluated by the same standard as an elite house, nor should the latter be considered more important simply because it has greater design distinction.

3. PROPERTIES WHERE FUGITIVES LIVED IN MASSACHUSETTS

Description

Many fugitives settled in Massachusetts, either for several years or for the rest of their lives. In Boston the home of fugitive Robert Johnson still stands at 69 Joy Street, as does that of Lewis Hayden at 66 Phillips Street. Frederick Douglass's first home in freedom, in the household of Nathan and Polly Johnson, is extant at 21 Seventh Street in New Bedford. Basil Dorsey bought property and built a house in Florence that was subsequently owned and occupied by a second fugitive, Rev. Thomas H. Jones. The fugitive George Latimer lived out his life on Marianna Street in Lynn, and the fugitive John N. Howard bought a house in Springfield in 1854, escaped to Canada sometime before the Civil War, returned to the house in 1861, and remained there until the 1880s. Josiah Thomas, whom the first Boston Vigilance Committee sent to work in the thread spool factory of Jones & Whitmore in Ashburnham in 1847, lived in that town with his family at least through 1860. Researchers have yet to determine if these last three houses still exist.

The condition of extant resources is mixed, however, and the number of identified properties is exceedingly rare. In many cities and towns, more research is needed to determine where these dwellings were and if they have survived. This property type will contain more common, vernacular houses because of the circumscribed economic position most African Americans endured during the period of significance. Within this class of buildings, a range of houses is evident between urban and rural dwellings and among individuals of varying occupations and economic success. No particular physical characteristics have yet emerged to distinguish features of the buildings within this type as peculiarly African American. In this way, the buildings reflect the associative characteristics of the settling fugitives and their varying assimilation into the mainstream society and culture. Because of the small, affordable nature of this housing, surviving examples can be expected to have been enlarged and altered subsequent to the period of significance in response to evolving trends of home improvement over time.

Significance

This property type addresses the significance of fugitive African Americans settling in Massachusetts in the period of the Underground Railroad, the degree of security they felt in

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 104

particular communities, and their role in the history of the antislavery movement. It also provides insight into the living conditions, way of life, and community interaction of African Americans, as well as their integration into mainstream American society during this volatile time. While fugitive dwellings could function as other property types, notably locations of fugitive assistance, they are a significant resource category independent of these other property types. These properties portray the events of the Underground Railroad from a perspective that has been generally overlooked in historical scholarship until recently, and they enrich the significance of the context.

Properties that are eligible for their associations with fugitives who settled in Massachusetts will generally meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. They also will be eligible under Criterion B because fugitives were the key individuals in the Underground Railroad. Because of their strong historical associations, documented examples of fugitive dwellings will meet Criterion C as distinctive architectural types. A context for these buildings has been generally established; the identification and documentation of individual examples will ultimately expand and refine the characterizations of the type. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design to meet Criterion D. Such sites have the potential to provide valuable information as to how the prevailing African American culture may have influenced the design and decoration of fugitive dwellings. Archaeological investigation of properties where houses survive also has the potential to provide information about domestic life not available in the existing architecture or archival and published sources.

Registration Requirements

Only properties that can be convincingly documented to have been fugitive dwellings will be eligible, and these properties have the potential to be eligible under all available criteria (A through D). Significance will be established under Criterion A by a property's associative characteristics – that is, the settlement of fugitives in Massachusetts during the period of the Underground Railroad. A property sufficiently documented to be associated with a fugitive in a community during this period will also be eligible under Criterion B. Such instances will probably be sufficiently rare in a locality to emerge as distinctive within the context. In this case, physical characteristics will play a prominent role in establishing significance under Criterion C. Lastly, documented sites of fugitive dwellings, whether the house is present or not, may contain valuable archaeological evidence that would contribute to developing a more precise understanding of this property type. This potential should be evaluated each time the documentation of a property is planned.

A fugitive dwelling should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its association to the context and its period, as well as a feeling of fugitive presence. Geography is a crucial factor in the history of the Underground Railroad, and location is a key attribute for the property type. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 105

setting of the property is also important as it imparts information of the fugitive's relationship to the community. Moved buildings will have diminished significance, especially if relocated from their historic community settings. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function. Aspects of workmanship are useful to interpret the building in relation to other comparable dwellings, both within the milieu of the fugitive and more broadly. In general, these buildings were the affordable housing of their day, and they can be expected to have experienced stages of improvement in subsequent eras resulting in alterations and additions that tend to obscure, if not obliterate, design features from the period of significance. While the overall impact of these alterations on the integrity of the historic resource must be assessed, it is also important to look carefully within the current envelope to determine if defining physical characteristics survive in sufficient amounts to distinguish the property type. In these cases, the strength of the association with the Underground Railroad may outweigh weaknesses in the integrity of design and materials.

4. PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH LEGAL CHALLENGES TO SLAVERY

Description

Properties associated with legal challenges to slavery will typically be public buildings, such as courthouses, city or town halls, and jails or penitentiaries. In rural areas and earlier periods, taverns could have been used for legal actions.

None of the documented properties in Massachusetts so far associated with legal challenges to slavery – such as the Old Boston Courthouse, numerous jails, or Nelson's Tavern, the site of the first known fugitive rendition hearing in New Bedford, in 1822 – appear to have survived. However, this study has not identified all such challenges in all Massachusetts places, and researchers should be aware that local efforts to challenge fugitive renditions or to prevent the sale of free persons of color as slaves may have occurred and may have involved local courthouses or public buildings.

Significance

This property type illustrates the unstable condition of the fugitives' freedom, particularly following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which mandated the involvement of state governments in returning fugitives to slavery. Legal challenges in Massachusetts at times worked in favor of the fugitive; more than one slave catcher was rebuffed by magistrates through the successful legal challengers brought forth by abolitionists. Yet every fugitive felt vulnerable to the legal pursuit of slave catchers to some degree.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 106

Properties that are eligible for their associations with legal challenges to slavery will generally meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. Yet, they also will be eligible under Criterion B as fugitive assistants and fugitives were often involved in particular incidents. Buildings associated with this property type will often have design significance sufficient to meet Criterion C; courthouses, town and city halls and jails were usually distinctive ornaments in their communities. However, in the context of the Underground Railroad, this criterion is not necessarily relevant. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design to meet Criterion D.

Registration Requirements

Only properties that are convincingly documented to be associated with legal challenges to slavery will be eligible. Those properties will be principally eligible under Criterion A. When fugitive assistants and/or fugitives were directly involved in the actions, Criterion B will be relevant. Physical characteristics will be more a factor of integrity than significance, although features, such as court rooms, jail cells, and public meeting rooms where legal actions took place are important components.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association to the context and its period, as well as its representation of the significant event. Location and setting are important to associate the resource to its community. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function.

5. PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH DOCUMENTED FUGITIVE RENDITIONS,
RENDITION ATTEMPTS, OR RESCUESDescription

The National Park Service's *Underground Railroad Resources in the United States Theme Study* (September 2000) identifies a property type associated with slave escapes; however, as defined, such escapes did not occur in Massachusetts during the period of significance. An alternative property type has been established here to characterize properties associated with documented attempts by owners, owners' agents, or public officials to capture fugitives in the state, and the efforts of fugitives and those assisting them to effect their escapes from such attempts. Properties associated with the well-known escape of the fugitive known as Shadrach, such as the Lewis Hayden House in Boston and the Jonathan and Frances Drake House in Leominster, would be

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 107

classified as this property type. So would the extant Simeon P. Dodge House in Marblehead, where the fugitives William and Ellen Craft were concealed while agents sought them in Boston in 1850.

The condition of extant resources is generally good; however, the number of documented properties associated with fugitive renditions and rescues are so far few. This property type will often be related to others – such as homes that sheltered fugitives, properties associated with persons active in the Underground Railroad, and fugitive dwellings – and this association may supercede those areas of significance. Consistent with these alternative types, there is diversity of associative and physical characteristics, and, just as is the case with these property types, the larger and more pretentious buildings have generally been less altered than the smaller and more modest ones.

Significance

Properties and individuals that are associated with fugitive renditions and rescues reflect extreme instances of fugitive assistance. Many people, from many walks of life, provided direct support for fugitives. Properties with documented associations to them and the kind of assistance they provided are significant within the context of this nomination. In this case, their direct association with the stories of specific fugitive renditions and rescues enhance their importance

Properties that are eligible for their associations with fugitive renditions and rescues will generally meet Criterion A. In addition, they will likely meet Criterion B because they are also associated with individuals demonstrated to be significant in the anti-slavery movement during the period. Buildings associated with this property type may have sufficient design significance to meet Criterion C; however, in the context of the Underground Railroad, this criterion is relevant only in relation to establishing the significance of prominent individuals and their relative position in their community and the greater anti-slavery movement and to conveying the range of people involved and services provided. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design in order to meet Criterion D.

Registration Requirements

Only properties convincingly documented to be associated with fugitive renditions and rescues will be eligible under Criterion A. Significance under Criterion B will be determined by the documented role these individuals played in the fugitive assistance movement. Physical characteristics will be more a factor of integrity than significance.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association to the context and its period, as well as its representation of the significant event. Geography is a crucial factor in the history of the Underground Railroad, and location is a key attribute for the property type. Moved buildings will have diminished significance, especially if relocated from their historic

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 108

community settings. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function. The diversity of resources within this property type obliges a nuanced application of the registration requirements. Fugitive assistants came from a wide variety of economic and class backgrounds; many of them were freed slaves or fugitives themselves. It will be important to apply these requirements within appropriate social, cultural, and architectural contexts. A vernacular working-class dwelling cannot be evaluated by the same standard as an elite house, nor should the latter be considered more important simply because it has greater design distinction.

6. CHURCHES ASSOCIATED WITH CONGREGATIONS ACTIVE IN THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Description

The property type of a church needs little description. Churches associated with the Underground Railroad may range from elegant to modest; urban and rural churches are represented. Churches with unique architectural features may also be embraced, including Quaker and early Baptist meetinghouses.

This property type represents churches in Massachusetts that officially supported fugitives or played active and documented roles in assisting them. An example of this type already listed in the National Register is the African Meeting House in Boston.

Significance

This property type illustrates the role churches and church theology played in the anti-slavery movement and the Underground Railroad. While individual members of various congregations played active roles in fugitive assistance, the churches as corporate bodies – in Massachusetts and elsewhere – were equivocal on both abolitionism and aid to fugitives. Nineteenth-century abolitionists noted that even the Society of Friends, which had taken a strong stance against the slave trade and slaveholding in the 1700s, refused to take a firm stand on immediate abolitionism and disowned numerous “radical” abolitionist members. Disagreement on the issue existed even between African American churches: in 1856 the Vigilant Aid Society in New Bedford, composed of African Americans, criticized “the pro-slavery character of the African M.E.B. Church on Kempton street” for refusing to allow the society to hold meetings in that church “for the purpose of raising money to assist such as are daily making their escape from some portion of the slave States, and whom Divine Providence may direct among us, destitute of the means to make them

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 109

comfortable." Still, some churches, such as Free Christian Church in Andover and Tremont Temple in Boston (the original structures of which no longer stand), did take an overt antislavery stance, and may have sheltered and otherwise assisted fugitives. Further research may reveal the existence of similar congregations in other Massachusetts places.

Churches with active associations with the Underground Railroad will generally meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. If no other property survives associated with certain fugitive assistants and/or fugitives, they may also be eligible under Criterion B. Buildings associated with this property type will often have sufficient design significance to meet Criterion C; churches were usually distinctive buildings in their communities. However, in the context of the Underground Railroad, this criterion is not necessarily relevant. An eligible property must be archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design to meet Criterion D.

Registration Requirements

Only churches for which there is convincing documentary evidence of directly supporting the cause of fugitives will be eligible under Criterion A. Churches that meet Criterion A in this way will satisfy the criteria consideration regarding religious properties. Physical characteristics will be more a factor of integrity than significance, although the interior sanctuaries where events took place are important components.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association to the context and its period, as well as its representation of the significant event(s) distinguishing it. Location and setting are important to associate the resource to its community. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, floor plans, and materials associated with their period and function.

7. PROPERTIES ASSOCIATED WITH FUGITIVES LIVING IN AN ENCLAVE OR AN AFRO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

Description

This property type characterizes areas that are associated with the development of black or Afro-Indian communities in Massachusetts during the period of the Underground Railroad. In Boston and New Bedford, and perhaps in other cities with larger black populations, areas developed with heavy concentrations of people of color. Often dense in architectural terms, these neighborhoods over time were increasingly less apt to be traversed by people from other parts of the city; they thus

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 110

became more secure for transients and strangers such as fugitives. Such enclaves have been documented in the west ends of both Boston and New Bedford. Others may also have emerged in areas of historically black rural settlement, such as the "Black North" settlement of Dracut and the "Roast Meat Hill" section of Salem. Fugitives also have been documented to have joined Wampanoag settlements of Mashpee on Cape Cod and Gay Head, Christiantown, and Chappaquiddick on Martha's Vineyard, both because of the favorable sex ratio (that is, a greater number of black men than women and a greater number of Indian women than men in the population) and because the children of Indian women were deemed free. The Afro-Indian communities on Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard also played documented roles in fugitive assistance.

The condition of extant resources is mixed in these communities, and the survival rate of documented properties has not been fully assessed. In certain cities and towns (see Section E), more research is needed to determine where these enclaves may have been and if any components survived. Descriptions of Afro-Indian communities have yet to be made. This property type parallels that associated with fugitives who settled in Massachusetts, with the distinguishing element in this case being the collective characteristics of urban enclaves or marginal rural or Afro-Indian communities. In general, they can be expected to contain more modest, vernacular houses. Within these enclaves and communities, a range of houses will be evident between urban and rural dwellings and among individuals of varying occupations and economic success. Churches and meetinghouses – for example, the Mashpee Indian Meetinghouse, which is extant and listed in the National Register – may also have survived. No particular physical characteristics have yet emerged to distinguish features of the buildings within this type as peculiarly African American or Afro-Indian. Because of the small, affordable nature of this housing, surviving examples can be expected to have been enlarged and altered after the period of significance in response to evolving trends of home improvement over time.

Significance

This property type addresses the significance of African Americans settling in Massachusetts in the period of the Underground Railroad and their interest in creating communities. It also provides insight into the living conditions, lifestyles, and community interaction of African Americans, as well as their interaction with the mainstream society during this period. These properties portray the events of the Underground Railroad from a perspective that has been generally overlooked in historical scholarship until recently.

Properties that are eligible for their associations with fugitives living in an enclave or an Afro-Indian community will potentially form National Register-eligible historic districts that will primarily meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number F Page 111

The potential districts also will be eligible under Criterion B if associations can be made to individuals whose activity in the Underground Railroad can be documented. Because of their strong historical associations, documented examples of fugitive dwelling and other structures related to such enclaves or communities can be used to define a distinguishable architectural type and meet Criterion C. A context for these buildings has been generally established; individual examples, both singly and as an enclave or community, will ultimately expand and refine the characterizations of the type. Criterion D will apply in cases where properties that are archaeological in nature and examined and evaluated following a specific research design bring an added dimension to the definition of the physical characteristics of the plan and design of the enclave or community. Such sites have the potential to provide valuable information as to how the prevailing African American or Afro-Indian culture may have influenced the design and decoration of fugitive dwellings.

Registration Requirements

Only properties that are convincingly documented to be associated with fugitives living in enclaves or Afro-Indian communities have the potential to be eligible. This eligibility will be considered in terms of historic districts under all available criteria. (A building that represents the only surviving property from a documented enclave or community will be considered individually as a fugitive dwelling; however, its significance will include the association under Criterion A.) Significance will be established by the properties' associative characteristics – that is, the settlement of fugitives in Massachusetts during the period of the Underground Railroad. Physical characteristics of and relationships among properties will play a prominent role in establishing significance under Criterion C. Lastly, documented sites of fugitive dwellings, whether the house is present or not, may contain valuable archaeological evidence that would contribute to developing a more precise understanding of this property type. This potential should be evaluated each time the documentation of a property is planned.

Location and setting are crucial factors in representing the plan of the enclave or community. Eligible districts will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms, street plans, and materials associated with the period. Aspects of workmanship are useful to interpret the buildings in relation to other comparable dwellings, both within the milieu of the enclave or community and more broadly. These buildings were the affordable housing of their day, and they have experienced stages of improvement in subsequent eras resulting in alterations and additions that tend to obscure, if not obliterate, design features from the period of significance. The overall impact of these external alterations on the ability of the district to impart an authentic sense of the historic enclave or community must be carefully assessed. In these cases, the strength of the association with the Underground Railroad may outweigh current weaknesses in the integrity of design and materials.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS

Section number F Page 112

8. PROPERTIES COMMEMORATING FUGITIVES AND FUGITIVE ASSISTANTS

Description

In the absence of any other extant properties associated with fugitives and fugitive assistants, gravesites or other memorials may be regarded as significant sites. These commemorative properties must have been erected during the period of significance in order to be eligible under the context. Examples are the gravesites of fugitive assistants Charles Turner Torrey at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge of 1846 and that of Daniel Drayton in New Bedford, installed in 1857.

Significance

Commemorative properties with associations with the Underground Railroad will generally meet Criterion A because of their association with events defined in the historic context. Gravesites will be eligible under Criterion B. The self-consciousness of the abolitionist movement was sometimes embodied in the elaboration of commemorative properties, including gravesites; the Mount Auburn grave of relatively obscure fugitive Peter Byus, though falling just outside the period of significance (1867), is marked by an intricately carved headstone featuring a detailed biographical inscription and the Wedgwood-based abolitionist logo of the liberated slave with broken chains at his feet. Although none have so far been identified in Massachusetts, properties erected during the period of significance that commemorate fugitives or fugitive assistants other than gravesites may yet be discovered. Resources associated with this property type will often have sufficient design significance to meet Criterion C; commemorative objects and grave markers were distinctive examples of personal and/or community expressions.

Registration Requirements

Only those commemorative properties that are associated with individuals or events where there is convincing documentary evidence of their significance and that were erected during the period of the Underground Railroad (1783-1865) will be eligible under Criteria A and/or B. Properties with significant associations with the Underground Railroad will satisfy the consideration. Distinctive physical characteristics eligible for consideration under Criterion C will enhance significance.

The property should retain sufficient physical integrity to convey its feeling and association to the context and its period, as well as its representation of the significant event or person distinguishing it. Location and setting are important to associate the resource to its community. Eligible buildings will generally meet registration requirements if they retain the essential forms and materials associated with their period and function.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts,
1783-1865 MPS

Section number G Page 113

G. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

All properties must be situated within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts during the period of significance.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number H Page 114 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS

Section H

SUMMARY OF SURVEY AND IDENTIFICATION METHODS

This context was part of a larger project on the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts undertaken for the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Park Service Boston Support Office for the Northeast Region. The project included this historic context statement, two case studies of Underground Railroad activity in two communities wherein National Park Service units existed, a National Register of Historic Places nomination, and an application for National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom recognition.

Both this context and the historic resources that it has identified as potentially eligible for the Massachusetts and/or National Register of Historic Places were developed from three types of sources. The first was primary research. Since 1996 Kathryn Grover has examined the lives and activities of fugitives and fugitive assistants in Massachusetts, particularly in New Bedford and Boston. Much of this research has been published in *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001) and (with Janine da Silva) "Historic Resource Study: Boston African American National Historic Site (Boston National Historical Park, National Park Service, December 2002). Both works have touched upon other Massachusetts places and have provided a broad comparative basis for this context. Additional knowledge of Underground Railroad activity in the state arose from the case studies of Underground Railroad activity in Salem and Lowell developed for this project.

That the comparative census data used in the context was available in electronic form (though on an annual membership basis) was of great benefit. The decennial federal censuses are on the Ancestry.com Web site, while information on Massachusetts residents of color from the 1855 and 1865 state censuses, extracted by Ann S. Lainhart of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, is available online at (<http://www.newenglandancestors.org/research/database/poc/>). Finally, while local studies in this state and others are few, several Massachusetts towns and cities have published pamphlets on local Underground Railroad activity to date: in 1993 Martha Mayo at the Center for Lowell History issued *Profiles in Courage: African-Americans in Lowell*, in 2002 the Greater Lawrence Underground Railroad Committee published *The Anti-Slavery Movement and the Underground Railroad in Andover & Greater Lawrence, Massachusetts*; and in 2003 Salem Maritime National Historic Site published a revised edition of *African American Heritage Sites in Salem*. From primary research such properties as the William Jenkins House in Andover and the Rev. William Jackson House in New Bedford were identified.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number H Page 115

A second source was those Form B inventory forms and National Register nominations on file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission that assert some association with the Underground Railroad. In a survey project undertaken by Kathryn Grover for MHC in the summer of 2001, at least 72 nominations for Massachusetts sites stated such an association for that site or its occupants; of that number, no more than 30 were considered adequately documented Underground Railroad sites. The William Ingersoll Bowditch House in Brookline was, for example, identified in this way.

The third source was a series of personal and e-mail contacts undertaken independent of and for this project. Created in 2000, the Massachusetts Underground Railroad Network was a vital source of information on sites firmly and tentatively associated with fugitives and those who aided them in the Commonwealth. At its quarterly meetings and through its newsletter, the network provides and promotes opportunities to exchange information and offers technical support for those interested in investigating, documenting, preserving, and building a context for understanding the stories and sites associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts. In particular, network member Steve Strimer of the Florence History Project has been an invaluable contact for information about western Massachusetts sites. Personal contacts brought to light, for example, the existence of the Peter Byus gravesite at Mount Auburn Cemetery and that the Roger Hart Leavitt House in Charlemont and the Basil Dorsey House in Florence have survived and were key Underground Railroad sites. In addition, Neil Larson sent a query announcing the project and seeking information about reputed and known Underground Railroad sites to a list of historic commissions, historical societies, and others on a Massachusetts Historical Commission list. That e-mail posting permitted the team to determine that some sites were not extant and yielded general, speculative information about several others; it was beyond the scope and time allotted to this study to flesh out these latter leads.

Methodology for Evaluation

In 2003, research began in the primary and reliable secondary sources identified in earlier work and considered most salient for this study (see Section I). Simultaneously the 30 properties identified in 2001, as well as an additional 45 considered worth pursuing based on other sources, were examined to determine whether documentary evidence existed or might exist for their reputed Underground Railroad associations. The research team made site visits to ten Massachusetts cities and towns to identify potential National Register and Network to Freedom properties and to visit case study communities. Detailed census and city directory work was undertaken in Salem and Lowell as well as in Florence and Cambridge, respectively the sites of the Basil Dorsey / Thomas H. Jones House (the property selected for National Register

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number H Page 116 The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS

nomination) and the Joshua Bowen Smith House (the property selected as the Network to Freedom nomination). The authors, in concert with MHC and NPS project managers, chose these properties according to several criteria. Among them was an intention to represent and contrast several thematic aspects of the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts—the Smith House in Cambridge was the home of a fugitive assistant in Greek Revival style and in an eastern, urban, coastal milieu; by contrast, the Dorsey / Jones house in Florence was a fugitive's home in vernacular style in an inland, western village. In addition, and in particular with respect to the Dorsey / Jones House, the properties were examined according to National Register criteria and aspects of integrity as they apply to historic resources (see Section F for a detailed discussion of these registration requirements). In determining the eligibility of this and other properties for the National Register, the special character of the Underground Railroad and those who took part in it required a more nuanced application of the registration requirements, as Section F explains; in vernacular structures, for example, integrity of association, location, setting, and feeling may be relatively more important than integrity of materials, workmanship, and design.

Research began in primary and secondary materials as well. In an effort to clarify the debate on architectural integrity and on purpose-built spaces for the concealment of fugitives, the team consulted new archaeological, architectural, and methodological research in other states, including that by John Vlach, Byron D. Fruehling and Robert H. Smith, Judith Wellman, and Raymond Paul Zirblis, and consulted such other scholars as Myron Stachiw and Michael Nassaney who have worked but not published in this field. Research for this Massachusetts Underground Railroad project was able to uncover new information, including census data on populations of color in a dozen Massachusetts communities; the relatively long-term settlement in such places as Ashburnham and Plymouth of fugitives identified in Boston Vigilance Committee records; the repeated use of the route, and assistants thereon, between New York, Hartford, and Springfield; the importance of and widespread connection to the Boston abolitionist community of Leominster's Frances Drake; the employment of fugitives in several of the Commonwealth's shops and factories; the location and survival of the house of Marblehead fugitive assistant Simeon Dodge; early evidence of the presence of fugitive Lewis Clarke in Massachusetts; solid evidence of the direct involvement of Salem's William Bradford Dodge and Andover's William Jenkins and Peter and John Smith in fugitive assistance; and the strong probability of a connection between the New York Vigilance Committee's David Ruggles and the Leavitt family of Charlemont. In addition, the research was able to develop substantial documentation of the Underground Railroad associations of at least two properties earlier listed on the National Register for their architectural merit—the George and Susan Hillard House on Beacon Hill in Boston and the Joshua Bowen Smith House in Cambridge.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

**The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPS**

Section number H Page 117

This context should enable interested parties to identify and evaluate historical and architectural resources associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts cities and towns with an eye toward their nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The research has identified properties that might be added to the National Register as well as strategies for identifying other structures that may be nominated in the future.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number I Page 118

Section I

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Bartlett, Irving H. "Abolitionists, Fugitives, and Imposters in Boston, 1846-47." *New England Quarterly* 55, 1 (March 1982): 97-110. [transcription of 1846-47 Boston Vigilance Committee records]
- Bearse, Austin. *Reminiscences of Fugitive-Slave Law Days in Boston*. Boston: Warren Richardson, 1880.
- Bird, F. W., Whiting Griswold, and Cyrus Weekes. *Report of the Commissioners Relating to the Condition of the Indians in Massachusetts*. Boston: House Report No. 46, February 1849.
- Blassingame, John W., ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.
- Crawford Blagden Collection of Wendell Phillips Papers. Houghton Library, Harvard University.
- Chace, Elizabeth Buffum. "My Anti-Slavery Reminiscences." In *Two Quaker Sisters from the Original Diaries of Elizabeth Buffum Chace and Lucy Buffum Lovell*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1937.
- Clarke, James Freeman. *Anti-Slavery Days: A Sketch of the Struggle Which Ended in the Abolition of Slavery in the United States*. New York: J. W. Lovell Company, 1883.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. Written by Himself* (1845). *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass Written by Himself* (1881). In *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*. New York: Literary Classics of the United States/Library of America, 1994.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number I Page 119

Drew, Benjamin. *The Refugee: Or the Narrative of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by Themselves*. Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1856. Reprint. Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000. [sometimes shown with title *Northside View of Slavery*]

Earle, John Milton. *Report to the Governor and Council Concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth, Under the Act of April 6, 1859*. Senate Report No. 96. Boston: William White, 1861.

The Experience of Thomas H. Jones, Who Was a Slave for Forty-Three Years. Written by a Friend, as Related to Him by Brother Jones. Boston: Bazin and Chandler, 1862.

Sydney Howard Gay Papers. Butler Library, Columbia University.

[Jackson, Francis]. "The Boston Vigilance Committee Appointed at the Public Meeting in Faneuil Hall October 21st 1850 To Assist Fugitive Slaves: Treasurers Accounts." Facsimile edition. Bostonian Society, Boston, Mass.

_____. "Fugitive Slaves Aided by the Vigilance Committee since the Passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill 1850." Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society Papers, New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y.

Life of Rev. Thomas James, by Himself. Rochester, N.Y.: Post Express Printing Co., 1887.

Lovejoy, J. C. *Memoir of Rev. Charles T. Torrey, Who Died in the Penitentiary of Maryland, Where He Was Confined for Showing Mercy to the Poor*. Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1847. Reprint. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969.

May, Samuel J. *Some Recollections of Our Antislavery Conflict*. Boston: Fields, Osgood and Company, 1869.

Narrative of Events in the Life of William Green (Formerly a Slave), Written by Himself. Springfield, Mass.: L. M. Guernsey, 1853.

Narrative of Henry Watson, a Fugitive Slave. Boston: Bela Marsh, 1848.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number I Page 120

Narrative of Sojourner Truth, a Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York, in 1828. Boston: by the author, 1850.

A Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper, from American Slavery. Philadelphia: Merrihew and Gunn, 1838.

Ripley, Peter C., ed. *The Black Abolitionist Papers.* 5 vols. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985-92.

Smith, James Lindsay. *Autobiography of James L. Smith, Including, Also, Reminiscences of Slave Life, Recollections of the War, Education of Freedmen, Causes of the Exodus, etc.* Norwich, Conn.: Press of the Bulletin Company, 1881.

Still, William. *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c.* 1871. Reprint. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1970.

"The 'Underground Railroad' in Massachusetts." Vols. 13 and 14 of Notebooks Concerning the Underground Railroad. Material Collected by Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, Ohio State University, Columbus, n.d. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries. "North American Slave Narratives." <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/neh.html>.

Wesley, Dorothy Porter, and Constance Porter Uzelac. *William Cooper Nell, Nineteenth-Century African American Abolitionist, Historian, Integrationist: Selected Writings, 1832-1874* Baltimore, Md.: Black Classic Press, 2002.

Weston Papers. Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, Boston Public Library.

Secondary Sources

Collison, Gary. *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen.* Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number I Page 121

- Davis, Hugh. *Joshua Leavitt, Evangelical Abolitionist*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
- Fruehling, Byron D., and Robert H. Smith. "Subterranean Hideaways of the Underground Railroad in Ohio: An Architectural, Archaeological and Historical Critique of Local Traditions." *Ohio History* 102, 98 (Summer/Autumn 1993).
- Gary, Larry. *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961.
- Goodman, Paul. *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Grover, Kathryn. *The Fugitive's Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001.
- Grover, Kathryn, and Janine V. da Silva. "Historic Resource Study: Boston African American National Historic Site." Boston National Historical Park, 31 December 2002.
- Harper, Douglas. "Slavery in the North." <http://www.slavenorth.com>.
- Hart, Albert Bushnell. *Slavery and Abolition, 1831-1841*. 1906. Reprint. New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1968.
- Jacobs, Donald M., ed. *Courage and Conscience: Black & White Abolitionists in Boston*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press for the Boston Athenaeum, 1993.
- Litwack, Leon F. *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Mayer, Henry. *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Melish, Joanne Pope. *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1998.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number I Page 122

Old Anti-Slavery Days. Proceedings of the Commemorative Meeting, Held by the Danvers Historical Society, at the Town Hall, Danvers, April 26, 1893, with Introduction, Letters and Sketches. Danvers: Danvers Mirror Print, 1893.

Richards, Leonard L. *"Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America.* London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Siebert, Wilbur H. *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom.* New York: Macmillan, 1898.

_____. *The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts.* Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1936.

Soderlund, Jean R. *Quakers & Slavery: A Divided Spirit.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Vlach, John Michael. "Above Ground on the Underground Railroad: Places of Flight and Refuge." Essay for volume edited by David Blight. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, forthcoming.

Wellman, Judith. "The Underground Railroad and the National Register of Historic Places: Historical Importance vs. Architectural Integrity." *The Public Historian* 24, 1. Winter 2002. 11-30.

Winks, Robin W. *The Blacks in Canada: A History.* 2d ed. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997.

Zirblis, Raymond Paul. "Friends of Freedom: The Vermont Underground Railroad Survey Report." Montpelier: Vermont Department of State Buildings and Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 12 December 1996.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetThe Underground Railroad in Massachusetts
1783-1865 MPSSection number app. Page 123

Appendix 1: Underground Railroad Sites in Massachusetts

The attached table is an introductory index of potential and documented properties associated with the Underground Railroad in Massachusetts. It is an appendix to "The Underground Railroad in Massachusetts: Statement of Historic Context." Because research continually uncovers new information in this field, the list cannot include all potential Underground Railroad properties. However, all extant properties mentioned in the multiple property context are included in this table, as well as sites that may exist but have not as yet been documented.

The table indicates whether a property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places individually (NR IND) or as part of a district (NRHD), or is a National Historic Landmark (NHL) or, in the case of properties on Nantucket, is within the National Historic Landmark Historic District (NHL HD). Several properties are also designated on the National Park Service's Network to Freedom (NTF) and are so indicated. Note that in many cases, properties may have been listed in the National Register or designated as a National Historic Landmark for reasons other than their association with the Underground Railroad. If a property has been documented in the statewide inventory maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, or MACRIS), the property's inventory form number is indicated, with the number preceded by the town code (e.g., ANV 277=Andover form number 277). Several properties are only documented within an area form, rather than individually, and these properties will be indicated with a letter code (e.g., WIL. D=Wilbraham, area D). Properties whose survival has not been ascertained are indicated by a question mark in the penultimate column. Finally, notes in the last column indicate when properties may be listed in MACRIS by the name of the first owner or builder, which may differ from that of the person who holds Underground Railroad associations with the property.

(end)

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN MASSACHUSETTS 1783-1865

| TOWN | Property | Address | NR? | MHC No. | Extant? | Comments |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|---|
| Amherst | Mrs. Spencer Church House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Andover | William Jenkins House | 89 Jenkins Road | | ANV 277 | Y | |
| Aquinnah/Gay Head | Beulah Vanderhoop House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Aquinnah/Gay Head | Samuel Peters House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Ashburnham | Alvin Ward House | 323 Lake Rd. | | ASH 215 | Y | known by historic name Caleb Ward House |
| Ashburnham | Enoch Whittemore House | off Tuckerman Road | | ASB 230 | Y | known as Joseph Whitmore Hse or Dr. Lorenzo Locke Whitmore Hse & Office |
| Ashburnham | Jones & Whittemore spool factory | unknown | | | ? | |
| Ashburnham | Josiah Thomas House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Belchertown | Squire Shaw House | 32 Park St. | NRHD | BLC 21 | Y | known by historic name Susan Dwight Shaw House |
| Boston | African Meeting House | 8 Smith Court | NRHD | BOS 4085 | Y | |
| Boston | Lewis Hayden House | 44 Phillips St. | NRHD | BOS 4088 | Y | |
| Boston | William C. Nell House | 3 Smith Court | NRHD | BOS 4093 | Y | |
| Boston | John P. Coburn House | 2 Phillips St. | NRHD | BOS 4102-3 | Y | also known as Coburn's Gaming House |
| Boston | John J. Smith House | 86 Pinckney St. | NRHD | BOS 4105 | Y | |
| Boston | George S. Hillard House | 62 Pinckney St. | NRHD | | Y | |
| Boston | John T. Hilton House | 73 Joy St. | NRHD | | Y | |
| Boston | Wm Lloyd Garrison House | 125 Highland St. Roxbury | NR/NRHD | BOS 12038 | Y | |
| Boston | Robert Johnson House | 69 Joy St. | NRHD | | Y | |
| Brookline | Wm. Ingersoll Bowditch House | 9 Toxteth St. | NR IND | BKL 1726 | Y | |
| Cambridge | Lewis & John Milton Clarke House | 2,4 Florence Pl., off Norfolk | NRHD | | Y | |
| Cambridge/Watertown | Mount Auburn Cemetery | 580 Mt. Auburn St. | NHL | | Y | |
| Cambridge | Aaron Safford House | 179 Prospect St. | | | Y | |
| Cambridge | Joshua Bowen Smith House | 79 Norfolk St. | NRHD, NTF | CAM 551 | Y | known by historic name Robert Fuller House |
| Charlemont | Roger & Keziah Leavitt House | Route 2/Main St. | NTF | | Y | |
| Charlemont | Roger Hart Leavitt House | Route 2/Main St. | NTF | | Y | |
| Colrain | Charles Green House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Concord | Bronson Alcott House (The Wayside) | 455 Lexington St. | NHL | CON 171 | Y | |
| Concord | Francis E. & Ann Hagar Bigelow Hse | 19 Sudbury Rd. | | CON 109 | Y | |
| Concord | Henry David Thoreau Birthplace | 341 Virginia Rd. | NR IND | CON 177 | Y | moved, altered 1878; house known by historic name Wheeler-Minot Farmhouse |
| Danvers | Bradstreet or Brooks Baker House | 4 Putnam Court | | DAN 213 | Y | apparently moved; known by historic name Daniel Brooks Baker House |
| Groton | Dr. Amos Farnsworth House | Indian Hill Road | | GRO 55 | Y | |
| Harvard | Fruitlands | 120 Prospect Hill Rd. | NRHD | HRV 199 | Y | Transcendentalist community |
| Harvard | Tower Hazard house | East Bare Hill Road | | HRV 79 | ? | also known as Forbush-Hazard House |
| Harwich | Jonathan Walker House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Lawrence | Anna Howard Shaw House | High St. | | | ? | |
| Leicester | Samuel J. May Jr. House | 960 Main St. | NRHD | LEI 92 | Y | |
| Leominster | Jonathan and Frances Drake House | 21 Franklin St. | | LEO 152 | Y | known by historic name Jonathan Drake House |
| Lowell | Linus Child House | 63-67 Kirk St. | NRHD | LOW 46 | Y | also known as Boott Cotton Mills Agents House |
| Lowell | Adrastus Lew House | Mount Hope St. | | | Y | |
| Lowell | Mechanics Block | unknown | | | ? | |

| TOWN | Property | Address | NR? | MHC No. | Extant? | Comments |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|----------|---------|--|
| Lynn | Nathan Breed House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Lynn | Jesse or John W. Hutchinson House | Hutchinson Court, High Rock | | | Y | also known as Stone or Daisy Cottage |
| Lynn | George Latimer House | 102 Marianna St. | | | ? | |
| Lynn | Frederick Douglass House 1843-1845 | unknown | | | ? | |
| Manchester | Daniel Friend House | 8 Friend St. | NRHD | MAN 151 | Y | |
| Marblehead | Simeon and Betsy Dodge House | 236 Washington St. | NRHD | | Y | |
| Marblehead | Adoniram C. Orne House | 23 State St. | NRHD | MAR 373 | Y | also known as Mansfield-Orne House |
| Marlborough | Benjamin Prentiss House | | | | Y | |
| Marshfield | Moses F. Rogers House | 540 Highland St. | | MRS 59 | Y | known by historic name John Rogers House |
| Mashpee | James Lewis House | unknown | NHL HD | | ? | |
| Nantucket | Arthur Cooper House | unknown | NHL HD | | ? | |
| Nantucket | Alfred Folger House | unknown | NHL HD | | ? | |
| Nantucket | The Atheneum | cor. Federal and India sts. | NHL HD | | Y | renovated |
| Nantucket | Lucretia Coffin/Phebe Hussey House | 15 Fair St. | NHL HD | | | |
| Nantucket | Big Shop | Milk St/Quaker Rd,NW cor. | NHL HD | | Y | moved |
| New Bedford | John (or Martha) Briggs House | 111-113 Allen St. | | NBE 163 | Y | |
| New Bedford | Nathan & Polly Johnson House | 21 Seventh St. | NHL | NBE 2036 | Y | |
| New Bedford | Second Baptist Church | 205 Middle St. | | NBE 2618 | Y | |
| New Bedford | Sgt. William H. Carney House | 128 Mill St. | NR IND | NBE 381 | Y | |
| New Bedford | Rev. William Jackson House | 198 Smith St. | | NBE 2052 | Y | known by historic name Flossie Freedom-Paul Carlisle House |
| New Bedford | William Piper House #1 | 87 S. Sixth St. | | | Y | |
| New Bedford | William Piper House #2 | 46 Bedford St. | NRHD | | Y | |
| New Bedford | Daniel Drayton Gravesite | Dartmouth/Rockland Sts. | | | Y | in Rural Cemetery |
| New Bedford | Andrew Robeson House | 32 William/47R N.Second | NHL/NRHD | NBE 92 | Y | moved |
| New Bedford | George Howland House | 245 Walnut St. | NRHD | NBE 89 | Y | |
| New Bedford | Lewis Temple House | 54 Bedford St. | | | Y | |
| New Bedford | William Rotch Rodman House | 388 County St. | NRHD | NBE 70 | Y | |
| New Bedford | William Rotch Jr. House | 396 County St. | NHL | NBE 15 | Y | also known as Rotch-Jones-Duff House |
| Newton | Jackson Homestead | 527 Washington St. | NR IND | NWT 167 | Y | |
| Northampton | Basil Dorsey-TH Jones House | 191 Nonotuck St. | NR IND | | Y | |
| Northampton | Basil Dorsey House #2 | 4 Florence Road | | NTH 2435 | Y | |
| Northampton | Ross Farm | 123 Meadow St. | NTF | NTH 153 | Y | also known as Samuel Hill House |
| Pembroke | Samuel Brown House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Pembroke | Dr. Anthony Collamore House | 225 Washington St. | | PEM 19 | Y | known by historic name Thomas Barker-Dr. Collamore House |
| Plymouth | Solomon Banks House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Plymouth | James Seymour House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Salem | Albert Gallatin Brown House | 2 Broad St. | NRHD | | ? | may also be known as William West or Benjamin Cox-Rev. Lemuel Willis House |
| Salem | Nathaniel Bowditch House | 9 North St. | NHL | SAL 1511 | Y | |
| Salem | Thoms H. Jones House | 10 High St. | | | ? | |
| Salem | Charles Turner Torrey house | 28 Pleasant St. | NRHD | | ? | |
| Saugus | Benjamin Franklin & Dorothy Newhall H | 17-19 Ballard St. | | | ? | |
| Springfield | Crosier-Howard House | 22 Salem St. | NRHD | SPF 3561 | Y | also Grace Baptist Church Sunday School |
| Wilbraham | Wilbraham Academy | Main & Faculty Streets | | WIL.D | Y | |

| TOWN | Property | Address | NR? | MHC No. | Extant? | Comments |
|-----------|--|---------------|--------|---------|---------|---|
| Worcester | Liberty Farm | 116 Mower St. | NR IND | WOR 216 | Y | also known as Liberty Farm-Foster House |
| Worcester | Martin Stowell House | unknown | | | ? | |
| Worcester | Isaac Mason House | Shirley St. | | WOR BE | Y | moved from 62- 64 Union St. |
| Worcester | Thomas H. Jones House | 18 Chandler | | | ? | |
| | NR IND = individually designated in National Register of Historic Places | | | | | |
| | NRHD = designated as part of a National Register Historic District | | | | | |
| | NHL = National Historic Landmark | | | | | |
| | NHL HD = National Historic Landmark, Nantucket Island | | | | | |
| | NTF = designated as a Network to Freedom site | | | | | |